Balthasar's Method of Divine Naming

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ONE OF THE MOST original elements of Hans Urs von Balthasar's theology is his method of predicating attributes of the triune God, combining divine immutability and divine suffering love. Although Balthasar explicitly rejects the God of process theology, he understands the mystery of the Trinity to include death, surprise, potentiality, becoming, faith, and time. Yet at the same time, Balthasar enthusiastically adopts the Dionysian and Thomistic threefold way of affirmation, negation, and eminence, a method that Dionysius the Areopagite and St. Thomas Aquinas used to exclude all change, suffering, and potentiality from God. How can these apparently contradictory views of God stand together in the thought of one of the greatest speculative theologians of the twentieth century?

Not surprisingly, this element of Balthasar's theology has sparked a lively debate in the past few years. David Schindler[1] and Gerard O'Hanlon, SJ[2] have argued for the internal coherence of Balthasar's thought, holding that his theology is an organic development of the Fathers and the great Scholastics. Guy Mansini, OSB[3] and Richard Schenk, OP[4] have

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[1] David L. Schindler, book review of Gerard O'Hanlon's *The Immutability of God in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, *The Thomist* 58 (1994): 340–41; "The Person: Philosophy, Theology, and Receptivity," *Communio* 21 (1994): 172–90.

[2] Gerard F. O'Hanlon, SJ, *The Immutability of God in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[3] Guy Mansini, OSB, "Balthasar and Theodramatic Enrichment of the Trinity," *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 499–519.

[4] Richard Schenk, OP, "Ist die Rede vom leidenden Gott theologisch zu vermeiden? Reflexion über den Streit von K. Rahner und H. U. von Balthasar," in *Der Leidende Gott: Eine philosophische und theologische Kritik,* ed. Peter Koslowski and Freidrich Hermanni (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2001), 225–39.

questioned some of Balthasar's divine attributes like becoming and suffering. Perhaps this debate can be advanced by asking the question: What is Balthasar's method of divine naming? More specifically, how does Balthasar recognize perfections in creation and the history of salvation, and how are these perfections then attributed to God? This approach, a particularly Scholastic one, can shed much light on the Trinitarian theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar.

Such a study necessarily involves the investigation of a number of essential themes in Balthasar's thought. We will begin with a brief look at Balthasar's approach to the relationship between philosophy and theology. Second, we will consider his adoption and critique of negative theology. Third, we will examine his doctrine of Christ as the concrete analogy of being *(analogia entis)*. Fourth, we will consider his principle that the economic Trinity, the Trinity as it operates in the history of salvation, is the only way to the immanent Trinity, the Trinity as it is in itself. These four studies will prepare the way for a closer look at individual divine attributes: although Balthasar did not think of himself a systematic theologian, we can still look for a certain order, not only in his statements about divine naming, but also in his use of divine names. At the same time, our discussion of divine attributes will provide an overview of Balthasar's adoption of the Dionysian and Thomistic threefold way of affirmation, negation, and eminence. We will conclude with a critique of some elements of Balthasar's method of naming God.

The Relationship Between Philosophy and Theology

Balthasar's view of the relationship between philosophy and theology can be found above all in his book on Karl Barth and in the first volume of *Theologik*. Balthasar was very sympathetic to Barth's theological outlook, adopting a Christo-centric theology that places great emphasis on the analogy of faith, which identifies Christ as the ultimate manifestation of the true similitude between creatures and God, a manifestation that includes but also corrects a philosophical analogy of being. Yet there is a marked distinction between the two great Swiss theologians of the twentieth century in their understanding of the relationship between faith and reason, between theology and philosophy.

Balthasar points out the tension in Barth's thought between his desire to give philosophy its due and his insistence on the absolute primacy of graced knowledge. For Barth, theology must employ the concepts and categories of philosophy.[5] Yet, as Balthasar recognizes, while grace presup-

[5] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth* (San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1971), 85.

poses and is distinct from the order of creation, all too often Barth's theology reduces everything to the order of grace.[6]

In an effort to distance himself from Barth, Balthasar explains that "the real source of controversy here was Barth's refusal to grant any trace of theological relevance to man's philosophical knowledge of God."[7] Balthasar asks: "Doesn't the analogy of faith (or grace) presuppose an analogous (by no means identical) analogy in the order of creation and even in the order of sin? Without the latter analogy as its external ground, can the analogy of faith become truly and effectively operative?"[8] Balthasar warns us that "if there is no philosophy, then the whole hierarchy of values and scholarly disciplines collapses. If there is no philosophy, then there are no absolute truths and values any more."[9] Instead, "a real priority of nature and reason is presupposed if there is to be a real Incarnation."[10]

In *Theologik* I, especially its revised prologue, Balthasar again insists on an autonomous place for philosophy. Theology presumes an ontological structure;[11] revealed truth does not destroy but perfects the world's truth.[12] Yet Balthasar also questions to what extent the world's ontological structure is already known by reason.[13] In fact, he holds that because reason is weak, it must be illumined in order to be able to penetrate thoroughly the being of natural realities.[14] His attitude of caution toward reason's ability to entirely discern the world's ontological structure moves Balthasar toward a Bonaventurian outlook on faith and reason.

Balthasar's critique of philosophy goes one step further in *Theologik* II, in which he argues that in some ways, philosophical or worldly logic can no longer assist Christian life and thought. As proof for his position, he points out that for Sts. John and Paul, Jesus' resurrection contradicted all earthly logic and experience. The Christian, therefore, can no longer orient himself by using earthly logic.[15] This argument implies a sharp critique of the power of ungraced reason, leaving the role of philosophy in theology very uncertain.

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6 Ibid., 126.
7 Ibid., 296.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 297.
10 Ibid., 270.
11 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theologik* I (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Johannes Verlag, 1985), vii.
12 Ibid., xi.
13 Ibid., vii.
14 Ibid., xii.
15 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theologik* II (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Johannes Verlag, 1985), 98.

Does this exegesis of Sts. Paul and John on the resurrection conflict with Balthasar's praise of philosophy in *Theologik* I? Is the world's logic not a reflection of the divine logos as it shines forth in creation? Does Balthasar tend toward Karl Barth's view of the relationship between faith and reason? We cannot give a definitive answer to these questions now. Our study of Balthasar's method of divine naming will place us within closer reach of a solution. As Peter Casarella has pointed out, Balthasar's notion of faith generating new experience does not necessarily entail fideism.[16] On the other hand, Richard Schenk has argued that Balthasar's theological method, which Schenk identifies with the Augustinian–Franciscan tradition, involves a receptivity to graced knowledge that is theoretically open-ended to the point that philosophy is no longer a measuring stick for revelation, but is transformed by received public and private revelation.[17] Nevertheless, Balthasar did recognize the indispensable role of philosophy in theology. The question for us is not whether Balthasar was a fideist, but what role philosophy plays in his theology.

According to Balthasar, philosophy unaided by grace can discover perfections in creation that may be truly predicated of God analogously. However, since the illumination of grace may be needed to recognize what is in nature, theology may discover additional perfections in nature that were not accessible to ungraced reason.

Balthasar's Appropriation and Critique of Negative Theology

One of Balthasar's main concerns in *Theologik* II is a defense of positive language about God against Neo-platonic apophatic theology and Eastern mysticism. The latter's approaches to God lead to such a radical negative theology that they form the greatest fortress against Christianity, leaving God wholly unknown and wholly distant from us.[18]

Yet a biblical foundation for negative theology exists already in the Old Testament.[19] The Church Fathers even adopted elements of pagan Neo-platonic negative theology, although their outlook was balanced by a recognition of the primacy that is due to the way of eminence,

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16 Peter Casarella, "Experience as a theological category: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Christian encounter with God's image," *Communio* 20 (1993): 118.

17 Schenk, "Ist die Rede vom leiden Gott theologisch zu vermeiden?" Reflexion über den Streit von K. Rahner und H. U. von Balthasar," in *Der Leidende Gott: Eine philosophische und theologische Kritik,* ed. Peter Koslowski and Freidrich Hermanni (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2001), 235–36.

18 *Theologik* II, 88.

19 Ibid., 82–83, 94.

which is a way of affirmation.[20] Following Thomas Aquinas, Balthasar affirms that the more knowable *in se* is less knowable *quoad nos*.[21] Furthermore, since God the Father remains invisible, he is beyond our concepts.[22] Despite the wondrous revelation that God has made in Christ, the infinite God-creature distance remains, even with Christological analogy.[23] Balthasar assents to the classic position in Christian theology that God is incomprehensible, a position that goes back to Philo and scriptural revelation.[24]

Balthasar's creative contribution to the critique of negative theology is his approach to the negation of materiality and finitude. This way of purification, in which one abstracts from materiality, corporeality, the sensible, the imaginable, and the conceivable, has led to great problems, even as practiced by the medievals and St. John of the Cross.[25] In a bold move, Balthasar never clearly supports a full negation of material limitations when speaking of God.[26] Why does he do this?

We can provide only a brief answer to this question, yet one that seems to reflect the entire spirit of Balthasar's theology. As already seen, he hesitates to use worldly logic to evaluate revelation. This hesitation is rooted in a deep desire to have our finite, fallen reason corrected by a marvelous graced illumination from above. Balthasar wants to let the incarnate Word speak, to be attentive to the divine attributes which our philosophical logic and analogies may have overlooked or rejected, but which are manifested in the glorious revelation of Christ. Balthasar's motivation is praiseworthy. His reverence and awe before the Word revealing itself is a model for theologians. Indeed, theology on one's knees is the only way to a fruitful theology. But does Balthasar's method present an approach to divine naming which possesses both internal coherence and coherence with the Fathers and the Scholastics? Some possible solutions to this question will emerge as we consider how Balthasar attributes perfections to God.

For the moment, we can say that Balthasar recognizes both a need for negative theology and a limit to affirmation. God remains incomprehensible. Even attributes that seem to imply an intrinsic finitude will only be predicated of God within a negative theology that excludes

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[20] Ibid., 91.
[21] Ibid., 110–11, 246.
[22] *Theologik* I, 15; *Theologik* II, 87.
[23] *Theologik* II, 288.
[24] Ibid., 87.
[25] Ibid., 101–2.
[26] Ibid., 89, 91.

from him all inner-worldly experience.[27] But Balthasar has also left the door open for the possibility of attributing characteristics like sacrifice and becoming to God, attributes that philosophical negative theologies have usually identified as intrinsically material or finite, suggesting that, for Balthasar, salvation history and the intellect's graced illumination will open up a radically new perspective on nature.

Jesus Christ as the Concrete *analogia entis*

Balthasar's theology is centered on Christ as the perfection of creation manifesting his divinely ordained relationship to God,[28] the concrete analogy of being revealing all of God's attributes.[29] He is the standard with which every philosophical analogy of being must be measured: "Theological analogy sheds definitive light on what the philosophical analogy is as such."[30] In his perfect humanity Christ manifests our proper relationship of similarity and dissimilarity to God. The analogy of faith that comes through Christ is so important because creation's proper analogy to God is obscured by sin; in the words of Angela Franz Franks, "only Christ, as both divine Son and man, can express absolute Being within a worldly form."[31]

It is the hypostatic union that really makes this analogy possible. The perfect qualities and attributes of the one nature can be applied to the other only because they are united in one person.[32] This concrete *analogia entis* still presupposes a philosophical analogy of being, a natural similarity of God and creatures: "The theological analogy does not abolish the philosophical analogy."[33] However, "there is no upper limit to the concrete content that can be injected into this concept of nature . . . no creature can set arbitrary limits to what God does or could say to us . . . grace elevates and completes man in a radical way."[34]

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[27] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theodrama* IV (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 324 (*Theodramatik* III [Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Johannes Verlag, 1980], 301–2); O'Hanlon, *The Immutability of God,* 38.

[28] Angela Franz Franks, "Trinitarian *Analogia Entis* in Hans Urs von Balthasar," *The Thomist* 62 (1998): 542.

[29] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theodrama* II (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 267 (*Theodramatik* II.1 [Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Johannes Verlag, 1976], 243); Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theodrama* III (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 221 (*Theodramatik* II.2 [Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Johannes Verlag, 1978], 203).

[30] *Theology of Karl Barth,* 231.

[31] Franks, "Trinitarian *Analogia Entis*," 541, cf. 553.

[32] *Theodrama* III, 222 (*Theodramatik* II.2, 203–4).

[33] *Theology of Karl Barth,* 230; see Franks, "Trinitarian *Analogia Entis*," 542.

[34] *Theology of Karl Barth,* 236.

It should be pointed out that for Balthasar, the analogy between God's being and created being is somewhat fluid. In Christ, however, the proper analogy between finite and infinite freedom is revealed.[35] We are called to live out our freedom as a participation in Christ's freedom, which will bring us into greater harmony with our essence, just as God's freedom is in harmony with his.[36] Freedom is a power by which one determines one's position in being.[37] There is a disjunction between the analogy of being in fallen nature and the analogy of being to which we are called in grace. We can recognize here a Plotinian, Augustinian, and Bonaventurian understanding of the hierarchy of being (ontological, epistemological, and moral) in which the human being's place is somewhat fluid and temporary, in contrast to a Proclian, Dionysian, and Thomistic approach in which each being has a fairly permanent place within the hierarchy, with an absolute ontological determination and a relatively fixed epistemological and moral determination. By allying himself with the former tradition, Balthasar intensifies the radicality of the revelation of Christ as it opens up a new perspective, one that includes insights into the kind of perfections which will be attributed to God.[38]

The Economic Trinity as the Only Way to the Immanent Trinity

In Balthasar's view, statements about the immanent Trinity can only be made from the economic Trinity.[39] This principle implies the critique of classic Trinitarian analogies (like those of St. Augustine and Richard of St. Victor) that Balthasar articulates in *Theologik* II.[40] Instead of focusing on analogies in creation to describe the Trinity, one should look to the center of salvation history, especially the central event of that history, the paschal mystery.[41] While non-biblical analogies can be used in theology, they

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35 Franks, "Trinitarian *Analogia Entis*," 536; Thomas G. Dalzell, SM, *The Dramatic Encounter of Divine and Human Freedom in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (New York, Peter Lang, 1997), 48, 70–80.

36 Dalzell, *The Dramatic Encounter of Divine and Human Freedom,* 80, 98.

37 Ibid., 72–73, 97.

38 For this interpretation of the history of theology, see Richard Schenk, OP, *Die Gnade Vollendeter Endlichkeit: Zur Tranzendentaltheologischen Auslegung der Thomanischen Anthropologie* (Freiburg, Germany: Herder, 1986), 246–48, 279–80, 517–18.

39 *Theodrama* IV, 324 (*Theodramatik* III, 301–2); Thomas Rudolf Krenski, *Passio Caritatis: Trinitarische Passiologie im Werk Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Johannes Verlag, 1990), 117–18, 129.

40 *Theologik* II, 61.

41 Krenski, *Passio Caritatis*, 118; Matthew Levering, "Balthasar on Christ's Consciousness on the Cross," *The Thomist* 65 (2001), 570–71.

should be treated with great caution. *Contra* Karl Rahner, however, the economic Trinity cannot be identified with the immanent Trinity.[42] Still, the two are closely connected, so that everything in creation, including finitude, suffering, and sin, must somehow have its foundation in the Trinity.[43]

However, because the immanent Trinity is distinct from the economic Trinity, we cannot simply read off the former from the latter. Because Jesus has two distinct natures, he cannot simply represent his own divinity, as this would involve a mono-physite heresy. Not everything about Jesus' humanity can be taken as a direct revelation of God. To argue so would be to miss the crucial distinction between the form and the content of form, the distinction between form and the truth communicated by the form. Rather, Jesus manifests his relationship with the Father and transposes it into the creaturely-temporal.[44] With the purifying method of the Dionysian threefold way (affirmation, negation, eminence), the revelation of that relationship will take us to the heart of the Trinitarian mystery.

Divine Time and Space

We are now ready to study the first set of Balthasar's controversial divine attributes, which are divine time and space. The previous sections will shed much light on the method that Balthasar uses in predicating individual names of God.

The divine processions, the procession of the Son from the Father, the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, are timeless.[45] The Father is not "before" the Son, and the Son is not "after" the Father. The divine Persons are co-eternal, a thesis that Catholic dogma demands. God's time cannot include any creaturely becoming.[46] Here we have the negation of creaturely time from the life of the Trinity.

Turning to the way of eminence, however, Balthasar posits a "supertime." The first reason for this is that it maximizes divine love:

> The Father's act of surrender calls for its own area of freedom: the Son's act, whereby he receives himself from and acknowledges his indebtedness to the Father, requires its own area. . . . However intimate the relationship, it implies that the distinction between the persons is maintained. Some-

[42] *Theodrama* III, 508 (*Theodramatik* II.2, 466); O'Hanlon, *The Immutability of God,* 37.

[43] *Theodrama* V, 516 (*Theodramatik* IV, 472); Franks, "Trinitarian *Analogia Entis*," 534, 542; O'Hanlon, *The Immutability of God,* 72.

[44] *Theodrama* V, 120 (*Theodramatik* IV, 104); Peter Casarella, "The Expression and Form of the Word: Trinitarian Hermeneutics and the Sacramentality of Language in Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theology," *Renascence* 48 (1996): 115, 119.

[45] *Theologik* II, 126.

[46] *Theodrama* V, 77 (*Theodramatik* IV, 67).

> thing like infinite "duration" and infinite "space" must be attributed to the acts of reciprocal love so that the life of the *communio*, of fellowship, can develop. While the Father from all eternity utters his eternal Word, the latter does not, as it were, keep interrupting him. . . . True, all temporal notions of "before" and "after" must be kept at a distance; but absolute freedom must provide the acting area in which it is to develop. . . .[47]

A kind of "super-time" and "super-space" allows for an interchange of love and thanksgiving between the divine Persons that is analogous to an intense experience of mutual love and thanksgiving among human beings, while the traditional understanding of eternity allows only one perfect divine act of love. The latter would mean that the Son cuts off the word of the Father, does not leave him room to communicate his love for the Son. Balthasar is taking his experience of human interpersonal love as a foundation for this description of divine *communio*. The beloved must leave the lover room for self-expression, the time to speak, before responding with thanksgiving. This understanding of interpersonal love is also rooted in dialogical philosophy and the mystical experience of Adrienne von Speyr. We will elaborate on Balthasar's appropriation of this Trinitarian analogy later.

Balthasar backs up this language about God by appealing to a very novel way of interpreting Johannine theological time:

> . . . God's "abiding forever" must not be seen as a "non-time" but as a super-time that is unique to him; and this is illustrated in the fact that Christ's time mediates between God's "time" and world-time. Christ's time recapitulates and comprehends world-time, while it also reveals God's super-time. Jesus' time, particularly in John, has a kind of inner periodicity that, while of course colored by the human time in which Jesus shares, has its own intrinsic validity as a result of his relationship with the Father; in other words, it has Trinitarian significance.[48]

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[47] *Theodrama* II, 257 (*Theodramatik* II.1, 233: "Der Akt des väterlichen Sichgebens fordert seinen eigenen Freiheitsraum, der Akt des Sichempfangens und—verdankens des Sohnes den seinen . . . Der Austausch kann noch so innig sein, er fordert das Sich-Durchhalten der Differenz. Den Akten der sich austauschenden Liebe muss so etwas wie unendliche 'Dauer' und unendlicher 'Raum' gewährt werden, damit das Leben der *communio*, der Gegenseitigkeit sich entfalten kann. Während der Vater von Ewigkeit her sein ewiges Wort spricht, fällt ihm dieses nicht gleichsam immer schon ins Wort. . . . Wenn aus diesem Austausch auch jedes zeitliche Früher und Später fernzuhalten ist, muss sich die absolute Freiheit doch den Spiel-Raum gewähren, sich zu entfalten.")

[48] *Theodrama* V, 30 (*Theodramatik* IV, 24: ". . . dass Gottes 'Dauer' nicht Unzeit, sondern eine ihm eigene Über-Zeit ist, wird vor allem daran ersichtlich, dass zwischen der 'Zeit' Gottes und der Weltzeit die Zeit Christi vermittelt: die Weltzeit in sich zusammenfassend, aber auch die Über-Zeit Gottes offenbarend.

Relegating Jesus' sacred time to his human nature and excluding it from a revelation of the triune life would be an unjustifiable division of the Person of Jesus into his two natures.[49] Rather, this salvific-historical time in the Gospel of John points to Jesus' relationship with the Father. Balthasar sees an even stronger basis for this kind of exegesis in the sending of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.[50]

Thus, the role of philosophical negative theology is acknowledged in the negation of purely worldly time. However, Christ moved in a special time distinct from this purely creaturely time. We cannot negate this from the immanent Trinity based on a previous notion of the nature of eternity, since this would bypass the economic Trinity that provides the only access to the immanent Trinity. A Boethian notion of eternity would involve the importation of a non-biblical analogy and ignore analogies that the Bible itself presents, a method which does not adequately recognize Christ as the exemplar for all of creation. Only the revelation of Christ can ultimately enlighten the mind sufficiently as it strives to recognize the true nature of eternity.

Suffering Divine Love

The main exposition of Balthasar's controversial divine attributes is found in the fifth volume of *Theodrama* (volume four in the German). Early on in the work, he summarizes the difficult paradox that he maintains:

> We must resolve to see these two apparently contradictory concepts as a unity: eternal or absolute Being—and "happening." This "happening" is not a becoming in the earthly sense: it is the coming-to-be, not of something that once was not (that would be Arianism), but, evidently, of something that grounds the idea, the inner possibility and reality of a becoming. All earthly becoming is a reflection of the eternal "happening" in God, which, we repeat, is per se identical with the eternal Being or essence.[51]

Die Zeit Jesu hat, gerade by Johannes, eine Art innere Periodik, die gewiss zunächst von der Menschenzeit, an der Jesus teilnimmt, tingiert wird, aber in sich selbst durch seine Beziehung zum Vater, also trinitarisch, relevant wird").

[49] *Theologik* II, 117.

[50] *Theodrama* V, 31–32 (*Theodramatik* IV, 25–26).

[51] *Theodrama* V, 67 (*Theodramatik* IV, 59: ". . . wir müssen uns entschliessen, diese beiden scheinbar unvereinbaren Begriffe zusammenzusehen: ewiges oder absolutes Sein—und Geschehen. Ein Geschehen, das also kein Werden im innerweltlichen Sinn ist, kein Enstehen dessen, was irgendwann nicht war (das wäre Arianismus), aber offenbar doch etwas, was die Idee, die innere Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit eines Werdens fundiert. Innerwelt-liches Werden ist ein Abbild des ewigen Geschehens in Gott, das als solches—man muss das wiederholen—identisch ist mit dem ewigen Sein oder Wesen").

While Balthasar affirms the immutability of God, he also sees becoming as analogous to the divine nature. And yet, God is the eternal, fully actual Absolute. "And since God is immutable, the vitality of his 'becoming' can never be anything other than his Being. . . ."[52] Balthasar assents to the language of God's pure and infinite actuality in this and many other passages: "The eternal life that is God . . . cannot be described as a becoming. . . ."[53] Here we see the negation of attributes like *created* and becoming, suffering, and finitude, since immutability refers to the claim that God is *not* changing, and infinity points out that God is *not* finite.

Turning to the way of affirmation, Balthasar posits a kind of death on the part of the Father in generating the Son:

> In giving of himself, the Father does not give something (or even everything) that he *has* but all that he *is*—for in God there is only being, not having. So the Father's being passes over, without remainder, to the begotten Son. . . . This total self-giving, to which the Son and the Spirit respond by an equal self-giving, is a kind of "death," a first, radical "kenosis," as one might say. It is a kind of "super-death" that is a component of all love and that forms the basis in creation for all instances of "the good death," from self-forgetfulness in favor of the beloved right up to that highest love by which a man "gives his life for his friends."[54]

This explains how suffering can be possible in creation. Balthasar is operating on the premise that creaturely limitation must have its foundation in God.[55] He posits an "infinite distance" between the Father and the Son as the ground for the possibility of creation, a distance that also allows for the possibility for sin. Searching for the source of suffering, he finds it in God's own self. The suffering of the Father is the foundation for every "good death" in creation, that is, every death for the sake of love, every self-denial for the sake of the other.

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52 *Theodrama* V, 512 (*Theodramatik* IV, 468: "Auch weil Gott unveränderlich ist, kann die Lebendigkeit seines 'Werdens' nie etwas anderes sein als sein Sein . . .").

53 *Theodrama* V, 77 (*Theodramatik* IV, p/ 67: "Das ewige Leben, das Gott ist . . . kann keinesfalls als ein Werden bezeichnet werden . . .").

54 *Theodrama* V, 84 (*Theodramatik* IV, 73–74: "Die Selbstpreisgabe des Vaters, der nicht nur etwas oder alles von dem gibt, was er hat, sondern alles, was er ist (in Gott ist nur Sein und kein Haben), geht restlos auf den erzeugten Sohn hin . . . diese totale Selbstpreisgabe, die der Sohn und der Geist antwortend mitvollziehen werden, bedeutet so etwas wie einen 'Tod,' eine erste radikale 'Kenose,' wenn man will: ein Über-Tod, der als Moment in jeder Liebe liegt und innerhalb der Schöpfung alles grundlegen wird, was in ihr guter Tod sein wird: vom Sichvergessen für den Geliebten bis zu jener höchsten Liebe, die ihr 'Leben hingibt für ihre Freunde' ").

55 Ibid.; see *Theologik* II, 78.

This text also gives us a glimpse of Balthasar's a priori understanding of love: "a kind of 'super-death' that is a component of all love. . . ." Suffering is that which every lover is willing to undergo for the beloved, the ultimate sign of love. We pointed out how Balthasar's interpretation of human love relationships influenced his view of eternity. Another side of this interpretation of the nature of human love leads him to posit suffering in God. The Father's suffering is a kind of total self-emptying of his own self into the Son, a giving of his whole divine essence to another. This suffering is appropriately predicated of the Father because of the nature of love, which must be in the divine Persons most of all.

Balthasar backs up this radical notion of divine suffering with a number of authorities. First, God is described as crying, complaining, in pain, and in sorrow over eighty times in the Old Testament, far outnumbering the statements about God's immutability in the old covenant.[56] Second, passages about God's compassion and mercy like John 3:16 and Romans 8:32 ought to be taken seriously, and ought to be seen as standing behind that of the earthly Jesus, meaning they should not be restricted to Jesus' humanity. The economic revelation of the Trinity seems to demand some kind of suffering in God.[57] Third, a number of Church Fathers, including Tertullian, Cyril of Alexandria, and Origen posited affects or suffering in God.[58] Thomas G. Weinandy has also recently pointed out the place of divine suffering in patristic thought, especially in Origen.[59] This suffering cannot be externally imposed on God, as it cannot occur without the assent of the divine will. God chooses to be affected by suffering in creation out of his love for all beings. Fourth, Balthasar approaches suffering as a kind of perfection based on the mystical visions of Speyr, who reported mystical experiences of divine suffering. Her writings become a support for Balthasar's unique approach to the economic Trinity as revelatory of the immanent Trinity: "In the Christian context, sacrifice, suffering, the Cross and death are only the reflection of tremendous realities in the Father, in heaven, in eternal life."[60]

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[56] *Theodrama* V, 214–15 (*Theodramatik* IV, 193).

[57] Dalzell, *The Dramatic Encounter of Divine and Human Freedom,* 169; O'Hanlon, *The Immutability of God*, 38.

[58] *Theodrama* V, 217–221 (*Theodramatik* IV, 195–99); see Krenski, *Passio Caritatis,* 62–70.

[59] Thomas G. Weinandy, OFM, Cap., *Does God Suffer?* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 97–102.

[60] *Theodrama* V, 511 (*Theodramatik* IV, 467: " 'Opfer, Leiden, Kreuz und Tod sind christlich betrachtet nur die Widerspiegelung von gewaltigen Wirklichkeiten im Vater, im Himmel, im ewigen Leben . . .' ").

But is the attribution of suffering to God simply metaphorical language used to bring out the intensity of divine love? Such is the interpretation of Gerard O'Hanlon and Thomas Dalzell.[61] But Balthasar himself does not describe God's suffering as metaphorical. "So we can say that, if human love is enlivened by the element of surprise, something analogous to it cannot be excluded from divine love. It is as if the Son born of the Father 'from the outset surpasses the Father's wildest expectations.' "[62] The language of divine surprise is much more than an attempt to describe the utter fullness of God's love without predicating some kind of actual surprise in God. It seems that something analogous to surprise as experienced in this world is also found in God.

Still, could Balthasar not be using the term "analogous" in a very loose way here? Balthasar's poetic and dialectical rhetoric often make it difficult to grasp what he is trying to say. However, his *Theologik* II includes a fascinating passage on the nature of the revelation of Christ and its relationship to metaphor.

> It was already mentioned that all three spheres are claimed for the Word revealing itself as flesh: it is the "expression" of God (Heb 1:3), the "image" of the invisible God (Col 1:15, 2 Cor 4:4) and the "Word" of God (Jn 1, 1:14, Rev 19:13). Here there is no hierarchy anymore, rather the three descriptions are equal, stand next to one another and are even in one another. Everything in the Word made flesh is an expression of the Father in the Holy Spirit. . . .[63]

Balthasar then turns to the work of E. Jüngel on metaphor, which is here taken in the Aristotelian sense of "translation into another form of speech."[64] Balthasar refuses to attribute such metaphor to the revelation of Christ, countering that grace gives the believer the light "to go beyond the boundaries of the metaphorical image to an understanding of the

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[61] O'Hanlon, *Immutability of God,* 141–43; Dalzell, *Dramatic Encounter,* 169–71.

[62] *Theodrama* V, 79, quoting Speyr (*Theodramatik* IV, 69: "Darum ist ein Analogon zu dem, was in menschlicher Liebe das belebende Moment der Überraschung ist, aus der göttlichen nicht auszuschliessen. Der aus dem Vater geborene Sohn übertrifft gleichsam 'die kühnsten Erwartungen des Vaters von vornherein' ").

[63] *Theologik* II, 246: "Doch wurde schon angemerkt, dass für das als Fleisch sich offenbarende Wort alle drei Sphären in Anspruch genommen werden: es ist 'Ausdruck' Gottes (Heb 1:3), 'Bild' des unsichtbaren Gottes (Col 1:15, 2 Cor 4:4) und 'Wort' Gottes (Jn 1, 1:14, Rev 19:13). Hier herrscht keine Stufung mehr, viehlmehr stehen die drei Bezeichnungen ebenbürtig neben—ja ineinander. Alles am fleischgewordenen Wort ist Ausdruck des Vaters im Heiligen Geist. . . ."

[64] Ibid., 249: "Übersetzung in eine andere Sprachform."

primordial meaning."[65] He concludes that "to describe language in this context as metaphor at all means to drop out of the realm opened up by God's revelation. The creaturely images . . . become transparent and included in the sacrificial love of God."[66] The grace of Christ elevates the earthly language of the God-man, language that includes "expression," "image," and "word," to the divine. Thus, to interpret Christ's revelations of divine time, suffering, faith, and surprise as metaphorical would be to veil what Christ himself never veiled, to close the curtain of "likenesses" that the disciples finally overcame in the Last Supper discourse of John.[67] Instead, the divine modalities of expectation and fulfillment, of letting the other be, of faith and hope, of surprise, time and space, are "positive features of the eternal, free, animated life of the Trinity."[68]

That Balthasar posits suffering as a properly analogous divine attribute is an interpretation held by Rudolf Krenski, Margaret Turek, and Anne Hunt. Krenski understands Balthasar to predicate suffering of God, pointing to a *similitudo* within a greater *dissimilitudo*, so that there is an identity of the suffering revealed in Christ and the suffering of God, although the latter's is dissimilar because it is a freely accepted *passio*.[69] Turek sees the predication of self-yielding surrender, weakness, dependency, and expectancy as perfections included in the Father's infinite freedom.[70] Hunt refers to Balthasar's analogies from the paschal mystery to the immanent Trinity as "not just metaphor but analogy properly speaking."[71]

Balthasar certainly realized the immense tension that his thought introduces into theology's image of God. Applying this new notion of eternity as time-fullness, he states, "There is a primal beginning in which the Father is 'alone,' even if he was never without the Son, for

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[65] Ibid.: "um das Gleichnisbild über seine Grenzen hinaus zu seinem urbildlichen Sinn hin zu verstehen."

[66] Ibid., 250: "in diesem Rahmen Sprache überhaupt als Metapher zu bezeichnen, fällt aus dem in Gottes Offenbarung eröffneten Kreis. Die geschöpflichen Bilder . . . werden in die Sprache der sich entäussernden Liebe Gottes durchsichtig und darin einbezogen."

[67] Ibid.

[68] *Theodrama* V, 98 (*Theodramatik* IV, 86: ". . . lauter Positivitäten der ewigen freien Lebendigkeit in der Trinität.").

[69] Krenski, *Passio Caritatis,* 362–70. See Schenk, "Ist die Rede vom leidenden Gott theologisch zu vermeiden?" 235–36.

[70] Margaret M. Turek, "'As the Father has Loved Me' (Jn 15:9): Balthasar's Theodramatic Approach to a Theology of God the Father," *Communio* 26 (1999): 300–304.

[71] Anne Hunt, "Psychological Analogy and Paschal Mystery in Trinitarian Theology," *Theological Studies* 59 (1998): 215.

ultimately it is he, unique and alone, who begets the Son."[72] The Father somehow sacrifices his solitude to generate the Son, even though the divine Persons must be co-eternal, since their divinity requires their eternity. Balthasar himself describes "emotions" as actually existing in the divinity:

> Furthermore, such forms of the eternal life as mercy, patience, and so on, can be understood on the analogy of human emotions, but this must not involve attributing "mutability" to God . . . the Bible, in both Old and New Testaments, look *through* this attitude and discern beyond a quality of the Divinity as such.[73]

Balthasar also presents a kind of divine generation, in which, although the Son proceeds from the Father, the Father has no assurances of the Son's response to him:

> There are no in-built securities or guarantees in the absolute self-giving of the Father to Son, of Son to Father, and of both to the Spirit. Humanly speaking, it is a total surrender of all possessions, including Godhead. From the giver's point of view, therefore, it could appear to be an absolute "risk. . . ."[74]

The Father makes a certain wager in generating the Son, "hoping" that the Son will assent to the will of the Father. The Father somehow does not know what the Son will do; he is filled with expectation; he waits for a response of obedience. This anxious "waiting" of the Father will become one of the bases for divine love. It is one instance of the Father's suffering, the willingness to be rejected by his own Son, the "decision" to give up his solitude in favor of *communio*. And yet Balthasar admits that the divine processions are not a matter of the Father's decision, but consequent upon

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72 *Theodrama* V, 94, quoting Speyr (*Theodramatik* IV, 82: " 'Es gibt einen Uranfang, in welchem der Vater 'allein' ist, auch wenn er nie ohne den Sohn war, denn schliesslich ist er es, der den Sohn zeugt, in seiner Einzigkeit und Alleinheit' ").

73 *Theodrama* V, 222 (*Theodramatik* IV, 200: "Ferner können, ja müssen Formen der ewigen göttlichen Lebendigkeit (wie Erbarmen, Gedult, usf.) in Analogie zu menschlichen Affekten verstanden werden, ohne dass dadurch 'Veränderlichkeit' in Gott einzuzeichnen wäre . . . die Bibel Alten und Neuen Bundes blickt zweifellos durch seine ökonomische Haltung *hindurch* auf eine Eigenschaft der Gottheit an sicht selbst.").

74 *Theodrama* V, 245 (*Theodramatik* IV, 221: "In der absoluten Selbsthingabe des Vaters an den Sohn, des Sohnes an den Vater, beider an den Geist sind keinerlei 'Sicherungen' eingebaut; es geht, menschlich gesprochen, um den restlosen Verlust des 'ganzen Habens und Besitzens,' die Gottheit einschliesslich, um etwas also, das vom Schenkenden her wie ein absolutes 'Wagnis' erscheinen könnte . . .").

the very nature of the Godhead.[75] He thereby negates any creaturely wager of God, since the Father did not choose to take a chance and generate the Son rather than to remain alone. Nevertheless, an eminent wager remains, one that is beyond our comprehension.

Still, the divine Persons are co-eternal. How then can the Father be said to be "waiting" for the Son's response? Furthermore, how could it even be possible that one divine Person reject another? This paradox may seem to pose a contradiction. But for Balthasar, such an approach is needed in order to acknowledge the divine freedom of each person of the Trinity:

> In begetting the Son, the Father does not determine him; rather "he endows him with freedom to explore the infinite realm of his own free Sonship, of his own divine sovereignty." Accordingly, it is the Father's will to be "outstripped, for all eternity, by the Son's love. Faith is, as it were, the space that must be opened up so that there is room for infinite fulfillment, beyond the limits of all expectation." "Faith is constant readiness, the basis of all love."[76]

What is the economic basis for the predication of this kind of freedom in the Godhead? First, the incarnated Son of God displayed an assent to the Father's will, one that did not come automatically and seems, following the Johannine narrative, to not have been fully desired at first. Jesus Christ's decision to be obedient to the Father mirrors a divine reality.[77]Balthasar is applying the principle that Christ reveals not his own divinity but his relationship to the Father, which he can do because Christ "is the *revelation of the Trinity* . . . 'he lives in a fully Trinitarian way yet is a man among men.' "[78] The last two citations from *Theodrama* V also include Speyr's exegesis of the New Testament several times: Balthasar consistently gives Speyr's mystical understanding of the New Testament a great deal of authority. Finally, we can recognize Balthasar's adoption of themes from dialogical philosophy, where the perfection of love and *communio* involves letting the other be other.

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75 *Theodrama* V, 88 (*Theodramatik* IV, 77).

76 *Theodrama* V, 98 (*Theodramatik* IV, 86: "Der Vater legt den Sohn in der Zeugung nicht fest, 'er lässt ihn vielmehr frei in den unendlichen Raum seiner eigenen sohnhaften Freiheit, seiner eigenen göttlichen Souveränität,' deshalb will sich der Vater 'in alle Ewigkeit von der Liebe des Sohnes übertreffen lassen. Der Glaube ist wie der Raum, der geöffnet werden muss, damit Platz für unendliche Erfüllungen über alle begrenzte Erwartung hinaus geschaffen wird.' 'Glaube ist die stete Bereitschaft, und so die Basis aller Liebe' ").

77 *Theodrama* V, 123 (*Theodramatik* IV, 106).

78 *Theodrama* V, 121 (*Theodramatik* IV, 104: "Der Sohn ist *trinitarische Offenbarung* . . . 'er lebt vollkommen trinitarisch, obwohl er Mensch unter Menschen wird' ").

Thus the Father who gives the Son divine freedom, a freedom that integrates every perfection found in human freedom, must respect the autonomy of the Son, letting the Son be God in his way, giving him "room" to maneuver, the "space" to respond to the Father's outpouring of himself. Thus the Father has faith that the Son will respond with obedience, which he does. The Father is overwhelmed by the immensity of the Son's response, the Son's thankfulness for being generated and adoration of the Father's greatness: "Again and again, the Father and the Son are more in their mutual relationship than they themselves would have supposed."[79] The absolute negation of such freedom, faith, and surprise from God in philosophical negative theology is thus overcome by a reverent obedience to the revelation of Christ interpreted through mystical experience and dialogical philosophy. The content of nature expounded by philosophy not yet purified by the obedience of faith is radically transformed.

Let us now step back and consider the overall Trinitarian analogy at work in Balthasar's thought. This can only be approached through his critique of the Augustinian Trinitarian analogy and his adoption of the analogy of the family for the triune life. Balthasar maintains that St. Augustine's analogies of *mens, notitia, amor,* and *memoria, intellectus, voluntas* are inadequate. The former remains accidental in relation to the substance, since each particular act of knowing and loving is non-substantial for the human person. The latter never moves beyond one person, as they represent the faculties of one soul.[80] Here Balthasar points to Augustine's emphasis on the unity of essence achieved through his analogies, one that seems to leave an inadequate representation of the three persons. Balthasar's objection reminds us of the inherent weakness of every Trinitarian analogy. Either the unity of the divine essence is emphasized at the expense of the plurality of persons or vice versa.

Balthasar puts a much greater emphasis on the distinction of persons, due to (1) his understanding of Jesus Christ as the concrete *analogia entis* who reveals not so much his own divinity but his relationship to the Father, which manifests a Trinity that dialogues as the incarnate Jesus dialogues with the Father; (2) the Trinitarian visions of Speyr; and (3) his adoption of the theme of personhood as intrinsically dialogical from philosophers like Martin Buber. Following an exposition of the dialogical philosophers Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, and Ferdinand Ebner, Balthasar compares the Augustinian analogy to the analogy of the family, which is "the simple but necessary supplement of the previously described dialogic,

[79] *Theodrama* V, 515, quoting Speyr (*Theodramatik* IV, 471: ". . . 'immer wieder sind sich Vater und Sohn gegenseitig mehr als sie selber vermutet hatten' ").

[80] *Theologik* II, 35–37.

and remains despite its clear differences the best imago Trinitatis given to creation. It overcomes the enclosure of self that is found in the Augustinian concepts. . . ."[81] Not only does the analogy of the family avoid the isolated individualism of Augustine's approach, but the latter's analogy is not found in Scripture, and so should only be adopted with extreme care, since theology should always remain close to Scripture.[82] Balthasar's enthusiasm for this interpersonal analogy does not stop him from offering a critique of Richard of St. Victor's intrasubjective Trinitarian analogy. Still, Balthasar's own understanding of God seems to be much closer to Richard's than to Augustine's. As Matthew Levering has pointed out, Balthasar's difficulty with Richard's approach is caused not so much by the latter's use of an analogy from three human persons but rather by Richard's failure to ground this analogy in salvation history.[83]

So Balthasar's preferred model for triune love is that of interpersonal human love. Whereas Augustine spoke of mind loving its knowledge, Balthasar insists on an analogy of love between one human person and another, the love of parents for their child. Using this model, Balthasar presents joy and wonder as part of the mutual love of the divine Persons:

> Above all we must fend off the "all-knowing" attitude . . . this eviscerates the joys of expectation, of hope and fulfillment, the joys of giving and receiving, and the even deeper joys of finding oneself in the other and of being constantly over-fulfilled by him; and finally—since we are speaking of God—it destroys the possibility of mutual acknowledgment and adoration in the Godhead. . . . [W]e cannot say that a particular hypostasis is rich in possessing and poor in giving away, for the fullness of blessedness lies in both giving and receiving both the gift and the giver. Since these acts are eternal, there is no end to their newness, no end to being surprised and overwhelmed by what is essentially immeasurable. The fundamental philosophical act, wonder, need not be banished from the realm of the Absolute.[84]

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[81] Ibid., 56: "die einfache aber notwendige Ergänzung der vorher geschilderten Dialogik, bleibt trotz allen klaren Verschiedenheiten die sprechendste dem Geschöpf eingestiftete imago Trinitatis. Sie übersteigt nicht nur die Ichgeschlossenheit des augustinischen Konzepts. . . ."

[82] *Theodrama* III, 508 (*Theodramatik* II.2, 466).

[83] Levering, "Balthasar on Christ's Consciousness on the Cross," 569–70.

[84] *Theodrama* II, 257–58 (*Theodramatik* II.1, 233–34: "Vor allem ist daraus jedes für Menschen tödliche 'Je-schon-Wissen' . . . fernzuhalten, womit die Freuden des Erwartens, des Erhoffens und Erfüllens, die Freuden des Von-einander-Empfangens, tiefer noch die Freuden des sich im Andern immer neu Findens, des steten übertreffenden Erfülltwerdens durch ihn, schliesslich—da wir von Gott sprechen—der gegenseitigen Anerkenntnis und Anbetung des Gottseins verunmöglicht

This kind of divine love is made possible by Balthasar's understanding of eternity and his refusal to fully negate attributes found in creation that seem to be intrinsically tied to limitations or temporality. A contradiction is avoided as long as these new divine characteristics of surprise and joy are posited as perfections within a dialectical theology, as part of God's infinite actuality. The human experience of intense interpersonal love, one that overwhelms the lover with the goodness and mutual love of the other, becomes a divine perfection.

But how can the Father be surprised by the Son, rejoicing in the unexpected love of the Son for the Father, and vice versa? Balthasar answers that Divine surprise occurs through one person seeing a new side of the other. Citing Speyr, he states: "It is characteristic of 'genuine love' that it 'cannot tire of looking at the beloved. . . . Thus the Son, in the Father's presence, is for ever beholding him in a new way. . . .' "[85] But how can one person see a "new side" of the other if each is eternally and infinitely in act? Because each person keeps a mystery about himself from the other: "[T]he partners are perfectly transparent to one another, and they possess a kind of impenetrable 'personal' mystery."[86] One can see Balthasar's dialectic at work in this last passage. In order to retain continuity with the theological tradition of the Fathers and the Scholastics, as well as the doctrine demanded by the ecumenical councils, he has to posit the absolute omniscience of each divine Person to protect the divinity of each. Thus, creaturely surprise must be negated. Yet his interpretation of Scripture through the lens of the concrete *analogia entis*, the mystical experience of Speyr, and dialogical philosophy lead him to posit an apparent contradiction: Divine Persons who always fully know one another and yet keep a secret to themselves in order to reveal it to the other, resulting in the surprise and joy of the other. This surprise includes the Son's "decision" to answer the Father's incredible gift of self with thanksgiving.[87] The

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würden . . . man kann nicht sagen, eine Hypostase sei reich als Besitzende und arm als Verschenkende, denn erst im Geben wie auch im Entgegennehmen des Geschenkten und Schenkenden liegt die Fülle der Seligkeit. Da diese Akte ewig sind, ist das Neuseins, des Überrascht- und Über-wältigtwerdens durch das Masslose kein Ende. Der philosophische Grundakt des Staunens braucht aus dem Absoluten nicht verbannt zu werden").

[85] *Theodrama* V, 79 (*Theodramatik* IV, 68: "Es gehört zur 'echten Liebe,' 'sich am Geliebten nicht sattsehen zu können . . . Wenn der Sohn, vor dem Vater stehend, ihn doch immer wieder neu sieht . . .' ").

[86] *Theodrama* II, 258 (*Theodramatik* II.1, 234: ". . . liegt in diesem göttlichen Austausch oder Gespräch immer beides: voll-kommene Durchsichtigkeit füreinander und dennoch so etwas wie ein unlüftbares 'personales' Geheimnis").

[87] *Theodrama* V, 508–9 (*Theodramatik* IV, 465).

Son is so filled with this gratefulness that he wants to be able to give the Father something "of his own." Returning the love that springs from the divine essence would be to return what was given. So the Son becomes incarnate, in fact: " 'He must do this so that he can possess something, so that he can have something to give away,' "[88] that he might "prove" his love for the Father. So he "gives up" his divinity and becomes man, in order to present a new gift to the Father, one not already in the divine essence.[89] And yet, despite the expectation and surprise present in the relationship of the divine Persons, the now of fulfilled expectation already *is*, eternally: "What is 'now' always was, and it is so full that it is unsurpassable . . . in such a way that expectation and fulfillment exactly coincide."[90] This is the paradox of an eternally fulfilled expectation, joined to a kind of faith that the Son will respond to the Father's self-emptying with love.

The themes of suffering love, faith, and surprise all reveal Balthasar's understanding of receptivity as a perfection, and here we mean a receptivity that includes far more than just the fact that the Son's being is from another. By attributing suffering to the Father, an event mirrored in the Jesus' abandonment on the Cross, Balthasar appears to posit the ability to be negatively affected by another as a divine perfection. The Father takes a risk in generating the Son, giving up his solitude. He gives the Son true divine sovereignty, which apparently does not involve the Son's necessary assent to the Father's will. Thus, the Father must be open to receive rejection. But the Father has faith that the Son will say yes to him, and the reception of this assent is also a perfection. Finally, the surprise involved in divine love means that each person must be open to receive a new insight into the other person, open to receive an unexpected love that overwhelms every expectation.

Balthasar emphasizes the perfection of this receptivity for a new love:

> [C]onceiving and letting be are just as essential as giving. In fact, without this receptive letting be . . . the giving itself is impossible. . . . Hence there is "no less love in receiving than in giving. Perhaps there is even more, since what is received and conceived is divine."[91]

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[88] *Theodrama* V, 516, quoting Speyr (*Theodramatik* IV, 472: ". . . 'er muss es tun, um etwas zu besitzen, was er verschenken kann . . .' ").

[89] Ibid.

[90] *Theodrama* V, 126, quoting Speyr (*Theodramatik* IV, 109: "Das Jetzt war immer schon da, und es ist so voll, dass es uneinholbar ist . . . so, dass Erwartung und Erfüllung übereinfallen' wobei die zukommende Erfüllung die Erwartung je übererfüllt").

[91] *Theodrama* V, 86–87, quoting Speyr (*Theodrama* IV, 75–77: "Das Empfangen und Geschehenlassen ist für den Begriff der absoluten Liebe ebenso wesentlich

Balthasar finds this complementary activity and receptivity in the Trinity, one that includes the reception of a love from the other which is somehow greater than expected. This receptivity includes a kind of new knowledge that one divine person shares with another, one that propels God's love to new heights. The Son's self-revelation of a mysterious side of himself to the Father is received with joy and surprise, spurring the Father on to a greater love for the Son, who is filled with wonder and awe. Balthasar sees this kind of dialogical receptivity as analogous to the reception of new knowledge and love which is a necessary element of any fruitful interpersonal love relationship on the human level. But all of these divine attributes are predicated in an eminent way, following the way of negation that excludes all strictly creaturely receptivity, surprise, and potentiality.

Review

Balthasar's method of divine naming can be summarized thus. First, philosophy is indispensable, yet it must be elevated and perhaps radically transformed by grace. Second, negative theology is also necessary, but a philosophical negative theology cannot be allowed to exclude certain characteristics from the process of divine naming, if supernatural revelation points in another direction. This naturally leads to the third point, that only the revelation of Christ can determine the true nature of potentiality and finitude. Fourth, the economic Trinity must be the basis for any description of the immanent Trinity, and so one must look to Christ as the revealer of his relationship to the Father. Fifth, an understanding of true love as *communio*, as letting the other be, giving the other freedom, a doctrine of love inspired by dialogical philosophy and the visions of Speyr, is a hermeneutical key in the approach to supernatural revelation. The Trinitarian analogy of the family is closely connected to this. The first two steps take away the restriction on the predication of suffering and the related attributes we have discussed. Christ is the one standard for all analogies and doctrines of analogy. He reveals his relationship to the Father. However, this revelation must be interpreted, which is where the influence of dialogical philosophy and the mysticism of Speyr come in. Thus suffering, time, surprise, and other attributes are recognized as analogous perfections. Their creaturely modalities are negated of God, followed by the attribution of "super-death," "super-time," and so on. The eminent way in which suffering, sacrifice, and other attributes are present in God is beyond our comprehension, yet we must,

wie das Geben, das ohne das empfangende Geschehenlassen . . . gar nicht zu geben vermöchte. . . . Also liegt 'nicht weniger Liebe im Nehmen als im Geben. Vielleicht sogar mehr, weil das Empfangene göttlich ist' ").

in obedience to divine revelation, maintain that these are perfections that are really and analogously present in the being and life of the Trinity.

Critique

We will conclude with a threefold critique of Balthasar's approach to divine naming, regarding his notions of (1) Christ as the concrete *analogia entis* which is the standard for every other analogy, (2) Christ as revealing his relationship to the Father, and (3) modes of potentiality such as surprise and suffering as perfections.

The teaching that Christ is the concrete *analogia entis* could be interpreted in a way to which every Christian would be forced to assent; for example, in the sense that reason must be obedient to faith, so that every philosophical analogy owes a certain obedience to supernaturally revealed analogies. The understanding of the content of supernatural revelation, however, itself requires reason and philosophical analogies. We must bring a philosophical understanding of humanity to the revelation of Christ, and while this understanding must be perfected by grace, it must include true philosophical insights into human nature. We cannot say what is creaturely and what is divine if we refuse to distinguish the content of the revelation of Christ and the humanity of Christ. Without a philosophical *analogia entis* that plays a determining role in the interpretation of revelation, the image and the original would fuse into one, and we would have no way of distinguishing the two. The very notion of Christ's humanity presumes a pretheological understanding of what humanity is, which would have to include certain attributes, some of which would be recognized as perfections, others as limitations. Jesus himself did not teach us in his earthly life how to distinguish between the manifestation of his humanity as humanity and the manifestation of his humanity as a revelation of God and the divine perfections. Rather, he presumed knowledge gained from the created order, an order that was instituted through the eternal Logos himself.

Balthasar seems to have sensed the problem we have mentioned, admitting that Jesus cannot simply represent his own divinity, as this would involve a mono-physite heresy. The solution for Balthasar is to approach Jesus as manifesting his relationship with the Father, one that Christ transposes into the creaturely-temporal. The problem is that Jesus has a twofold relationship with the Father: as man and as the eternal Son of God. Hence, Jesus' relationship with the Father as the Son of God can only be understood if Jesus is manifesting his divinity. Balthasar gives priority to the manifestation of the relationship to the Father over the manifestation of Christ's own divinity. But the two are inseparable. Balthasar, in fact, recog-

nized the need to distinguish the two natures of Christ. Can this be done, however, without an *analogia entis* that is brought to the reception of revelation, an analogy that enables the believer to distinguish the creaturely from the divine, the limited as limited and the limited as imperfect perfection? It seems that instead of turning to an *analogia entis* which is not already radically transformed by the *analogia fidei* though not disobedient to it, an *analogia entis* that both shapes the *analogia fidei* and is shaped by it, Balthasar turns to Christ as manifesting his filial relationship. Unfortunately, the problem of distinguishing perfections from limitations remains, and we are still without a sufficient hermeneutical principle to recognize these. Jesus' relationship to the Father in his divinity is distinct from his relationship to the Father in his humanity (Jn 10,30: "The Father and I are one"; Jn 14,28: "The Father is greater than I"). Can this distinction be recognized without letting the *analogia entis* play a greater role in the understanding of revelation?

The third critique concerns Balthasar's transformation of attributes (like suffering) into analogous divine perfections, attributes that are experienced in this life as potentialities. He states that potentiality in creation can be something highly positive, and that there is a vibrant becoming in God that is nothing but being.[92] Here, potency and becoming are treated as positives and partial perfections either because they already include actuality in some way or because potency as such and becoming as such are now seen as perfections. In the former case, we are simply extracting actuality from mixed potency and becoming, so that calling potency and becoming perfections is a kind of equivocation, since we are not really predicating perfection of potency as such but of the actual element of partially actualized potencies. But in the first of the *Theodrama* passages just cited, Balthasar suggests that he is also thinking of the latter case, of passive potency as perfection. This would mean that potency as such is act as such, and becoming as such is being as such. If this is so, then has the order of creation not been reduced to the order of grace?[93] Is theology still using philosophical concepts and categories, or is it creating its own?[94]

These questions are of the utmost importance. The intelligibility of Christian revelation is at stake. NV

[92] *Theodrama* V, 90, 512 (*Theodramatik* IV, 79, 468).
[93] *Theology of Karl Barth,* 126.
[94] Ibid., 85.

Metaphysics and Mysticism

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I

THE GROWING and unflagging interest shown these recent decades in Plotinus and Neo-platonism, as well as the development in the west of studies devoted to the rich heritage of Indian thought, once more brings to the forefront the question of the relation between philosophy—above all metaphysics—and mysticism. As for Plotinus, we have a better insight into the force of his genius and the originality of a mental effort that was completely magnetized by a transcognitive experience, so to speak, of contact with the One.

What does such an experience signify, especially as regards the metaphysical quest? The answer presupposes that we first address a certain number of preliminary problems. To start with, we must arrive at a common understanding of the very nature of metaphysics and mysticism. Though the definitions of both give rise to debates where a great deal is at stake, space does not permit us to enter into these debates at this point. The definitions I shall propose, without explicitly justifying them, will, I hope, allow us to proceed with our reflection. They require the examination of a series of questions that we cannot do otherwise but ask.

Should metaphysics be propaedeutic to mysticism and serve as a kind of preliminary exercise to mysticism, understood as experience of the object? Or, on the contrary, should such an experience not be at the root of metaphysics, thereby making it a kind of conceptual thematization? Is there not continuity, an unbroken progression, and hence homogeneity, linking metaphysics with mysticism, with the result that mysticism marks the natural, normal crowning of metaphysics? And, supposing such to be the case, must we conclude that there is a need for

the mystical experience imbedded in the very nature of metaphysics? We shall weigh these questions.

This quandary is of the utmost interest to metaphysics, but our consideration must begin with anthropology. And, in anthropology, two types of questions must be asked. The first type concerns the nature and structures of human knowledge. The second, to which we shall return later, is of the existential and historical order. These questions concern the concrete conditions of the exercise of knowing and more directly of the exercise of the metaphysical quest in mankind's historical situation.

The status of man's metaphysical knowledge relates to the fact that man knows by drawing his concepts from sense data through a process of abstraction. This is what we mean when we say that the connatural object of human knowledge is the essence of bodily things. In virtue of our nature composed of a body and spiritual soul, these are the objects with which our mind feels at home, so to speak. But this connatural object of our mind is not its adequate object. Because it is a spiritual faculty, the human intellect, according to the highest and most purified degree of abstraction that it is capable of, attains the transcendentals: the true, the good, the one, and, above all, being, in all their universal fullness. However, it first attains this being in the analogues that are connatural to it by ridding them of all materiality. The intellect attains it secondly by way of analogy as realized in purely spiritual creatures and, still further, in the supreme analogue, God, . . . *ipsum esse subsistens* . . . and "cause of being," as St. Thomas puts it.

Thus we grasp the paradoxical status of metaphysics in man. The intellect is capable of grasping being in all its analogical fullness. Therein lies its extraordinary power and greatness. But it attains the highest analogues by beginning with the essences of lower analogues, which are bodily beings composed of form and matter. Therein lies the root of its limits and inferiority. A sign of this inferiority is that at the terminus of the process of the concept's abstract elaboration there is the need for a *conversio ad phantasmata*, a condition for our intellectual knowledge of singular concrete beings.[1]

None of the foregoing owes anything to Kant. But it is not beside the point to note here that Kant, who lacked the metaphysical perception of being as such and its analogy, set limits that characterize our imperfect mode of knowing the highest realities, the building blocks of human reason that determine the very content of its object. But it is one thing to know a higher reality imperfectly if yet in truth, and another to assert that,

[1] Cf. Saint Thomas, *ST,* I, 84, 7.

by restricting it, this imperfection determines the field of knowable things. Nor is it beside the point to observe that it is on this point that Hegel expressed his anti-Kantian reaction most vigorously. For Hegel, there is no true knowledge unless it is perfect knowledge, either as regards the object known—the Absolute—or as regards the mode of attaining this object. There comes into play here the Hegelian consideration of the limit. The limit, or finiteness, is always a provisional "moment" such that the dialectical process that is immanent in the Absolute itself and in its self-knowledge is a process of transgressing the limit.

This position has a direct bearing on the question of mysticism, for Hegel attributes to speculative *Logic,* which in fact is metaphysics, the ability to know the Absolute itself through identification with the process of this Absolute's self-positioning. With this, Hegel, while transposing it into the key of dialectics, harkens back to the ambition of Spinoza. For both thinkers mysticism is useless since its object—a kind of identification with the Absolute—is the same as that of philosophy. The outlook is one of monism.

For our purposes, the consequences of Kantianism are just as negative, for with Kant we begin to see the rise of philosophies of feeling. Since reason is incapable of gaining access, albeit imperfectly, to being in all its fullness right up to the Absolute, man will ask another faculty, *Gemüt* or *Gefühl,* to grant him access thereto. This opens the door to the emotional and with it, and all too soon, the irrational. Mysticism, without any ties to reason and truth, thus becomes a kind of substitute for outlawed metaphysics.

It is therefore by an ascending path and in an imperfect manner of knowing that the human intellect reaches the highest realities. Because these realities are the highest, knowledge of them finalizes and crowns the cognitive undertaking of the metaphysician; to know God is the end toward which every created intellect tends with an impetus that belongs to its very nature. Here we can gauge the considerable scope of St. Thomas's assertion: Knowledge of God, however imperfect, has more worth than the perfect knowledge of lower beings. This assertion sheds a decisive light on the meaning of the intellectual quest as well as on what should give predominant inspiration to any culture. It puts the primacy of truth at the foundation.

In this process, the intellect reflects upon itself and becomes aware of its own imperfect manner of knowing. The critique of the metaphysical knowledge of God rests upon the distinction between what is signified and the manner of signifying *(quid significatur, modus significandi).* Our intellect knows that it is unable to grasp the essence of God in itself. This

is what the Thomistic formula expresses: Of God we do not know what He is *(quid est)* but that He is *(quia est)*. Of course, to say of God (as of anything, for that matter) that He is, we must know something, even in an imperfect way, of what He is. Such an understanding, which enjoys a keen sense of transcendence, allows for no traces of agnosticism.

Imperfect knowledge on an ascending path involves the apophatic way of thinking. Metaphysics requires it, especially in its higher part, natural theology.

The notion of pure perfections, such as the good, the beautiful, the just, does not carry with it any intrinsic limitation, and we grasp the pure perfections first of all in their lower analogues that are connatural to us. Since they do not possess in their intelligible content any imperfection, we legitimately attribute them to God by way of causality. A perfection found in the effect is found *a fortiori* and necessarily in the cause. Such an affirmation, then, constitutes the first step in the undertaking.

But immediately our mind perceives through analogy that the manner in which this perfection exists in God is infinitely higher than the way it exists in creatures. Such is the *via negationis* or *via remotionis*. It has to do with divesting the perfection, encountered first in creatures, of all the limitations with which it is clad, for these limitations could in no way be applied to God. The divine mode in which these perfections are actual wholly escapes us, so that in the end we know God as unknown. To know God, St. Thomas will also say, is to know that we do not know what He is in Himself:[2] An "unknowing that knows," an unknowing that is not the negation of knowing but the height of knowing, since by it knowing is surpassed. Actually, the *via negationis* is not its own end, since it cannot be disassociated from the *via eminentiae*, which is like the intellect's silent adoration before the mystery of the divine transcendence. It is as if wonder, which is the starting point of philosophical questioning, were here the end-result, as it were, of knowing. The intellect's natural attitude of adoration of the mystery tends of itself to result in a religious attitude. But what it expresses is the awestruck sense of the infinite distance that separates every creature, that separates every created intellect and its means of knowing from the divine essence. Still, such a religious attitude fails to reach the mystical dimension, since mysticism signifies an experience of the Absolute.

At this point, then, we must stress on the distinction between metaphysics and mysticism. We must never lose sight of this distinction, even if we have not yet said all there is to say.

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[2] *In Div. Nom.,* c. VII, lect. 4.

II

The foregoing relates to human knowledge insofar as it is specifically human. This knowledge depends upon the substantial union of the spiritual soul with the body and upon the role of the images required for the actualization, by means of abstraction and conceptualization, of the potential intelligibility contained in sensible objects. But this consideration remains to be completed.

The human being is a showcase of the laws and requirements of every created being. In a series of chapters in Book Three of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, where he treats of the good and of God as the final cause of all things and, consequently, of beatitude for spiritual creatures, St. Thomas enumerates a weighty principle: All beings tend to become like God, each according to the possibilities of its own nature (Chapter 19). In other words, all beings, starting with the lowliest and most elementary viz. inanimate beings, each in its own way tends toward God. Thus a powerful aspiration toward the supreme source of being lifts up created being. To designate it, Thomas uses the ontological sense of love and desire. Each being fulfills this desire by attaining, as far as it can, its own perfection, since every created perfection is a likeness to the supreme and infinite perfection of God.

But this love and this desire take a new form in the spiritual creature endowed with intellect and will. Here the tendency toward assimilation with the Source takes that higher form, which is by way of knowledge and love (as an act elicited by the will). Those activities that are intrinsically independent of matter, viz. knowing and loving, find their eminent realization in a spiritual union with God. From this a twofold question arises: Is such a union possible, and what is the nature and mode of this union which enables it to fulfill the potentiality of the desire?

Such questions move us beyond the consideration of properly human knowledge and place the focus on the capacity that flows from spirituality as such, that goes beyond the specific and which, in Maritain's felicitous expression, is "transnatural." The human spirit is capable of participating in what belongs to every spirit insofar as it is spirit. An examination of the human spirit's possibilities in relation to the metaphysical order would therefore be incomplete if it did not take this dimension into account.

Prior to putting morality into practice, which presupposes rational deliberation, man has in him, as in every created being, a natural love of the Creator. Such love, of an ontological order, is inextricably love of self and love of God. And since the relationship of the creature to God can be likened to the relationship of a part to the whole, and since the part, by virtue of its being a part, tends first of all toward the good of

the whole, this natural love is a love of God above everything. To think of the good of a part as separated from the good of the whole of which it is a part is to think in contradictory terms. By loving itself, the creature spontaneously and with the same impulse loves God as supreme good.[3] The will, which is the subject's *appetitus*, takes on this love and this desire spontaneously in its first movement and before any deliberation or reflection.[4] The consideration of ontological love touches on an altogether fundamental point. Other transnatural aspirations flow directly from the spiritual nature of the soul and its intellectual powers.

Our will, the subject's appetite, naturally tends toward happiness understood as the saturating possession of the fullness of the good. This good, such as our intelligence conceives it, is not known in itself, in its essence. Our will therefore tends toward it as toward a *"bonum in communi."* Can it be reached in itself? Certainly not on this earth. But even if the soul could escape from the limits of space and time, it could not arrive at it by its own powers; it would have to love Him who is the sovereign Good within the limits of the indirect knowledge from afar that is connatural to it. It would achieve a kind of happiness; its felicity would be real, to be sure, but relative.

But that he is called to participate in the very life of God, who is subsisting Beatitude, man could not even guess, much less demand. Nevertheless, the absolute gratuity of the gift of the life of grace comes to fulfill beyond all measure an aspiration of nature that nature, by itself, cannot satisfy and whose object it cannot even conceive of in all its depth. This is because the spiritual element in spiritual creatures is a participation, albeit imperfect, in Him who is Spirit, and everything that participates tends to become assimilated to its principle. Thus the will's aspiration goes beyond its own possibilities of achievement. For as soon as the created spirit starts to think on itself, it becomes aware of the natural limitations of its capacity to act.

This is where we broach the notion of the natural desire to see God. It is a desire of the mind as a particular faculty, while the desire for beatitude, the desire of the will, concerns the totality of the subject. Our

[3] Cf. Saint Thomas, *ST* I, q. 60, a. 5; I–II, q. 109, a. 3; II–II, q. 26, a. 3.

[4] In no way does original sin harm or diminish nature's *positive reality*: "As a result, everything that belongs to nature in a positive way remains 'intact,' metaphysically considered (. . .) all that is ontological love, natural appetite, even the elicited natural appetite of the *voluntas ut natura*, remains intact. This love, moreover, focuses on the last end *in communi*; only implicitly is it a love of God." On the other hand, the wound of original sin shows up at the level of free elicited love. At this level, love of God above all things is not possible for man except as a vague desire. See the Note of Fr. Michel Labourdette in Louis Gardet and Olivier Lacombe, *L'expérience de Soi. Etude de Mystique comparée* (Paris: Desclée, 1981), 183.

intellect has a mediate and indirect knowledge of God. It knows Him not in Himself but indirectly in the looking glass of things. But of itself, by its metaphysical nature, the intellect as intellect is not fully satisfied unless it knows perfectly the essence of the reality known first only imperfectly. To know perfectly is to see intellectually, to have a direct grasp of the essence. Thus the desire to see the first cause presupposes the effort of reason to trace back from the effect to the cause. The mediation of some reasoning, as a kind of precondition, is therefore required. But to see the first cause in itself is beyond the capabilities of any created intellect. By itself, our intellect cannot reach that far.

Hence, when the intellect is called to the beatific vision by virtue of a gratuitous elevation to the supernatural life, the desire of nature finds fulfillment beyond all expectation. Still, because of the limitations of every created nature, such a desire can in no way be considered a command. The satisfaction of this desire is impossible from the resources of created nature, yet this desire is not vain; it is not a contradiction, which would mean the destruction of reason. As in the case of the desire for beatitude, its presence bears witness to the created spirit's participation in Him who is Spirit, and to the tendency of that which participates in a perfection to be assimilated to its principle.

Thus we find ourselves faced with the paradoxical conjunction of two affirmations: On the one hand, our intellect is only satisfied when it knows its object perfectly, for which reason it aspires to a perfect knowledge of God, the First Cause; on the other hand, this knowledge of God as First Cause is only granted in the beatifying vision, which our mind is not capable of attaining through its own powers. This incapability holds for the nature of every created intellect.

The paradox disappears as soon as we consider the factors at work in the process of intellectual knowledge. As an illuminative power, the agent intellect abstracts essences from things as they are perceived first by the senses; it is an active power whose capability is proportionate to the knowledge of a spirit that is the form of a body. Its capability is therefore limited. But it is in the possible intellect that knowledge, properly so named, takes place when this intellect becomes intentionally the thing known. As to its spiritual nature, the possible intellect is a participated spiritual nature, to be sure, yet one common to all spirits. As such, then, the possible intellect is capable of receiving in itself every intelligible object, including the highest, God seen with clarity, when it is enlightened by the *lumen gloriae*. In relation to the reception of knowledge so sublime, knowledge that is literally divine, the possible intellect is in obediential potency. In other words, the receptive potency of the possible intellect goes beyond

the natural capabilities of the agent intellect *(lumen naturale)*. It is open to receiving every intelligible object and since it is fully actuated only when it knows its object perfectly, a natural desire points it toward perfect knowledge of the first cause as soon as it gets an inkling of it.

It should be noted that by naturally desiring an exhaustive knowledge of the First Cause, our intellect does not thereby formally desire the beatific vision of the Godhead or of the Trinitarian mystery. Because of the limited power of the agent intellect, our mind is incapable of responding to this desire by itself. This is what we mean in speaking of a transnatural desire.

Thus we can formulate a second conclusion: To speak of a perfect knowledge of God, First Cause, is to evoke an experience, that is, a direct and fruitful knowledge of the Absolute, is it not? We should say, then, that although our metaphysical knowledge, which is a conceptual knowledge, is not mystical knowledge, a mystical surge nonetheless animates every great philosophy.[5]

III

We are now in a position to address mystical knowledge itself. Even in the philosophy of religion there is today an inflated use of the word "experience." And it should be noted that this short reflection does not concern religious experience or its manifold modalities as such, but mystical experience in the strict sense. Moreover, the word "mystical" itself is not exempt from abusive distensions. I borrow my definition from an author who is an authority on the subject, the philosopher and Islamicist Louis Gardet. By mysticism is understood "the fruitful experience of an absolute": "experience," and therefore knowledge through connaturality; "fruitful," which has its completeness in itself. Further, the word "mysticism" connotes "the inwardly experienced grasping of a total and fulfilling reality."[6] That absolute is written with a minuscule will become clear shortly.

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[5] On this subject see the remarks of J. Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge,* chap. IV, "Metaphysical Knowledge," trans. G. B. Phelan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959).

[6] Louis Gardet, *La mystique* (Paris: PUF, 1982), 6. The quotation itself is borrowed from Jacques Maritain in a study on *L'expérience mystique et le vide* that makes up Chapter III of *Quatre essais sur l'esprit dans sa condition charnelle* (1939), cf. VII, 159–95. See Louis Gardet and Olivier Lacombe, *L'expérience du Soi, Etude de mystique comparée,* 382. We are further indebted to these two authors, one an Islamicist, the other a Hindologist, for articles and works that likewise deal with the subject. Let us cite Louis Gardet's *Expériences mystiques en terre non chrétienne* (Alsatia, 1953); *Mystique musulmane—aspects et tendances, expériences et techniques* (Paris: Vrin, 1961), in collaboration with Georges C. Anawati; *Etudes de philosophie et de*

Let us begin by recalling the significance of mysticism in the Christian life. It is nothing other than the blossoming of the life of grace. In essence, then, it is supernatural. All extraordinary manifestations must be excluded from its definition. These latter, even when their authenticity is duly proven, do not make up the essence of mysticism, even if they are closely tied to it.

The most perfect, immediate, and unveiled union is given in the face to face of the beatific vision, which by its very perfection gives rise to charity's unfailing love. The soul that sees God is perfectly happy. Thus the beatific vision constitutes the terminus of Christian existence, the repose in an end everlastingly possessed, the object of a fulfilling fruition beyond all desire. But as long as we are *viatores*, pilgrims and wayfarers, our knowledge is imperfect: "We see now dimly through a mirror; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known" (1 Cor 13:12). It is by faith that we know the divine mysteries, we do not see them; our intellect accepts them because He who is in the bosom of the Father has made them known to us (cf. Jn 1:18). In order to communicate these mysteries to us, the Incarnate Word speaks to us in our human language in such wise that the knowledge from faith that bears directly on the divine reality is a very imperfect knowledge as regards its mode, which is a human one. There is no intermediary between knowledge from faith and vision.

At this point mystical knowledge finds its place. For, while with knowledge the object is received in the knowing subject according to the mode of the knower, love is directed to the object in itself in such a way that here below love goes further than knowledge. It is from this "further" that mystical knowledge is born. The union of love, which attains the beloved as he is in himself, is the source of a connaturality, of an affinity, that makes the soul feel as if by instinct what belongs to the beloved. Thus the gifts of the Holy Spirit operating in the soul start with the connaturality of love. As regards the object known, this knowledge is none other than knowledge from faith; what it introduces is a new mode of knowing, which goes beyond the ordinary, human mode. This knowledge is without concepts because it is supra-conceptual; that is why we designate it as a fulfilling silence, a blessed night. A medieval manuscript uses the beautiful expression, "The Cloud of Unknowing." On several occasions St. Thomas adopts the expression of Pseudo-Dionysius, *pati divina,* to suffer divine things, to

mystique comparées (Paris: Vrin, 1972). Olivier Lacombe's *L'Absolu selon le Védânta* (Paris: Librarie Orientaliste Paul Geuther, 1937); *Indianité* (Paris: 1979). Here we have no doubt the most remarkable effort of speculative philosophy on the subject, based on firsthand information.

undergo them experientially. In this unknowing (which we should not confuse with the *via negative*), the soul experiences the deepness of faith's mysteries, their beauty and their beatifying power. Such in sum is the nature of Christian mysticism: experience of God's depths through the connaturality of love.[7]

With her fraternal communion, with the bread of the word of God, and with her sacramental and Eucharistic life the Church constitutes the normal environment for the mystical union through love. At this point we may consider two essentially theological questions that are of interest to the philosopher who is investigating the ties between mysticism and metaphysics.

The first question deals with whether mystical experiences, those falling under the heading of mystical union in charity, are possible outside the visible boundaries of the Church. The answer has to be affirmative. Christ's grace is offered to all; we would not be able to exclude such an experience a priori. Still, such a union presupposes that the soul in question has faith, albeit an implicit faith, and lives an upright life. But since it is partially deprived of the word of God and of the sacramental life, this experience will most often take an atypical form and will show up sporadically. Only an in-depth examination of each case can allow us to recognize it. In Islam, al-Hallaj, whom Louis Massignon has studied, represents a particularily moving example of a mystic who experiences profound things of God.[8]

Is the supernatural mystical experience of God's depths the unique form that, albeit masked, is to be found wherever there is mysticism?[9] Or should we acknowledge another form of mysticism, which would be distinct in essence? The testimonies of India first of all, but also of Sufism in the land of Islam, witness to the existence of this other form. Let us try to draw a quick sketch of it.

Because of its union with the body, our soul does not have direct knowledge of itself. To know what its essence is we must go by way of analysis and reasoning. When we perform acts of thinking and willing, these acts are accompanied by an imperfect and confused awareness of our

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[7] A fulfilling experience anticipating eternal bliss: We have no need here to deal with the meaning of the phases of desolation and fulfillment that mark the mystic's life.

[8] Cf. in Louis Gardet and Olivier Lacombe, *L'expérience du Soi,* Part II, chap. II (Louis Gardet), 209–48.

[9] I took up this question in a contribution to the symposium organized by the *Revue Thomiste,* at Toulouse (26 and 27 May 2000), *"Surnaturel," Une controverse au coeur du thomism au Xxe siècle,* forthcoming as *Sur la mystique naturelle*.

existence as spiritual subjects. Moreover, our being, like every being, is animated by an ontological love of self, which was spoken of earlier. Thus the human soul does not see its own essence but it knows, by the activity of its powers, that it exists. How could it not seek to get back to the sources it has so vaguely perceived in order to know them through a saturating experience? Such a seeking, which requires the use of refined techniques and a sometimes heroic asceticism, requires all its spiritual energy. Therefore, the experience in question has for its object the pure substantial *to be* of the *self*. Unlike the ordinary course of mental activity, which brings us first to the knowledge of things and, from there, indirectly to the knowledge of ourselves, this process of returning to the source obliges the soul to empty itself of every particular operation and of all multiplicity. Through this very abolition of every ideating act, it can thus "attain and know, in the night and beyond every concept, the metaphysical wonder, the absolute, the perfection of every act and of every perfection, which is *to be*—its own substantial *to be*." This abolition of every act of thinking is itself an intensely vital act of the soul. In this supra-conceptual experience of the finite absolute, which is the pure *to be* of the human self, the Cause of being is attained mediately without the intervention of any rational reference. If this is so, it is because this negative experience attains existence, which is transcendent and limited only by the essence that receives it, of which precisely at this point nothing is known. When this negative experience attains the soul's own proper existence, it attains at the same time *be-ing*, in the whole of its metaphysical scope, and the sources of *being* insofar as a creating influx, from which it receives everything, courses through the soul's existence. Of course, we do not experience an influx of this kind in itself but in the effect it produces. "This is why the experience in question responds to the desire of everything to get back to its sources and the principle of its being, although only in a certain fashion and in so far as that is possible on a natural level."[10]

It is essential that the metaphysician pay attention to this kind of experience. For we have here a quest for an experience that the human spirit attempts to acquire by its own strength and which is of an intellectual nature; at the end of the emptiness that the intellect creates in itself, there comes this "touching," about which Plotinus speaks and which crowns a trajectory of unknowing. Metaphysics, which supposes the abstractive intuition of being as *actus essendi*, is a conceptual and rational knowledge. Its limitations are those of human reason, which the metaphysician must

[10] Cf. J. Maritain, *On the Church of Christ: The Person of the Church and Her Personnel,* chap. X, "Invisible Presence in/of the Visible Church," trans. Joseph W. Evans (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973).

know how to accept. He may have a great temptation to free himself from the natural limits of our knowing in order to gain possession of its proper object experientially.

Moreover, a mystical impulse of this kind generally demands, by its very strength, the elaboration and architecture of metaphysics itself in him who surrenders himself to it. And it is no coincidence if this kind of metaphysics undergoes the allurement of monism. In Hindu thought, which is ignorant of creation in the proper sense, the *Self (atman)* is basically the same in man as in God. We can understand how the pressure exerted on the conception of the world and of man by the quest for a union obtained beyond every distinction shapes the vision of the word in the image of the soul's journey toward the One. Hence, in order to judge a particular philosophy along with the meaning of its statements, we should look for the intention that is at its origin. Is this intention the building up of a knowledge based on the highest causes; in other words, is metaphysical wisdom the goal? Or is it the quest for a supra-conceptual experience that bends the use of conceptual knowledge and the real gifts of the metaphysician to its own ends?

It is not easy to answer these questions. Each case must be examined on its own. This is especially the case if we keep in mind that with metaphysics on one hand and the search for the experience of its own sources by way of unknowing on the other, we are faced with attitudes that proceed from the root of the spirit and which may coexist in the same subject in their inceptive and atypical state; the possibility of passing from one attitude to the other cannot be excluded. To this must be added the possible conjunction with the poetic experience, an experience of the world and the self caught in its creativity.[11] I have described pure types. In the state of touches, it is not rare that the experience of the self intervenes within the framework of a search that remains essentially metaphysical. From the consideration of the mysticism of the experience of the self, we can draw a third conclusion. More often, no doubt, than we would suspect, the presence of mystical touches of the self is discernible in more than one thinker who remains above all a metaphysician. This presence is not without repercussions in the metaphysical undertaking itself.[12]

A final remark concerns the problems bound up with what is called Christian philosophy, that is, a philosophy whose work of reasoning

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[11] Cf. L. Gardet and O. Lacombe, *L'expérience du Soi,* Part II (Louis Gardet), chap. III, "Poésie et expérience du Soi," 249–317.

[12] Louis Gardet interprets the thought of Heidegger in this sense, cf. L. Gardet and O. Lacombe, *L'expérience du Soi,* Part II, chap. IV, "Expérience du Soi et discours philosophique," 319–69.

unfolds under the influence of the faith while, strictly speaking, remaining genuine philosophy. The philosopher who intends to reflect upon the mysticism of the profound things of God will not hesitate to borrow from a higher science, theology, the light needed to deal with an object that surpasses his own knowledge. Moreover, if from a subjective standpoint this philosopher has some experience of the things of God in faith, even if only in an attenuated and sporadic manner, metaphysical reasoning in him will by that very fact be enlivened and invigorated.

As regards the mysticism of the self a somewhat different question arises. The ontological love of self and of God as cause of being is in itself a good thing, so *basically* the experience of the Self is a positive experience. But it is here that we must take into account man's historical condition: Because of original sin, the natural love of God above all things is not efficacious when we reach the level of the elicited and free act of the will. Grace is needed to rectify the will. Speaking ethically, then, nothing prevents the experience of the self from being rectified in the soul in the state of grace. It should be noted, however, that grace does not transform our experience, which of itself is on a natural level, into an intrinsically supernatural experience. Grace enters here as a conditioning and as *gratia sanans*. We should add that since the experience of the self is attained at the end of a hard and often heroic effort, there is a strong temptation for the soul to make itself the center of everything, which, let us stress, would be the negation as it were of the ontological love that is at the root of the whole undertaking. But in itself, the experience of the self, even if it is still perilous, does not in principle raise any objection.[13] N V

[13] Cf. Heinz-R. Schmitz, *Sur le rôle de la volonté dans l'expérience mystique du Soi,* in *Revue Thomiste* 79 (1979): 409–23. This author points out that *the mystical experience of the Self* does not always have the strongly religious bent that it has in the traditions of India.

Reconciliation with the Church and Interior Penance: The Contribution of Thomas Aquinas on the Question of the *Res et Sacramentum* of Penance*

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SACRAMENTAL PENANCE, which provides remission of sins, brings reconciliation with the Church and with God. Today, numerous theologians agree in recognizing more clearly that reconciliation with the Church constitutes the "first effect" of the sacrament of penance or its "proper effect," which brings reconciliation with God (second effect) to the Christian sinner. Grounded in the study of the history of penance (the patristic theme of "peace with the Church"), this thesis constitutes one focus of contemporary reflection on this sacrament.[1] Having arrived at maturity in the movement for the rediscovery of the ecclesial

* Translation by Robert E. Williams, SSI, of "La réconciliation avec l'Église et la pénitence intérieure: l'apport de Thomas d'Aquin sur la question du *res et sacramentum* de la pénitence," in *Praedicando et docendo*, Mélanges offerts à Liam Walsh OP, ed. Barbara Hallensleben and Guido Vergauwen (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1998), 31–47.

1 Colman E. O'Neill, "Les Sacrements," in *Bilan de la théologie du XXe siècle*, ed. Robert Vander Gucht and Herbert Vorgrimler, vol. 2 (Tournai, Paris: Casterman, 1971), 457–500, cf. 493–98; Herbert Vorgrimler, *Busse und Krankensalbung,* "Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte IV/3" (Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 1978), 195–96; Reinhard Messner, *Feiern der Umkehr und Versöhnung,* "Gottesdienst der Kirke, Handbuch der Liturgiewissenchaft 7/2, Sakramentliche Feiern 1/2," (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1992), 185–86. Already Karl Rahner was able to produce a substantial list of theologians who accepted this determination of the *res et sacramentum* (*Theologische Schriften,* vol. 8 [Einsiedeln, Zürich, Köln: Benzinger Verlag, 1967], 449–50): H. de Lubac, M. Schmaus, E. Schillebeeckx, J. Ratzinger, Y. Congar, and many others.

dimension of the sacraments, which Vatican II sanctioned, today this thesis is one key to understanding the sacrament in its ecclesial dimension. It may be expressed thus: "reconciliation with God by means of reconciliation with the Church."[2]

From the very beginnings of this approach, it was integrated into the Scholastic analysis of the sacrament's structure; reconciliation with the Church, therefore, was defined as the "*res et sacramentum* of penance."[3] We find this to be the case with most of the theologians who hold to the sacraments' symbolic causality along with its three elements: the sacramental sign itself *(sacramentum tantum)*; the intermediate effect in the order of signification-causality, which is already a reality brought about by the sacrament *(res et sacramentum)*; and finally, the ultimate effect, that is, sacramental grace or the "fruit" of the sacrament *(res tantum)*. From this standpoint then reconciliation with the Church replaces the "inner penance" that for Thomas Aquinas and many medieval theologians constituted this *res et sacramentum* of penance. The present study is limited to an examination of reconciliation with the Church under the aspect of *res et sacramentum*. It aims at making a comparison of these two approaches to the intermediate sign-effect of penance in hopes of establishing that the Thomistic doctrine of "inner penance" offers a theological framework for a better understanding of the relation between "reconciliation with God" and "reconciliation with the Church."

Reconciliation with the Church

It was Bartomeu M. Xiberta, a Spanish Carmelite, who first presented a systematic treatment of the statement: "Reconciliation with the Church is the *res et sacramentum* of penance . . . the proper and immediate effect

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[2] Bernard Rey, *Pour des célébrations pénitentielles dans l'esprit de Vatican II* (Paris: Cerf, 1995), 177; in particular, the author endeavors to position the ecclesial community ("Church of sinners") as the subject of the collective action of reconciliation (cf. especially 163–65).

[3] So, for example, Jean-Hervé Nicolas, *Synthèse dogmatique, De la Trinité à la Trinité* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1985), 1050–52. Without prejudice to the sacrament's other names, in this paper we will keep using the term "penance," which joins together the virtue and the sacrament. Let us remember that the word "penance" *(paenitentia)* does not come from the idea of pain *(poena)*. It was used very early on by Christians: To do penance *(paenitentiam agere)* translates *metanoia*, the deep down conversion of which the Gospel speaks and from which the sacrament gets this name; Pierre-Marie Gy, "La documentation sacramentaire de Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 80 (1996): 425–31; cf. 428 for the *res et sacramentum* of penance (Thomas and Rahner).

of sacramental absolution." This thesis forms the subject of his doctoral dissertation defended in 1921 at the Gregorianum in Rome.[4] In a rather traditional manner, his argument is built upon the witness of Scripture and Tradition, and then confirmed by a study of the Scholastic doctors.[5] The proposition, or rather the demonstration, of Xiberta is not put forward as a criticism of Thomas Aquinas, since the author appeals to him, along with other Scholastics (Bonaventure in particular), in support of his thesis.[6] At the most, Xiberta observes, the radical distinction between the individual forum and the social forum, on which his opponents base themselves by invoking St. Thomas, is not decisive. As regards the scope of his thesis, in his preface, as at the end of his study, Xiberta underlines its apologetical dimension: to hold in a historically sound way that reconciliation with the Church is the *res et sacramentum* of penance is to possess the means that allows us to establish the *sacramental* dignity of the penance practiced in the Church (relationship between the "divine element" and the "human element") against those who only see in it an ecclesiastical institution.[7] If Xiberta deserves the honor of this first historico-doctrinal study, we must nevertheless grant the initiative to the Jesuit theologian Maurice de la Taille, director of Xiberta's thesis, who taught that the *res et sacramentum* of penance consists in "the extinction of [the sinner's] debt to the Church" *(extinctio debiti erga Ecclesiam)*. For Father de la Taille, sacramental absolution is first of all *(per prius)* the Church's acceptance of the satisfaction the penitent offers after having confessed his sins (satisfaction performed or which he intends to perform): This relieving of the debt owed to the Church signifies the

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[4] Bartomeu M. Xiberta, *Clavis Ecclesiae. De ordine absolutionis sacramentalis ad reconciliationem cum Ecclesia* (Roma: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1922). We are using the reproduction of the 1922 text by J. Perarnau in *Miscellania Bartomeu M. Xiberta*, "Analecta sacra Tarraconensia 45/2" (Barcelona: Biblioteca Balmes,1972 [1973]), 241*–341* (with the original paging indicated by brackets).

[5] *"Reconciliatio cum Ecclesia est res et sacramentum sacramenti paenitentiae" (Clavis Ecclesiae,* [12]; cf. [96]; *"proprium et immediatum fructum absolutionis sacramentalis"* ([11]); *"(. . .) Ostendere conabor reconciliationem cum Ecclesia nedum abesse ab effectibus sacramenti, esse potius proprium et immediatum fructum. (. . .) Nos vere ostendere conabimur infusionem gratiae deletivae peccati esse finem sacramenti eiusque excellentissimum effectum, ordine tamen causalitatis intercedere alium effectum immediate significatum et causatum per sacramentum, videlicet reconciliationem cum Ecclesia"* ([11]–[12]).

[6] *Clavis Ecclesiae,* [89] *"Iuxta Angelicum (. . .) reconciliationis vero per sacramentum proprium est reconciliare cum Ecclesia."* We will take a look at the position of Thomas Aquinas later.

[7] The author names Wycliff, Luther, and "most of the heretics" who follow them, as well as certain "Modernists" (*Clavis Ecclesiae,* [3]–[4]; cf. [94]–[95].

relieving of the debt owed to Christ.[8] Between Xiberta's apologetical dimension and the stress de la Taille puts on the "debt of sin," the theme of reconciliation with the Church is still rather far from the theological interpretation it will have later. On the other hand, it underlines quite clearly the Church's role as *mediator* in the signification and granting of forgiveness.

Among the works of major influence, we cannot overlook Henri de Lubac's *Catholicism*, which marks a decisive stage in the work of restoring value to the sacraments' social dimension within Catholic dogma. Already *Catholicism* offers the main elements of reflection: a close analogy between baptism and penance, identical nature of the "disciplinary institution" and the "means of inner purification," priority of reconciliation with the Church as the immediate effect of penance and "efficacious sign" of reconciliation with God. "There can be no return to the grace of God without a return to the communion of the Church."[9] In De Lubac's quick summary, which provides a whole theological program for the sacrament of penance, there is however no mention of *res et sacramentum*, nor is there any need for it.

Later historical studies—those of B. Poschmann in particular—will only confirm Xiberta's thesis (which Poschmann explicitly took as his model)[10] and there is no reason to dwell on them here. We should point out, however, that on the historical level, as on the theological level, Poschmann offers a radicalization of Xiberta's thought. Poschmann explains that on the historical level the penitential teaching of the early Church can only be understood in light of Xiberta's thesis.[11] For Poschmann, on the theological level, only the concept of reconciliation with the Church as the immediate effect of penance allows the sacrament to preserve its full meaning (necessity of the Church's sacramental intervention); it alone allows us to see penance as an authentic judicial process (an aspect to which Poschmann pays much attention).[12] Once

[8] Maurice de la Taille, *Mysterium Fidei de Augustissimo Corporis et Sanguinis Christi Sacrificio atque Sacramento* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1921), 581. The Eucharistic context of de la Taille's teaching should be noted. For de la Taille's influence on Xiberta's thesis, cf. Herbert Vorgrimler, *Busse und Krankensalbung,* 195, no. 46.

[9] Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1950), 37–38.

[10] Bernhard Poschmann, *Paenitentia secunda,* Die kirliche Busse im ältesten Christentum bis Cyprian und Origenes. Eine dogmengeschichtliche Untersuchung (Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1940), 12.

[11] Ibid., footnote 1 ("nur von ihr aus"). This thesis of Xiberta is clearly formulated: "(. . .) dass 'die Rekonziliation mit der Kirche res et sacramentum des Busssakraments' sei" (ibid.).

[12] Bernhard Poschmann, "Die innere Struktur des Busssakraments," *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift* 1/3 (1950): 12–30, cf. 25 & 29.

the central place of *pax cum Ecclesia* in early penance has been well established (this is what the historical studies do), it still remains to be shown that it amounts to precisely the *res et sacramentum* of penance. For this we need, besides history, a speculative analysis of the sacrament. Poschmann provides its outline: reconciliation with the Church constitutes a *res*—that is, the thing signified and the immediate effect of the sacramental action—but it is also the *sign* of reconciliation with God. The Church gives her forgiveness to the converted sinner, and God has promised His forgiveness to whomever the Church forgives. Already that was precisely Xiberta's explanation. Furthermore, if we ask what efficacy reconciliation has in regard to sacramental grace (the *res tantum*), Poschmann's answer is: A certain "right" to receive God's grace. But we could also imagine that there is no reason to add a supplementary effect to reconciliation with the Church since this latter *includes* peace with God, forgiveness, and grace.[13] Hence we may ask ourselves if the framework of *res et sacramentum* really allows us to take into account the historical thesis touted by Poschmann.

B. Poschmann comes across as more critical of Thomas Aquinas and the Middle Ages overall. As a matter of fact, it is the subsequent controversy about contrition and attrition that he thinks got off on the wrong track by misunderstanding *pax Ecclesiae* as the "first goal" and the "indispensable means" of reconciliation with God. Poschmann points out that if Thomas Aquinas had presented reconciliation with the Church, and not inner penance, as the *res et sacramentum*, the development of penitential doctrine would have taken a wholly different path. For in this case "the sacrament then keeps its irreplaceable importance, even with the most perfect contrition, and there would have been no need to have recourse to imperfect repentance to insure its right to exist."[14] Perhaps such an observation applies to Duns Scotus or to those theologians denounced in Blaise Pascal's tenth *Provinciale*, but certainly not to the position of Thomas Aquinas, as we shall see later. Nowhere do we find that St. Thomas had to "raise the ante on the requirements for repentance, resulting in an extrasacramental justification,"[15] for the good reason that Thomas's effort consists in tying together as closely as possible personal contrition and the sacramental dimension: The contrition Thomas speaks of is contrition at work in the Church's sacramental process.

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[13] Ibid., 21.

[14] Bernhard Poschmann, *La pénitence et l'onction des malades,* "Histoire des dogmes IV/3" (Paris: Cerf, 1966), 180 (German ed., 1951, 111); cf. "Die innere Struktur," 25.

[15] Bernhard Poschmann, *La pénitence et l'onction des malades,* 181.

On the speculative level, C. Dumont tried to determine more precisely the proper structure of this *res et sacramentum*.[16] He points out that in order for us to be able to consider reconciliation with the Church as the *res et sacramentum* of penance, we have to uncover more than a relation of extrinsic analogy or simple likeness between it and grace; we must also be able to establish a distinction. This observation leads us to exclude immediately an understanding of reconciliation only in its juridical nature, and to retain the penitent's *real participation* in the community in which he is reintegrated: The penitent becomes an "active member" in the Church once again. For Dumont, reconciliation with the Church and grace remain nevertheless distinct since grace designates a larger field of relations (the whole aspect of salvation), while integration into the Church "only introduces a necessary historical moment."[17] With this analysis Dumont gains a technical explanation that allows him to give an account of the *res et sacramentum*, but with an important consequence: a separation between grace and the Church, which have neither the same intensity nor the same depth. (Along with other nuances in his understanding of the Church, J. H. Nicolas resolves this difficulty by explaining that the notion of sacrament is not univocal: Here the *res et sacramentum* is so closely bound up with the *res tantum* that it can hardly be separated from it.)[18]

As for the relationship of causality that reconciliation with the Church has with grace, Dumont explains it in terms of "disposing causality" (thus, by comparison with Hervaeus Natalis, coming up short of Thomas Aquinas's mature thought).[19] Faced with this difficulty, he maintains the identity of the twofold affirmation: The penitent is received into the Church because God gives him back His grace, or, reciprocally, the penitent is taken back into ecclesiastical communion because the divine friendship has been given back to him. Consequently, extending the remarks of his predecessors, Dumont points out that this reconciliation with the Church allows us to show the *necessity of the sacramental avowal* made to the Church's minister (Council of Trent), since we have here a reconciliation *within* the Church and a resumption of responsibility *by* the reconciling Church. The thesis of reconciliation with the Church as the *res et sacramentum* of penance is promoted anew, not without relevance, in order to defend Catholic teaching on the sacrament.

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[16] C. Dumont, SJ, "La réconciliation avec l'Église et la nécessité de l'aveu sacramentel," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 81 (1959): 577–97.

[17] C. Dumont, "La réconciliation avec l'Église," 586.

[18] Jean-Hervé Nicolas, *Synthèse dogmatique,* 1051. But then we are still faced with the problem of the distinction.

[19] C. Dumont, "La réconciliation avec l'Église," 586–87 & no. 18.

It cannot be denied, however, that the most important attempt at a synthesis belongs to Karl Rahner. Rahner definitely accepts the thinking of Thomas Aquinas on several key points, particularly the place of the penitent's actions, with the priest's absolution, at the heart of the sacramental sign, as well as the instrumental efficient causality of the sacrament thus constituted.[20] Moreover, Rahner is unwilling to give up on finding a *res et sacramentum*, a "middle term" between the sign and the effect of penance: It is reconciliation with the Church, which respects both history (the patristic theme of *pax et communio cum Ecclesia*) and reality itself. Through his reconciliation with the Holy Community, the sinner, who has been reintegrated into the Church, acquires a new participation in the Spirit of the Church *(res et sacramentum)* that forgives and grants "peace with God" *(res tantum)*.[21] This explanation, which stresses the necessity of the priest's absolution for there to be a reconciliation with the Church, is based upon a close parallel with baptism. In a way analogous to the baptismal character (the stable integration into the Church of which the baptized person is made a member), the *res et sacramentum* of penance consists in the restoration of the living bond with the Church.[22]

Rahner does not simply replace one theological explanation with another, but he fits the thinking of Thomas into his views. On the one hand, he shows that for Thomas (as for Bonaventure) the sacrament really produces reconciliation with the Church. On the other hand, he upholds "inner penance" as the effect produced or reinforced by the sacrament, while stressing that authentic "inner penance" (contrition) includes the desire to refer oneself to the ministry of the Church. True repentance includes the will to be reconciled with the Church in such a way that it bears the twofold aspect of reconciliation with God and with the Church. "The sacrament reconciles with the Church the sinner who approaches the Church with his 'inner penance' as the will to be reconciled with the Church. Through this, the sinner has a right to the 'infusio gratiae' that allows him to achieve fully this 'inner penance' by which he is able essentially to make his own the grace that is offered to him, in

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[20] Karl Rahner, "Vergessene Wahrheiten über das Busssakrament," in *Theologische Schriften*, vol. 2 (Einsiedeln, Zürich, Köln: Benzinger Verlag, 1964), 143–83, cf. 161–71. In particular, Rahner challenges the assimilation of the thought of Thomas Aquinas to that of Duns Scotus.

[21] Karl Rahner, "Vergessene Wahrheiten," 180–81.

[22] Ibid., 180–82. See Karl Rahner, "Das Sakrament der Busse als Wiederversöhnung mit der Kirche," in *Theologische Schriften*, vol. 8 (Einsiedeln, Zürich, Köln: Benzinger Verlag, 1967), 447–71, cf. 468.

such a way that it becomes proper to him in a sanctifying and justifying fashion and he is thereby freed from his personal sins."[23] By designating reconciliation with the Church as the *res et sacramentum of penance*, Rahner takes inner penance with its existential fabric and orients it toward an immediate relationship with the Church in her visibility and her sanctifying dimension.

Rahner's thesis is grounded more profoundly in the Church's sacramentality (the Church as primordial sacrament, *Ursakrament*) and the understanding of the sacraments as "self-achievements" *(Selbstvollzüge)* of the Church. This approach clarifies first of all the "duality" that we see in every sacrament, as well as in the Church: the sign *(sacramentum)* and the reality of grace *(res)*. From this point of view, every *res et sacramentum* consists essentially in an ecclesial reality. Since Rahner has recourse to the comparison with baptism and the Eucharist, which showcase the ecclesial aspect in a particularly clear manner,[24] it is fitting that we should consider the *res et sacramentum* in these two sacraments in particular.

For Rahner, as we have said, baptism's *res et sacramentum* consists of incorporation into the Church *(das Eingegliedertsein, die Gliedschaft)* in a stable and lasting way. Rahner excludes from this state the question of the "ontological status" of the baptismal character: whether it is thought of as simply a "bespeaking" *(Beanspruchtheit)* on the part of the Church, or if its fundamental aspect is an ontological grounding in the person (the quality or "spiritual power" that makes us apt for acts of worship and of Christian life, in the Thomistic tradition); all this is no longer of any importance to him.[25] Here, as in the case of penance, the proper grounding of the *res et sacramentum* in the process of sacramental justification is reinterpreted in order to adapt it to the ecclesial scheme of things. Rahner adds weight to his choice by a critique of the Scholastic position: Without this "bespeaking" by the Church, we can only give an artificial explanation to the role of sign that belongs to the character. Put another way: Only the social dimension of the *res et sacramentum* allows us to establish its role of *sacrament*, for a sign requires *visibility*.[26] The argument

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[23] Karl Rahner, "Das Sakrament der Busse als Wiederversöhnung mit der Kirche," 469.

[24] Karl Rahner, "Vergessene Wahrheiten," 179–80.

[25] Karl Rahner, *Kirche und Sakramente,* "Quaestiones Disputatae, 10" (Freiburg: Herder, 1960), 78–79. This thesis claims to be a return to the origins of the concept of "character"; without which, according to Rahner, the theory of character would remain "arbitrary" (ibid.); cf. "Vergessene Wahrheiten," 180, no. 1.

[26] Karl Rahner, *Kirche und Sakramente,* 78–80.

has weight (besides, it did not escape the Scholastics), but Rahner's objection cannot be the deciding factor. Thomas Aquinas put forward the following response: The character is a sign through reference to the sensible rite of the sacrament's celebration whereby it is imprinted[27] (likewise, inner penance will have to be understood in reference to outward penance). In other words, the nature of sign and the "visibility" do not belong to the character as if this made up an independent reality, but rather when character is taken *in the unity of the sacrament with its three moments (sacramentum, res et sacramentum, res)* by which it is referred to the visible sacramental sign. The social dimension (present at each level of the analysis of the sacrament) doubtlessly does not oblige us to follow Rahner in such a definite fashion.

The case of the Eucharist, which Rahner treats first in his *Kirche und Sakramente*, is still more interesting. Without questioning the truth of Christ's Body and Blood, Rahner nevertheless refuses to see in it the *res et sacramentum* of the Eucharist. For Rahner this consists in a "deeper integration into the unity of the Mystical Body," a renewed incorporation that is the first effect and the efficacious cause of the other effects of the Eucharist.[28] For whomever would continue to hold that the true Body and Blood of Christ (the "Real Presence") is the *res et sacramentum*, Rahner has the following objection: Even if we hold that the *verum Corpus* is the sign of its grace insofar as the Church possesses it as the sign of her own unity (which is necessary in this case), we would still have to be able to account for the *ordering* of the effects *(res)* of the Eucharist and the primary place *(vorgeordnete Wirkung)* that belongs here to the Church's unity.[29] Rahner's view is profound, and the stress he lays upon ecclesial unity is altogether fundamental. Still, one can say that the position of Thomas Aquinas (here Rahner mentions the Eucharist as "the sacrament of the Church's unity," which is found in Thomas) in fact goes further than Rahner's. Thomas firmly holds that the *verum Corpus* is the *res et sacramentum* of the Eucharist, but he does not consider the unity of the Church as one effect that procures other sacramental graces. There is not on one side an ecclesial effect of the sacrament, and on the other side a personal and individual effect. It is clearly the same reality of grace, incorporation into Christ given to the person, which is both the food of spiritual rebuilding and at the same time, by its very nature,

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27 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* III, q. 63, a. 2, ad 4: *"Character habet rationem signi per comparationem ad sacramentum sensibile a quo imprimitur."*

28 Karl Rahner, *Kirche und Sakramente,* 74.

29 Ibid., 75.

the building up of the Church whose unity is strengthened and achieved through charity.[30]

Reconciliation with the Church is a constituent of the ecclesial action of reconciliation with God. It is immediately obtained through the sacrament. The sinner receives forgiveness in his ecclesial reintegration. Grounded in Scripture and the practice of the early Church, this statement highlights very well the ecclesial dimension of the sacrament and meets the desires of contemporary thinking. From the start, it is also associated with the "defense" of several aspects of Catholic teaching (sacramentality, necessity of confession, necessity of absolution by a priest, etc.). However, its formulation in terms of *res et sacramentum* entails several difficulties: the distinction between the intermediate element and the *res* of the sacrament, the likening of the penitential framework to that of baptism, the nature of reconciliation with the Church in the person of the penitent, its "causality" in regard to sacramental grace (reconciliation with God), the modifications the very notion of *res et sacramentum* has undergone, as well as the articulation (Rahner) of this concept along the main lines of Thomas Aquinas's treatment of penance. This is what we will now examine.

Inner Penance in Thomas Aquinas

Inner Penance

The framework of Thomas Aquinas's thinking is summarized in the following statement. "Even in Penance there is something which is *sacramentum tantum*, i.e., the actions done by the penitent sinner as well as by the absolving priest. Now, the *res et sacramentum* is the inner penance of the sinner, while the *res tantum*, which is not the sacrament, is the remission of sin. The first of these, taken integrally, is the cause of the second; the first and the second are the cause of the third."[31]

This framework of understanding calls for several observations. First, it puts an important stress on the "outward" acts performed personally by the penitent (confession, satisfaction, expressions of repentance), obviously in relation with the inward acts of conversion. Here penance is

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[30] Cajetan has expressed this unity well: "When we hear that the fruit *(res tantum)* of the sacrament is grace, and that what is to be received is the unity of the Church or the Mystical Body of Christ, we do not understand by that that there are two diverse realities since all that is nothing else but God's grace in His faithful" (Cajetan, *In IIIam,* q. 73, a. 1; Leonine Ed., t. XII, 139). Cf. my study: "Le fruit ecclésial de l'Eucharistie chez S. Thomas d'Aquin," *Nova et Vetera* 72/4 (1997): 25–40.

[31] *Summa Theologiae* (referred to as *ST*) III, q. 84, a. 1, ad 3.

taken in the Gospel sense of "to do penance" *(agere paenitentiam)*, the sensible character of which permits identification with an authentic *sacramentum*.[32] These acts make up the "matter of the sacrament," while the priest's action (absolution) constitutes its "form." This anthropological grounding of the sacrament's matter provides the starting point for a theological analysis of the sacrament: What the penitent does, in action and word, signifies a holy reality.[33] Thomas will go so far as to write that the *penitent in person* constitutes the "matter" of this sacrament.[34] In agreement with the Thomistic teaching on the *res et sacramentum*, the latter will be understood with immediate reference to this sacramental sign. This stress is all the more important because, unlike the theologians who went before him (and numerous theologians who followed), Thomas attributes a real instrumental efficiency to the sacramental sign, and hence to the personal activity of the penitent, as regards the giving of grace. It seems that no theologian held this before him, and Thomas himself, in his early writing on the *Sentences*, speaks only of a disposing instrumental causality.[35] In the *Summa*, however, it is no longer a question of a mere disposition to grace by the activity of the penitent and of the priest, but indeed of a real instrumental efficacy.[36] By virtue of Christ's passion, which acts in it, the sign or sacrament works effectively, as instrument, to obtain grace.

Next we should note that the production of the *res et sacramentum* belongs to the first element, the sacramental sign *taken integrally*. In other words, the penitent's acts of conversion do not have this efficacy except under the sway of their form, the priest's sacramental absolution. Thus, Abelard's thesis whereby the penitent's contrition remits sins, and that of Hugh of Saint Victor, who held that the priest's absolution remits them,

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32 IV *Sent*. d. 22, q. 2, a. 3, qla 3, ad 2; *ST* III, q. 90, a. 2, obj. 1, ad 1.

33 *ST*, III, q. 84, a. 1, corpus.

34 *De forma absolutionis,* chap. 4 (Leonine Ed., t. 40 C, 40): *"Ipse autem peccator confitens est sicut materia in hoc sacramento."*

35 Thomas was not the first to make the penitent's actions the matter of the sacrament (that was already the opinion of Hugh of Saint-Cher and of Bonaventure), but nobody made them the *efficacious cause* of grace.

36 IV *Sent*. d. 22, q. 2, a. 1, qla. 1, ad 2; cf. qla 2. *ST* III, q. 86, a. 6; cf. q. 64, a. 1. See Bruno de Vaux Saint-Cyr, *Revenir à Dieu*. Pénitence, conversion, confession (Paris: Cerf, 1967), 151–78. For Thomas's progress on instrumental causality, see Jean-Pierre Torrell, "La causalité salvifique de la résurrection du Christ selon saint Thomas," *Revue Thomiste* 96 (1996): 179–208, cf. 186–92; Hyacinthe Dondaine, "A propos d'Avicenne et de saint Thomas. De la causalité dispositive à la causalité instrumentale," *Revue Thomiste* 51 (1951): 441–53. For what follows I am indebted to Fr. Hyacinthe Dondaine's unpublished course on penance given at Le Saulchoir.

are combined by Thomas into a more satisfactory position.[37] In giving its full value to the thesis of an authentic instrumental efficacy, Thomas's effort consists in showing the unity of the sacramental action and of personal conversion understood within the workings of the divine grace of forgiveness in the Church.

Therefore, the *sacramentum*, considered as a whole, produces the intermediate element, the *res et sacramentum*, defined as "inner penance." What are we dealing with? Inner penance designates contrition, which by its aim extends to all "parts" of penance since it overlaps equally confession (avowal of sins) and satisfaction, insofar as these are included virtually, or *in voto*, in full contrition.[38] We may define contrition, for its part, as sorrow or remorse for sins committed with, under the impulse of charity, the intention of removing the consequence of sin, which is the offense committed against God.[39] Thus understood, inner penance is at once *signified* and *obtained* by the actions of the penitent and the minister.[40] Inner penance may be considered under two aspects. On the one hand, in as much as it is an act of virtue it is the origin ("cause") of the outward penitential action, and is signified by it. On the other hand, in as much as it falls within a sacramental ecclesial gesture, inner penance *acts efficaciously* for the healing of sin; as such, it is obtained by the outward action.[41]

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[37] Paul Anciaux, *La théologie du sacrement de pénitence au XIIe siècle* (Louvain: E. Nauwelaerts, 1949), 275–302; Pierre Adnès, "Le rapport de la contrition et de l'absolution chez saint Thomas et les théologiens médiévaux," in *S. Tommaso Teologo*, ed. Antonio Piolanti, "Studi Tomistici, 59" (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), 301–9. In the judgment of K. Rahner, this understanding of the causality of the acts of the person and of absolution provides "the conceptual assimilation of an *authentic* tradition going back to the patristic age" ("Vergessene Wahrheiten," 165–66; cf. 162–64).

[38] IV *Sent*. d. 22, q. 2, a. 1, qla 2, ad 3: *"Tres partes paenitentiae sunt et in paenitentia exteriori et in interiori; quia confessio et satisfactio quae videntur tantum ad exteriorem paenitentiam pertinere, inveniuntur in interiori paenitentia quantum ad propositum et praemeditationem eorum," ST* III, q. 90, a. 2, ad 1: *"[contritio] virtualiter autem pertinet ad paenitentiam exteriorem, inquantum scilicet implicat propositum confitendi et satisfaciendi."* But Thomas is not the first author to posit contrition or inner penance as *res et sacramentum*. That was already the position of Peter Lombard, of St. Bonaventure, and of many others. Rather, Thomas's originality lies in the efficacy he sees in this contrition and its place within the process of sacramental penance.

[39] *ST* III, q. 85, a. 1, ad 3; q. 85, aa. 5–6; cf. IV *Sent*. d. 17, q. 2, a. 1, qla 1 (here in its relation to confession and satisfaction).

[40] IV *Sent*. d. 22, q. 2, a. 1, qla 2.

[41] Ibid., ad 1.

The framework of the *res et sacramentum* appears here in broad daylight: Inner penance is *res* (effect) in relation to the penitent's outward acts, which *signify* it; it remains somehow "proportionated" to them. It is likewise a *sign* in relation to the forgiveness of sins, in reference to the outward action with which it forms a whole. Lastly, it is the efficacious cause of the forgiveness of sins, *together with* the penitent's personal action and the priest's absolution, taken once again as an organic whole.[42]

What is at stake in this conception is clear. For Thomas, there can be no forgiveness of sins without an authentic inner conversion of the heart.[43] We are miles away from a forgiveness obtained *ex opere operato* without the deep down participation of the penitent (here Thomas returns to the early doctrine). At the same time, this inner penance obtains forgiveness within the ecclesial action since it obtains its effect with penitential acts and absolution.[44] Even outside the sacramental *celebration*, contrition includes the intention of confessing and desiring absolution (intention to "submit oneself to the keys of the Church"). This is the reason we would not willingly speak of the forgiveness of sins through a contrition that is "extrasacramental" (Poschmann). Such is the motive why Thomas has no difficulty holding that confession to a layman under such conditions is "somehow sacramental."[45] Lastly, the framework of the sacrament does not in itself require a temporal simultaneity of its components. Certainly contrition may be given at the moment of the sacrament's celebration, but it may just as well precede it (Thomas deems this case the most common), or even follow it. Here, obviously, the doctrine matches Christian experience, which bears witness to the

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[42] Faced with the difficulty of conceiving the kind of causality of sacramental grace that belongs to inner penance, some Thomists and other theologians have been led to posit an "ornament of the soul" *(ornatus animae)* as *res et sacramentum*, a mysterious counterpart to the baptismal character. *"Magna videtur altercatio de ornatu,"* Cajetan too observes (*In IIIam,* q. 84, a. 1–2; Leonine Ed., t. XII, 288). We must however point out that inner penance or contrition is not the cause of charity; it is the cause of the *remission of sins*, which is the effect of the sacrament.

[43] *ST* III, q. 86, a. 2; cf. q. 84, a. 5, ad 3. As a virtue, inner penance consitutes a fundamental disposition of Christian life, which is not limited to the celebration of the sacrament: q. 84, a. 8. As "contrition of the heart" for sin committed, inner penance is required for the fruitful reception of baptism: Thomas, *ST* III, q. 68, a. 6, ad 3; *Super Ad Romanos* 11,29 (Marietti Ed., #927).

[44] *ST* III, q. 84, a. 1, ad 3 *("primum autem et secundum sunt causa tertii")*; IV *Sent*. d. 22, q. 2, a. 1, qla 2. It is in this sense that inner penance constitutes the "immediate cause" of the remission of sins (ibid., sed contra 2).

[45] IV *Sent*. d. 17, q. 3, a. 3, qla 2, ad 1.

complexity of the undertaking and to its character that may vary according to personal dispositions. To show this, Thomas does not hesitate to assert an anticipated causality of the complete sacrament (absolution already acts in the contrite sinner under the sway of charity).[46]

More profoundly, this analysis of penance places the conversion experience at the heart of the process of justification. Cooperating with the divine action, to which all initiative belongs, the virtuous act of penance engages faith, hope, charity, and filial fear.[47] Thomas makes the scheme of Christian justification and sacramental forgiveness coincide. When all is said and done, he knows only *one Christian penance*: a virtuous labor undertaken in a sacramental action where grace is at work.[48]

As for the *res* of the Sacrament, obtained by means of the *res et sacramentum*, Thomas designates it as "the remission of sins." Such is the proper effect of the sacrament of penance, expressed by the words of absolution (the sacrament effects exactly what it signifies, and Thomas follows this signification closely). This forgiveness of sins obtains the "reconciliation of friendship" *(reconciliatio amicitiae)* that best characterizes (better, in fact, than the category of strict justice, in Thomas's judgment) the underlying *intention* of penance.[49]

The sacrament is shown here fundamentally as the "means" to rid the offense that thwarts the friendship God wishes to establish with His children. It is also with this theme of restored friendship that Thomas develops the pneumatological character of penance. The fruit of the sacrament, obtained through the power of Christ's passion (passion "for the remission

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[46] *Quodlibet* IV, q. 7, a. 1 (Leonine Ed., t. 25/2, 330). See Daniel Ols, " Saint Thomas a-t-il soutenu l'existence d'une causalité efficiente anticipée dans l'économie sacramentelle?", in *S. Tommaso Teologo*, ed. Antonio Piolanti, "Studi Tomistici, 59" (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), 285–297. In my opinion, this concept allows us to explain in a coherent way why the remission of sins through the ministry of the priest is required even when contrition has already erased the guilt (IV *Sent*. d. 17, q. 2, a. 5 qla 1, ad 3, in the context of admission to the Eucharist). In his *Commentary on the Sentences*, Thomas distinguishes between the disposing action of contrition as a virtue and the *instrumental* action of contrition as part of the sacrament (ibid., sol.). In the *Summa* he stresses more strongly the relationship of all contrition with the ministry of the Church ("keys of the Church") by which the virtue of penance is ordered to the Passion of Christ that remits sins (*ST* III, q. 86, a. 6, ad. 3; cf. sol.).

[47] *ST* III, q. 85, a. 5; q. 86, a. 6, ad 2.

[48] Hyacinthe F. Dondaine, *La pénitence,* type-written course (Le Saulchoir), 81.

[49] *ST* III, q. 90, a. 2. This remark is important because for Thomas the virtue of penance is a species of justice. But here the theological virtues enrich and elevate justice (q. 85, a. 3, ad 4).

of sins"),[50] is due to the Holy Spirit, since He is Love in person and Communion in the bosom of the Trinity, the underlying reason for the entire economy of salvation and mercy: "Since it is through the Holy Spirit that we are made friends of God, it is therefore through Him that God remits our sins."[51]

Reconciliation with God and Reconciliation with the Church

For Thomas the term "reconciliation" *(reconciliatio)* designates the restoration of friendship after the hindrance to friendship has been done away with. Thus reconciliation appears as the sinner's return in grace into the heart of God. Penance, whose *object* is the sin that the penitent wants to work on eliminating, is wholly oriented toward reconciliation with God, which is its *end*.[52] We are far removed from any reduction of reconciliation to the juridical: at its root reconciliation pertains to the love of charity.[53] Reconciliation is closely associated with the theme of *satisfaction* (a part of penance) since it aims precisely at the reconciliation of the offended friend's heart: reconciliation with God and reconciliation with our neighbor.[54] Along with contrition and confession, satisfaction works for the total remission of the punishment due to sin, as well as for "reconciliation with the members of the Church."[55] Thus reconciliation is at the terminus of the penitential exercise of conversion, just as it is first in God's saving plan.[56]

What place does Thomas give to reconciliation with the Church? If we look at the instances where the terms *reconciliatio* and *reconciliare* occur

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[50] Even more: the effect of penance is obtained "in so far as we are united to Christ suffering for our sins" (*Summa contra Gentiles,* Book IV, chap. 72; Marietti Ed., #4071).

[51] *Summa contra Gentiles,* Book IV, chap. 21 (Marietti Ed., #3582), in reference to Proverbs 10:12, John 20:22, and Matthew 13:21.

[52] IV *Sent*. d. 14, q. 1, a. 1, qla 4, ad 2; This distinction between the object and the end allows Thomas to explain the difference between penance and the theological virtues. Thomas fully accepts that "penance reconciles with God," but only the theological virtues have God as their "object."

[53] IV *Sent*. d. 15, q. 1, a. 5, qla 2, sol.: *"reconciliatio autem nihil aliud est quam amicitiae reparatio;"* cf. a. 1, qla 2, obj. 1: *"reconciliatio, cum sit amoris, ad caritatem pertinet."*

[54] IV *Sent*. d. 15, q. 1, a. 1, qla 2, obj. 1 and ad 1; d. 15, q. 1, a. 5, qla 2; d. 15, q. 4, a. 7, qla 1, obj. 3 and ad 3; d. 16, q. 1, a. 1, qla 2; *ST* III, q. 85, a. 3, obj. 1. Let us recall that for Thomas works done without charity cannot count as satisfaction since then the motive for their acceptance by God would be wanting (IV *Sent*. d. 15, q. 1, a. 3, qla 2). It is charity (friendship) that accounts for the worth of satisfaction.

[55] *Super I Ad Cor.* 11:27 (Marietti Ed., #690), in the context of participation in the Eucharist.

[56] IV *Sent*. d. 18, q. 1, a. 2, qla 3.

in the treatise on the sacraments in the *Commentary on the Sentences* and the *Summa theologiae*, first we must say that this vocabulary shows up quite often in an ecclesial context. Here Thomas is drawing on the heritage of the patristic vocabulary, passed on by Augustine in particular, and by the texts cited in Gratian's *Decretals*. This reconciliation, which finds its place at the end of the process of penance,[57] is attached especially to admission to the Church's sacraments ("reconciliation with the Church") and above all to Eucharistic communion, which requires "peace with the Church."[58] The texts pay special attention here to the reconciliation of the dying, of persons engaged in an activity incompatible with the dignity of baptized persons, of apostates, heretics, priests degraded from their order, all with a heavy ecclesial content.[59] In this context, "reconciliation with the Church" is closely tied with the activity of the ministers.[60] Here we must highlight two aspects.

In a way similar to what we have been able to observe in the contemporary rediscovery of the theme of reconciliation with the Church, Thomas here brings out the necessity of the activity of the Church's ministers: "Through the sacraments man is not only reconciled to God, but he must also be reconciled to the Church. Now, he can only be reconciled to the Church if the Church's sanctification reaches him. . . . But in penance the sanctification of the Church does not reach a man except through the minister. . . . He is not yet reconciled to the Church in such a way that he can be admitted to the sacraments of the Church unless he has first been absolved by a priest."[61] Reconciliation with the Church is understood

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[57] IV *Sent*. d. 14, q. 1, a.5, qla 3; *ST* III, q. 80, a. 6

[58] IV *Sent*. d. 9, q. 1, a.5, qla 3, sed contra 2 and sol.; d. 14, q.1, a. 5, qla 3; d. 17, q. 3, a. 3, qla 2, ad 3; d. 17, q. 3, a. 3, qla 3; *ST* III, q. 80, a. 6.

[59] IV *Sent*. d. 25, q. 1, a. 2, sed contra 1; *ST* III, q. 80, a. 6; q. 82, a. 8, sed contra.

[60] IV *Sent*. d. 14, q. 1, a. 1, qla 2; d. 17, q. 3, a. 3, qla 2, ad 3. Just as Thomas interprets the canonical penance of the ancient Church in light of the public or solemn penance of the Middle Ages (IV *Sent*. d. 14, q. 1, a. 5, qla 3), just so he is incapable of giving a correct account of the role that the early practice reserved to the bishop in reconciliation (IV *Sent*. d. 20, div. text. and exp. text.). We should point out that he finds himself in the same difficulty when it comes to the ancient doctrine of the non-repeatability of penance (*ST* III, q. 84, a. 10). Indeed, his reflection starts from a very concrete point: the sacramental practice he knows, "penance as it is practiced in the Church" (*ST* III, q. 84, a. 1).

[61] IV *Sent*. d. 17, q. 3, a. 3, qla 2, ad 3: *"Per sacramenta homo non solum Deo, sed etiam Ecclesiae oportet quod reconciliatur. Ecclesiae autem reconciliari non potest nisi sanctificatio Ecclesiae ad eum perveniat (. . .) Sed in paenitentia Ecclesiae sanctificatio non pervenit ad hominem nisi per ministrum. (. . .) Non tamen adhuc Ecclesiae reconciliatus est, ut ad sacramenta Ecclesiae admitti debeat, nisi prius a sacerdote absolvatur;"* cf. IV *Sent*. d. 14, q. 1, a. 1, qla 2.

essentially in reference to the Church's sanctifying function and the grace of communion that constitutes it (in relation to the Eucharist especially). Here we are approaching the theme of the Church as sacrament developed by Rahner in this context.[62] It is not surprising, then, to learn that it is in connection with the Eucharist that Thomas prefers to treat the ecclesial dimension of penance. "Whoever receives this sacrament (the Eucharist) shows thereby that he is united to Christ and incorporated in His members, which is achieved through faith informed [by charity], and nobody can have that together with mortal sin."[63] Thomas considers this incompatibility between the state of mortal sin and the fruitful reception of the Eucharist explicitly in the light of the "Mystical Body of Christ, which is a society of saints."[64] The Eucharist nourishes the communion of the Church in its two dimensions of relationship with Christ and fraternal unity of the members. The absence of this communion, if it occurs, wounds the *signification* of the sacrament and the *reality* of its effect. The sacrament of penance is as a matter of fact ordered to true and full participation in the Eucharist, the sacrament of charity and of the Church's unity. Here we find reconciliation with God achieved at the very heart of the ecclesial communion. In Thomas, it is around the divine friendship which is charity (faith formed by charity) that the themes of the Church, of contrition, of the sacrament of penance, and of the Eucharist are bound together. At this level, it is quite difficult to assign priority to reconciliation with the Church or to reconciliation with God; in reality, the two coincide.[65]

However, Thomas endeavors vigorously to show that the proper virtue of the sacrament does not extend only to reconciliation with the Church, but indeed reaches to reconciliation with God. On this point he disagrees with Bonaventure. As already seen, the Franciscan Doctor, also, holds that contrition or inner penance is the *res et sacramentum* of penance. He likewise states that the sacrament reconciles with God and

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62 For this relationship between Eucharist, ecclesial mediation, and reconciliation, cf. IV *Sent*. d. 13, q. 1, a. 3, qla 2.

63 *ST* III, q. 80, a. 4.

64 Ibid. For Thomas, all the sacraments are ordered to the Eucharist, which bestows its underlying unity on the sacramental organism (*ST* III, q. 65, a. 3). Now the Eucharist is a major source of Thomas's ecclesiological thinking.

65 In Thomas's view of the Church, which is at once moral, sacramental (Eucharistic), pneumatological, and theocentric, first place belongs to the grace of the Holy Spirit that incorporates into Christ (cf. especially *ST* I–II, q. 106, a. 1; *ST* III, q. 8, a. 3). See Yves Congar, "L'idée de l'Église chez saint Thomas d'Aquin," in *Esquisse du mystère de l'Église* (Paris: Cerf, 1941), 59–91. The theme of contrition as *res et sacramentum* finds its full meaning within this vision of the Church as a body of faith and charity whose soul is the Holy Spirit.

the Church. But he distinguishes more sharply these two aspects of penance: (1) sacrament that reconciles with God; and (2) sacrament of the Church.[66] This distinction crystallizes in the question of the scope of the "power of the keys" exercised by the Church's ministers. In his function of "descending mediation," the priest has the power to grant reconciliation with the Church; such is the goal that is proportionate to his status as human minister. But in his function of "ascending mediation" (reconciliation with God), the priest can only *ask for* the grace on behalf of the sinner. This is how Bonaventure explains the alternation of words that beseech and words that indicate a fact in the rite of absolution. Thus, Bonaventure goes on, if we wish to speak properly, we must say that the power of the keys confided to the Church *does not go so far as the suppression of the fault* since it only reaches this by way of prayer and petition *(per modum deprecantis)*, while it actually extends to reconciliation with the Church, in regard to which it is in the position of being able to share *(per modum impertientis)*. Consequently, if a priest absolves a penitent, it is because he judges that God has first of all absolved him of his fault; only God can absolve. The priest's absolution *presupposes* divine forgiveness.[67]

As we have seen, Thomas's position veers in another direction. Thanks to his notion of instrumental causality, he can assign a "divine effect" to the action of the penitent and the priest without undermining God's prerogatives ("principal cause"). Through the personal cooperation of the penitent and by the action of Christ working through the minister, the fault that attacked the divine friendship is forgiven. He therefore gives full weight to the personal action of the penitent and to the Church's mediation: The sacramental sign (the penitent's acts and the priest's absolution), with inner penance, are *the (instrumental) cause* of the remission of sins.[68] Given this fact, he no longer has to distinguish between the realm of reconciliation with the Church and that of reconciliation with God in the remission of fault *(culpa)*. In the same sense he will hold firmly to the indicative formula of absolution, since the sacrament *effects what it signifies*: "I forgive you of your sins."[69]

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[66] Bonaventure, IV *Sent*. d. 22, a. 2, q. 2: the three elements of the sacrament's make-up *(sacramentum, res et sacramentum, res)* are distributed successively under these two aspects.

[67] Bonaventure, IV *Sent*. d. 18, 1, a. 2, q. 1; cf. ad 3: the priest can obtain grace for the sinner, but *he does not give it*: absolution from guilt belongs only to God. This concept will persist in the Scotist theory of the divine "pact."

[68] *De forma absolutionis,* chap. 2, no. 11 (Leonine Ed., t. 40 C, 37); *ST* III, q. 84, a. 1, ad 3; cf. q. 62, a. 1.

[69] *ST* III, q. 84, a. 3; or more explicitly *(perfectior expositio)*: *"Ego te absolvo, idest, sacramentum absolutionis tibi impendo"* (ibid., ad 5).

The thought of Thomas is therefore distinguished by his taking into account the personal action of the penitent in all its depth, together with the minister's action, to obtain efficaciously the remission of sins and, through this, a return to divine friendship in the bosom of the Church. Of this unique Christian penance, contrition, called forth by charity, is the heart: Penance is a conversion of love, an inner transformation, and reconciliation is a *gift of love*. Hence, in the sacramental action, the penitent's person and ecclesial mediation converge in a profound unity. For Thomas Aquinas, this is what is at stake in inner penance as *res et sacramentum*.

According to Thomas Aquinas—and this is another benefit of his thought—inner penance or contrition entails an internal relationship with the ministry of the Church and with Eucharistic communion, that is, the communion of the Church. We have seen that Rahner, while making reconciliation with the Church the *res et sacramentum* of penance, sought to maintain the merits of the Thomistic doctrine of contrition. We can now see how this doctrine of contrition is entirely capable of taking on the ecclesial dimension of the *res et sacramentum* of penance, which historical studies have restored to value. Thomas himself points us in the direction of understanding contrition, at the heart of the sacrament, as a *personal engagement* grasped in the ecclesial action and *recognized or ratified by the Church*: Such is the *res et sacramentum* of penance.[70] In other words, reconciliation with the Church is the Church's recognition of the penitent's inner conversion under the sway of divine grace (justification), which operates in the sacrament through the ministry of the Church. We have seen that this understanding has the advantage of respecting the proper framework of the *res et sacramentum*. But, no matter if we keep this framework in all its details, it especially allows us to understand reconciliation with the Church as part of the renewal of life to which the Gospel calls the disciples of Christ and which marks the concrete participation in the communion of grace that the Church is. The Thomistic doctrine of contrition and the understanding of the *res et sacramentum* of penance truly aims at this depth of divine friendship of which the Church is the sacrament. NV

[70] C. E. O'Neill, "Les Sacrements," 497; The author points out further—but that goes beyond our subject—that such an understanding can provide an interpretation suggestive of "devotional confession" and also clarifies the doctrine of indulgences ("contrition granted ecclesial aid").

Biblical Scholarship New and Old: Learning from the Past

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Introduction

STUDENTS IN AMERICA are often warned about the tendency of American scholars to be "provincial," that is, to stay complacently within the questions, answers, and assumptions of their own country. We must learn to be aware of our colleagues in Europe, especially those in the German- and French-speaking countries. There is however another kind of provincialism not often mentioned: The tendency we all share to stay complacently within the issues and assumptions of our own time in history. By learning to think with the authors of several ages, we form a frame within which to judge both our age and theirs, rather than letting our own age be our frame of judgment. As Roland Murphy states,

> How many far-fetched theories have been hazarded by modern writers who are locked up in their own crippling presuppositions? Even the vagaries and extravagances of ancient exegesis can have a sobering effect on current scholarship. . . . As David Steinmetz . . . has remarked, "The principal value of precritical exegesis is that it is not modern exegesis. . . ."[1]

That temporal provincialism is indeed a problem in the biblical guild can be seen by looking at how contemporary scholars treat the history of interpretation. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary (NJBC),* for example, has a fourteen-page article devoted to the history of interpretation of the

[1] Roland Murphy, *Ecclesiastes* (Dallas: Word, 1992), lv–lvi.

Old Testament, but the title of the article limits the discussion to *modern* interpretation. The article begins this way:

> The modern era of biblical interpretation may be said to have begun ca. 1650. Until that date most Christian exegesis viewed the Bible as a heaven-sent collection of writings, a report of events that were independent of their cultural and historical milieux. A narrow view of inspiration neglected the role of the sacred writer in the composition of the books and ignored the possibility of development in Old Testament revelation. The criticism of that era was dogmatic and theological. There were, of course, individuals who questioned one or the other traditional viewpoint, but these isolated scholars failed to capture the attention of their contemporaries.
>
> By 1650, however, fresh intellectual currents had gathered sufficient impetus to alter the biblical sciences.[2]

This finishes the *NJBC's* description of 1,650 years of interpretation, all the many centuries before the exegetes who walked in darkness saw a great light.

To do justice to the *NJBC*, there is in fact another fifteen-page article, this one on the history of interpretation of the New Testament, in which the first 1,650 years of exegesis gets a little over a quarter of a page. But there again we find signs of provincialism: The title of the article restricts the discussion to *modern* interpretation, and after listing exegetes up to Augustine who contributed to New Testament criticism, the period from A.D. 430 to A.D. 1483 is leapt over by the following comment: "Although the Middle Ages, especially the great Scholastic period, contributed to the better understanding of Scripture, the contributions to real NT criticism were not major."[3]

Were the author of this article to read commentaries from the time, or a chapter from a history of biblical studies in the Middle Ages, his impression would probably change. The thirteenth century was an exciting time to be an interpreter of Scripture. Biblical studies were moving from the monasteries to the schools, the works of Aristotle were being re-introduced into Europe, and the new mendicant religious orders were leading the way in a gospel-driven intellectual revolution;[4] these converging forces were accompanied by an explosion of theoretical and technical

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[2] *The New Jerome Bible Commentary (NJBC)* 69:3, 1114.

[3] *NJBC* 70:3, 1131; cf. 71:39–40, 1155, which offers some history of "spiritual" exegesis.

[4] M. D. Chenu, *Toward Understanding St. Thomas* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964), 234–37, 241–32.

innovations, including concordances, Bible dictionaries, renewed interest in and knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, interlinear and facing-page Hebrew–Latin Bibles, and the chapter and verse divisions we use today.[5]

The University of Paris took a particular descendent of Jerome's Vulgate as their standard text, due to its unavoidable interconnection with the glosses, and it was (as they acknowledged) in a sad state, full of corruptions and interpolations.[6] Even the original Vulgate translation was based a limited number of manuscripts.[7] However, an enormous co-operative labor by Dominican exegetes produced the *correctoria*, long lists of variant readings and amendments to the text gathered from older Latin Bibles, the comments of the Church Fathers, and from the original Greek and Hebrew languages with the assistance of contemporary Jews; and as the thirteenth century progresses we see scriptural references become much more precise than before.[8] It was only the beginnings of textual criticism as we have it today, but it was a significant advance over the previous centuries.[9]

In the first half of this essay, I will attempt an overview of and reflection on an influential commentary from the Middle Ages;[10] I will complete my reflections in the second half by looking at medieval and modern commentary side-by-side. My purpose is not to rank them but

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[5] Ibid., 329–55. The focus of this essay is on Bonaventure's commentary on Ecclesiastes. As Robert J. Karris has demonstrated with respect to the commentary on Luke, Bonaventure relied more on his tremendous memory for scriptural citations than on a concordance, often making connections that could not be made by word searches. See Karris, "Bonaventure and Talbert on Luke 8:26–39: Christology, Discipleship, and Evangelization," *Perspectives in Religious Study (PRSt)* 28 (2002): 59–63.

[6] Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952), 331.

[7] See *NJBC* 68:139 and 147, 1101–2.

[8] Smalley, 270, 334–36.

[9] While Bonaventure's commentary on Ecclesiastes is innovative in several ways, it does not seem to have taken advantage of the linguistic advances described here: He mentions variant readings found outside the Vulgate only four times (commenting on 1:17, 4:4, and two variations in 10:4), even though the older commentaries he relied upon included more information about such variants. See Dominic Vincent Monti, *Bonaventure's Interpretation of Scripture in His Exegetical Works* (Ph.D. diss., The University of Chicago, 1979), 94–95.

[10] This seems to be the most neglected of periods. Relevant to the author and commentary I will discuss, see Monti, *Bonaventure's Interpretation,* 3–4: "In fact, out of the 4,800 items included in a comprehensive bibliography of Bonaventurean research during the years 1850–1973, fewer than ten deal specifically with his biblical commentaries, which comprise two of the nine folio volumes of the Quaracchi edition of his works."

to contrast them, not to have a "duel of the commentaries" but rather a dialogue of the commentators.[11]

Bonaventure on Ecclesiastes

For this purpose, I have chosen a commentary on Ecclesiastes by St. Bonaventure. His commentary on Ecclesiastes was a "classic," according to Beryl Smalley, who writes, "I have seen a large number of postills on Ecclesiastes of the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries: all quote Bonaventure and all quote him anonymously."[12]

Some have thought that Bonaventure's *Commentarius in Ecclesiasticam* dates from the point in his studies when he was giving cursory commentary for beginning students. However, as Smalley has noticed, his commentary does not quite meet the usual description of these cursory commentaries: As a rule they are unoriginal, staying close to the accepted glosses and commentators, and necessarily sketchy, while Bonaventure's postill on Ecclesiastes is in many respects original, even trend-setting, and thorough to the point of being exhaustive.[13] For whatever reason, he singled out Ecclesiastes for special attention, leading others to conclude that the commentary dates from his later years as a master.[14]

Bonaventure shows close dependence on St. Jerome, Hugh of St. Cher, and the traditional anonymous glosses, in addition to his original achievements. I will not take up space in this short paper with identifying which aspects are original to Bonaventure and which are part of the tradition.[15]

The Prologue[16]

The prologue begins with a quotation from Ps 39:5 (40:5), "Blessed the man whose hope is the name of the Lord, and has not had regard for

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[11] At the same time as this article was being written, Karris was working on a similar comparison between Bonaventure and Charles H. Talbert. However, Karris's aim was to find points of contact between Talbert's narrative criticism and Bonaventure's approach to show what medievals and moderns can have in common; the aim of this article is to contrast Bonaventure's approach with historical criticism to show where medievals and moderns could learn from one another. See Karris, 57–66.

[12] Smalley, 274.

[13] Roland E. Murphy, ed., *Medieval Exegesis of Wisdom Literature: Essays by Beryl Smalley* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 40, 43, 45.

[14] Monti, *Bonaventure's Interpretation,* 82–83.

[15] For a good overview of Bonaventure's sources, see ibid., 98–99.

[16] For my research, I have used the Peltier edition of Bonaventure's *opera*, published in Paris in 1867. The commentary on Ecclesiastes is found in volume nine.

vanities, and lying follies."[17] (It was customary to begin the prologue to a commentary with a quotation, meant to bring out the chief themes of the book at hand, from elsewhere in Scripture.) There follows a long, stirring, and heavily theological discourse on why the man who hopes in the Lord has beatitude or blessedness, while the man who sets his heart on the vanities of the world is himself rendered vain, in the sense of "empty" or "futile." This section lays the remote intellectual foundations for understanding the theology of Ecclesiastes, introducing the ideas of beatitude and vanity, eternal and temporal, God and the world; the book of Ecclesiastes itself is not mentioned.

Bonaventure moves into Ecclesiastes by noting that the wise man's chief concern is to teach people the way to beatitude.[18] This sets up an exposition of the "final cause" of the book. Shortly before the composition of this commentary, it had become the custom to use Aristotle's "four causes" to analyze and introduce a book of Scripture: material, efficient, formal, final. Since these four causes can be found anytime something comes into being, and since all causes of coming to be can be grouped under these four headings, the medievals learned to use them as a tool for organizing thoughts and writings. Hence Bonaventure begins his proximate treatment of the book of Ecclesiastes by walking through its four causes.

Final Cause

The final cause of any book is the author's purpose in writing. The wise man's chief concern is to teach people the way to beatitude. And since—as Bonaventure has just argued at length—to arrive at beatitude one must love eternal things, despise temporal things, and lead a good life in interaction with a corrupt world, the wise Solomon produced three books: Proverbs, which teaches one to interact wisely with the world; Ecclesiastes, which teaches one to hold temporal things in contempt; and the Song of Songs, which teaches one to love heavenly things.[19]

Modern scholars have abandoned the notion that Solomon could have written Ecclesiastes, but there is still some profit in reflecting on Bonaventure's approach to the problem of how the Wisdom books relate.

There is a sense in which the mind only sees what it already knows. In a dark room, the brain uses previous memory together with imagination to organize and flesh out a few glints of light here and there into an amazingly accurate picture; in a similar way, the mind uses its pool of previously held ideas to organize and flesh out incoming data. Living in

[17] Ibid., 579.
[18] Ibid., 582.
[19] Ibid.

an age shaped by Darwin and Hegel, we look at the books of Solomon and see evolution and history. Proverbs, think many modern scholars, was an earlier stage, and then disillusionment with the optimistic viewpoint presented there led to the darker and more realistic views of Ecclesiastes. Bonaventure, however, living in a world shaped by Augustine and Francis, looks at these same books and sees mystical theology. Everyone who is serious about the spiritual life experiences the tension of being in the world but not of it.

A very rough analogy would be to compare Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* with the *Imitation of Christ*. The first is all about knowledge and how to get it; the second says repeatedly that the pursuit of knowledge is a snare and a pitfall. Both are true, both have been received into the stream of Catholic tradition, and one individual can even read them both and eventually hold them together in a single view (although it is very difficult to imagine one individual *writing* them both). This does not supplant the historical approach to the problem, but it does supplement it. It can be helpful to read an author whose mental interpretive filters are not the same as our own.

Material Cause

At a crude level, of course, the material cause of a book is the parchment and ink (or equivalents thereof) out of which it is made. But Bonaventure is thinking of the book as an intellectual product in the mind of its author and its readers rather than as a physical product, so the "stuff" the book is made of is its subject matter. The material cause of the book is what it is about.

Ecclesiastes is about the vanity of things.[20] Bonaventure spends a fair amount of time unpacking the idea of "vanity," or emptiness, futility, falsehood, which is opposed to fullness of being, to "truth" in the metaphysical sense.[21] He distinguishes three kinds of vanity: the vanity of mutability, the vanity of guilt, and the vanity of punishment. The first vanity arises from the changeableness of created things, and means nothing more than that created things do not have the absolute fullness of being that God does; in itself this is a good thing, because the world is not supposed to be God anyway. The second vanity comes into play when a person clings to the changeable world and so is drawn into sin, which is both "empty" in the sense that it is lacking in being and "futile" in the sense that it can come to no good; this vanity is an evil, definitely

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 582–84. The root meaning of *vanitas* is "emptiness," from which it comes to denote an illusory or unsubstantial quality, falseness, and pointlessness.

not the way things are supposed to be. The third vanity consists in the punishments due to sin (by which Bonaventure seems to mean original sin rather than a particular personal sin), such as death and concupiscence. This kind of vanity leads to futility in actions, and is also an evil, at least for the person suffering it. Each vanity flows from the one before it: The vanity of mutability leads to the vanity of sin, and this in turn leads to the vanity of punishment.

Formal Cause

The formal cause is what gives a thing its particular nature, what puts it in a species. What makes a book be a particular kind of book is not what it is about but rather the way in which it is written, whether as a play or as a poem, as a treatise or a tragedy. When we ask about the formal cause of a book, we are asking about the way in which it is written. In modern terms, this would be the genre.

According to Bonaventure, Ecclesiastes speaks in a manner "unique among the other books": He speaks as one who solemnly proclaims serious truths,[22] setting forth different opinions, speaking here in the manner of a wise man, and there in the manner of a fool, so that out of the clash of different opinions a single truth may become clear in the minds of the audience.[23]

A modern might then request a color-coded text in which the wise man speaks in red letters or something of that sort. Bonaventure means something more subtle than that. He does not mean that Ecclesiastes is a patchwork of different people speaking with no indication as to who they are, but that there is one wise man speaking who sometimes speaks as though he were a fool. Roland Murphy has recourse to a similar interpretation when he argues that Eccl 8:12b should remain a part of the original work: "But one can allow it to remain as part of the work if one recognizes that he is repeating, even quoting, the traditional doctrine that he does not adhere to."[24] Usually Bonaventure avoids leaning on this method, preferring instead to interpret everything (including 8:12b) as spoken in the author's own voice.[25]

A good example of Bonaventure's preference is his commentary on Eccl 5:17. After presenting the traditional view that the author speaks

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[22] At least, that seems to be the import of the word *concionator*, Jerome's translation of the word *qoheleth*.

[23] Ibid., 582.

[24] Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 56.

[25] Bonaventure, 649–50.

here in the voice of an Epicurean, he goes on to suggest that the author may be speaking in his own voice:

> But nonetheless to understand the things he says, two things should be noted, namely the reason and manner of speaking. . . . [S]ome things he says truly, but other things ironically . . . some things he says approvingly, but in others he is merely recounting what he himself has done. . . . Likewise, some of the things he says recount what he has thought. And he uses this manner of speech often in this book, like a man telling the story of his temptations. Hence this book was, as it were, a kind of meditation of Solomon. And just as a man changes from one meditation to a different opinion on the basis of different considerations, as when he thinks something is good, and afterwards thinks differently about it, so Solomon tells the story [of his thoughts in this book].[26]

Efficient Cause

As was said above, the efficient cause of a book is the author, and for Bonaventure, as for all premodern commentators, the author of Ecclesiastes is Solomon. Despite this sharp disagreement with modern historical-critical exegesis, however, it is interesting to see how he approaches the question of authorship.

In favor of Solomonic authorship, he argues that Solomon was the most suitable person to write the book. After all, Ecclesiastes contains severe condemnations of riches, and honor, and the pursuit of knowledge, so the person condemning should be someone who has experience of these things. If a poor man condemned riches, who would believe him? So our author needs to be someone who was powerful, rich, pleasure-seeking, and a pursuer of knowledge. But we know of no one more powerful, rich, pleasure-seeking, and wise than Solomon, so he is the best candidate.[27]

Against Solomonic authorship, Bonaventure points out that it is not helpful for a sinner to condemn sin: It is more a source of scandal than of edification. Furthermore, it would seem to be a sin for Solomon to write the book, the sin of hypocrisy.[28]

He defends Solomon first by pointing to the traditional idea that Solomon repented at the end of his life, and wrote Ecclesiastes as a result. But even if he did not, Bonaventure argues, the Holy Spirit can speak true things through both good men and bad, as Christ implies when he

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[26] Ibid., 628–29.
[27] Ibid., 582–83.
[28] Ibid., 585.

instructs the people to do what the Pharisees say but not what they do. Knowing that the book was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we do not need to bother ourselves about the moral quality of the man who wrote it. As for the problem of hypocrisy, he points out that Solomon was given the gift of wisdom in a rather impressive manner, and so he had a duty to use it for the people. It would have been a sin *not* to use his wisdom.[29]

The Commentary

To describe the commentary itself in detail would require many, many pages, so I will limit my remarks to Bonaventure's division of the text of Ecclesiastes, which actually gives a good sketch of the commentary as a whole.

The three main parts of Ecclesiastes are, of course, the title (1:1), the body of the text (1:2–12:8), and the epilogue (12:9–14). Bonaventure does not consider the possibility that someone besides Solomon added these parts.[30]

More interesting is the body of the text. First, the author sets out his thesis (1:2), namely that "all things are vanity." Then he spends almost all of the body proving his thesis. Lastly, he concludes by restating the thesis (12:8). This way of viewing the text is consonant with the view that the author writes as a *concionator*, trying to persuade his audience by various arguments.[31]

The proofs of the thesis fall into three parts. Bringing his analysis of vanity into play, Bonaventure says that the first part is about the vanity of mutability (1:3–3:15), the second part about the vanity of guilt (3:16–7:23), and the third part about the vanity of punishment (7:24–12:7).[32] Although it is not clear to me that 7:24 is the right division point, the division of the text into these three categories is surprisingly convincing. The first part of Ecclesiastes does speak about things which are neither good nor bad in themselves, like the unceasing change of the sea, and the passing of times and seasons. Then the author begins in 3:16 to speak about the evil things that men do. At some point, whether 7:24 or elsewhere, he transitions to speaking about the evils that men suffer, concluding with death in chapter 12.

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 585–86. He notes that the title manifests the efficient cause of the book, the body of the text manifests the material and formal causes, and the epilogue manifests the final cause.

[31] Ibid., 587.

[32] Ibid., 588.

The section about the vanity of guilt is rather long, because unlike the vanity of mutability, this vanity is *not* the way things are supposed to be. So after the author sets out the vanity itself (3:16–4:16), he then spends a lot of time setting out a remedy against it (4:17–7:23). Bonaventure sees him as setting out three kinds of guilt, namely malice (3:16ff.), avarice (4:1ff.), and imprudence (4:13ff), and then setting out remedies in the same order, namely against malice (4:17ff), avarice (5:9ff), and imprudence (6:8ff).[33]

A couple of points for reflection occur here. First, Bonaventure sees the author of Ecclesiastes as being—at a certain level at least—very clear in his ideas and organized in his approach, rather than confused and wandering. These seem to be the two options: Given so convoluted a text, the author is either very organized or very disorganized. However, this should not be taken too far. If you pursue Bonaventure's division to a certain level of detail, the author's more human side emerges, with brief tangents, outbursts of emotion, and so on, as in 8:15, where he says that the author speaks "as a man who is disturbed."[34]

Second, Bonaventure does not seem to have many literary techniques in his text-divisional tool bag. For example, he does not consider using repeated phrases as a clue to the division, and he obviously does not have the linguistic training to pursue a numerological argument of the sort proposed by Addison and Wright.[35] He is forced to rely exclusively on a good grasp of the theme at hand and his tremendous ability to follow an argument.[36] These limitations seem to be genuine limitations in training rather than results of premodern theological convictions about inspiration, because he seems quite ready to use the methods of textual division he learned in the study of Aristotle's corpus, which he certainly did not regard as inspired.

Bonaventure's commentary on Ecclesiastes is thus heavily theological: He is more concerned that Ecclesiastes be written under the inspiration of the Spirit than that it be written by a morally upright man; the subject of Ecclesiastes is one you can find in a book of devotions; the division of the text is according to a theological analysis of vanity. He obviously operates on the assumption that—to rephrase a common line—theology is the soul of Scripture.

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[33] Ibid., 613, 621 & 632.

[34] Ibid., 651.

[35] See Murphy, *Ecclesiastes,* xxxviii.

[36] Or as Karris somewhat more positively puts it ("Bonaventure and Talbert," 59), he relied on "the insights of previous commentators, the Scriptures themselves, a keen literary sense, a compendious memory, a brilliant intellect, and a profound faith—excellent tools, it would seem, for any exegete."

Death and Afterlife in Ecclesiastes

We are now prepared to address in more detail a particular theme in the commentary the theme of Ecclesiastes' view of life after death. I will compare Bonaventure's approach with that of a contemporary scholar so that, by setting modern and medieval side-by-side, we can get a sharper picture of both. Our modern representative is Father Roland Murphy, whose recent death was sad news indeed for Catholic biblical scholarship.

Murphy on Death and Afterlife in Ecclesiastes

In the introduction to his work, Murphy offers a quick overview of Qoheleth's views on death.[37] While ancient Israelites were remarkably resigned to death overall, Qoheleth simply cannot reconcile himself to it. They apparently found solace in the thought that they lived on in others' memory (Prov 10:7) and in their own posterity, but Qoheleth denies that there will be any memory (Eccl 1:11; 2:16), and wonders whether his heir will be wise or disastrously foolish (2:18–19). Although he thinks that death would be preferable to certain extreme situations (4:2–3; 6:1–6), otherwise it is entirely unwelcome, as the lugubrious tone of 12:1–7 shows. Death is the complete opposite of the only good Qoheleth can find, the life of pleasure; after death there is nothing (9:10).

Murphy's commentary on particular passages fleshes out this summary of Qoheleth's view of death and afterlife. His comments on each passage are divided into three parts: first the "notes," a verse-by-verse analysis of textual-critical issues, grammatical questions, and other such things that would disrupt the flow of a commentary on the meaning; second the "comment," another verse-by-verse analysis, this time of the meaning and import of the text; and lastly, the "explanation," in which he takes a "wide-angle" view of the text, summarizing the main points and placing it within the flow of the book as a whole.

While I will not present everything Murphy has to say about the theme of death and afterlife in Ecclesiastes, what I present will be representative of the whole.

Ecclesiastes 3:16–21[38]

Qoheleth bemoans the fact that human justice is corrupt, and in the worst of places—public justice. While he clearly affirms that God will

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[37] Murphy, *Ecclesiastes,* lxvii–lxix.
[38] Ibid., 37–38.

judge both the good and the wicked, it is far from clear what form he thinks that judgment will take. "He did not deny that God is just," Murphy says, "but he saw no evidence for it. The divine judgment, so often affirmed in his biblical tradition, was something he could not deny, but it appeared useless in reality."[39]

Murphy finds it hard to see the connection between vv. 17 and 18. Perhaps Qoheleth means that human injustice shows that men are beasts despite the divine judgment.

The description of death in v. 19 is rooted in Gen 2:7 and Ps 104:29–30. The statement in v. 21—"Who knows if the life-breath of humans goes upwards, and if the life-breath of animals goes down into the earth?"—is equivalent to a denial: There is no distinction in fate between the life-breath of man and the life-breath of animals. Although Murphy is not sure what exact position is being denied, he is sure that the proposition denied here is not the same as the proposition affirmed in 12:7, namely that "the life-breath returns to God who gave it." The hopeful-sounding affirmation of 12:7 does nothing to mitigate the gloomy view of 3:21.

Ecclesiastes 9:4–10[40]

The comparison in v. 4 of a living dog with a dead lion is heavily ironic, especially given the low value of dogs in the ancient Middle East. Love, hatred, and jealousy are rhymed in the Hebrew of v. 6. Starting in v. 7, Qoheleth draws a *carpe diem* conclusion which is very closely parallel to a passage in the epic of Gilgamesh.[41] These learned details are certainly not what one could find in Bonaventure's commentary, since Bonaventure does not seem to have known Hebrew and was certainly not familiar with the epic of Gilgamesh, but it is difficult to see exactly what they add with respect to the meaning of the text.

Verse 10, says Murphy, "is motivated by a dour but realistic perspective: in Sheol there is no real activity or life, so act now! This description of Sheol is classic; it portrays a state of non-life."

Ecclesiastes 12:7[42]

The process described in this verse is a reversal of Gen 2:7. "This is a picture of dissolution, not of immortality, as if there were a *reditus animae ad Deum*, "return of the soul to God." Qoheleth is not even talking about

[39] Ibid., 37.
[40] Ibid., 92–93.
[41] ANET, 90.
[42] Ibid., 120.

a "soul," but about the "life-breath," which Murphy says is "a totally different category of thought."[43] In a polemical context, Qoheleth denied that there is any distinction between the life-breath of men and that of animals (3:21), but he certainly shares with the rest of the Old Testament the conviction that God is the possessor and giver of life, that is, the life-breath. (Cf. Ps 104:29–30; Job 33:4; 34:15.)

From what we have seen of Murphy's commentary, Qoheleth was a dour individual who had no use for the consolations faith was supposed to offer in the face of difficulties. Although he was confused about many things, he was quite clear in his opposition to an unknown philosophy that seems to have leaned in the direction of a special postmortem fate for mankind. For Qoheleth, there is nothing after this life—at least, nothing to speak of—and death is simply a negative.

Bonaventure on Death and Afterlife in Ecclesiastes

Bonaventure does not have a section that summarizes the theme of death in Ecclesiastes. I will pull together the main points after we have looked at his commentary on particular passages. His commentary on each passage is divided into two or sometimes three parts: First, he explains the literal sense as briefly and clearly as possible; next he explains the spiritual sense of the text; lastly he takes up doctrinal or exegetical questions that arise from the text, dealing with them in the classic Scholastic "question" format. This separation of the tasks to be accomplished was one of Bonaventure's major innovations, and later commentators on Ecclesiastes followed his example.[44]

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[43] The point is well-taken, but "a totally different category of thought" is a bit of an overstatement. Our western notion of "soul" was decisively shaped by the tradition of Greek philosophy, which started with just such vague notions as "life-breath" (the original meaning of *pneuma* is after all "breath" or "wind"). The later tradition shaped and refined the early, imprecise attempts at stating the nature of the soul, but always in definite continuity with them. For a clear example of this continuity, see Aristotle's *On the Soul*, Bk. 1, esp. chap. 2.

[44] The emphasis in this commentary falls decidedly on the literal sense. Bonaventure offers a spiritual interpretation for 13 passages (1:5–7; 2:4–7; 3:2–8; 4:9–12; 4:13–16; 9:4–10; 9:12; 9:14–15; 11:1–7; 12:1–2; 12:3–7), in accord with his general principle that a spiritual sense is only appropriate when the text in question does not have a direct bearing on faith or morals; cf. Bonaventure, *Breviloquium,* trans. Jose de Vinck (Paris: St. Anthony Guild, 1963), 19. In contrast to this, there are 83 "questions" dealing with exegetical or doctrinal difficulties arising from the literal sense; altogether, these "questions" make up about 25 percent of the text of Bonaventure's commentary. See Monti, *Bonaventure's Interpretation,* 100–101.

Ecclesiastes 3:16–21[45]

To begin, Solomon bemoans the perversion of justice by rulers. This leads him to look for God's judgment; Bonaventure says that the "judgment" can be taken either to mean the time of judgment for each man, or the general time when all things will be revealed.

Having described the evil, Solomon then discusses why things are the way they are now: God is testing men by making them very much like beasts. Evil men, seeing that their lives are like the beasts', will become like the beasts in behavior as well, while good men will persevere and live spiritually.

In the lines that follow, according to Bonaventure, Solomon illustrates in detail the likeness between men and beasts. After showing the similarity, he says that the difference (the spiritual element in man) is very difficult to discern. Those who have faith know about the difference, and 12:7 is said in their person ("the spirit returns to God"); but those without faith have great difficulty discovering any difference, and 9:3 is said in their person ("one fate comes to all").

In the "questions" on this section, Bonaventure raises the difficulty about the soul again: How can Solomon say "Who knows?" when there are abundant philosophical proofs of the immortality of the soul? To sharpen the point, Bonaventure runs quickly through a number of these proofs. In response to the objection, he says that, even though faith and philosophy are in agreement on this point, nevertheless without faith it is very, very difficult for philosophers to arrive at the truth. Even Plato, that stalwart defender of the soul's immortality, erred by saying that animal souls are immortal—the *other* side of Solomon's "who knows"![46]

Ecclesiastes 12:7[47]

"The dust returns to the earth" means simply that the body disintegrates into ashes, in accord with Gen 3:19 and Sir 40:11. The spirit returns to God who gave it (Ps 32:15 Vg.); since God gave the spirit, the spirit gives back to God, like someone repaying a debt (2 Cor 5:10).[48]

It is interesting to note that while Murphy cites Gen 2:7, the creation account, Bonaventure looks to Gen 3:19, the curse after the fall. This fits with Bonaventure's take on this part of Ecclesiastes. According to his division, this part treats of the "vanity of punishment," and therefore deals

[45] Bonaventure, 613–15.

[46] Ibid., 615–16.

[47] An important point arises in 9:4–10 which I would rather save for the last, so I will turn now to 12:7.

[48] Ibid., 678–79.

with death insofar as death is a punishment for sin—and I take it that he means original sin specifically. Already at 7:24, Solomon has been discussing the vanity of punishment, that is, the results of original sin, but up to 12:1 he was talking about punishment which is itself an occasion of sin, such as concupiscence. Here at last, after working slowly through the miseries of a fallen and sinful world which seems on every side to alienate man from his creator, Solomon finds a kind of punishment which actually calls us back to God: "Remember your creator in the days of your youth, before the time of affliction comes" Death is indeed a negative in Ecclesiastes, as Murphy concludes, yet there is this one redeeming aspect to it.

Bonaventure also offers a spiritual interpretation of this passage: The "dust" refers to sinners, who are thrust into the "depths of infernal darkness" (this is a technical term, as will become clear below). He arrives at this interpretation by connecting "dust" to Ps 1:4 and "earth" to Prov 25:3.[49]

Ecclesiastes 9:4–10[50]

We go back now to the earlier passage. Here Solomon describes how men are led into a false sense of security because they do not see any providential difference between the fate of good men and the fate of evil men. This false sense of security then leads them into sin. First, he points out that no one can avoid death. Next, he describes how death puts one into a bad state. Lastly, he states the conclusion that would follow if indeed a man could not know whether what he does is pleasing to God, and whether there will be any reward for virtue.

In the "questions" on this passage, Bonaventure asks how Solomon could draw such an Epicurean conclusion. If we take the passage as being said in the person of an Epicurean, the answer is easy, of course; but Bonaventure prefers to take it all in the voice of Solomon. He says that Solomon draws the conclusion as what would follow if these premises were true, namely that a man cannot know whether what he does is pleasing to God and whether there will be any reward for virtue. Solomon himself does not hold these premises, but he draws the conclusion as a hypothetical "If X were, then Y would be."[51]

But what about the statement that "the dead know nothing any more"? Surely this is not what we believe? In the commentary on the passage, Bonaventure simply notes that the act of knowing presupposes

[49] Ibid., 681.
[50] Ibid., 655–56.
[51] Ibid., 657–58.

life, while the dead have neither life, nor motion, nor sense.[52] In the "questions," he says further that Solomon means that the dead did not know the things of this world, nor were they in the memory of those in the world, nor did they have any affection for things of this world.[53]

What may seem odd to a modern reader is that Bonaventure not only accepts these gloomy views as Solomon's, but accepts them himself as fact. He does not say that men of Solomon's time *thought* the dead do not know about the things of this world; he simply says that dead men *did not* know about the things of this world. His comment on v. 10 reveals that the past tense "did not" is the key. Commenting on the line, "For there is neither work, nor reason, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the depth *(inferos)* to which you are going," Bonaventure cites Job 10:22 to support the claim that "there is no reason there" in the "depth," and then explains: "Sinners went there, *and everyone before the coming of Christ,* as regards the outer part"[54] (emphasis added).

Bonaventure is referring to the *limbus patrum*, the "limbo" or "outer part" of the patriarchs. One finds the basic idea in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

> Scripture calls the abode of the dead, to which the dead Christ went down, "hell"—*Sheol* in Hebrew or *Hades* in Greek—because those who are there are deprived of the vision of God. Such is the case for all the dead, whether evil or righteous, while they await the redeemer: which does not mean that their lot is identical, as Jesus shows through the parable of the poor man Lazarus who was received into "Abraham's bosom." . . . Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation, but to free the just who had gone before him.[55]

Before Christ's death and resurrection, everyone without exception went to "Sheol," or Hell. However, Sheol had several layers: Those who died in the state of grace went to the "outer part," or *limbus* in Latin; those who died outside the state of grace went to the deepest part of Sheol, the "depth of infernal darkness," as Bonaventure calls it. When Christ died and descended into Sheol, he did not free those in the deepest part,

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[52] Ibid., 655–56. *"Mortui vero nihil noverunt amplius, quia cognitio supponit vitam: et ita praecellunt in actu cognitionis viventes mortuos; non enim habent, nec motum, nec sensum. . . . 'Qui descenderit ad inferos, non ascendet, nec revertetur ultra ad domum suum, nec cognoscet eum amplius locus eius.'* [Job 7:9.]"

[53] Ibid., 657.

[54] Ibid., 656.

[55] *CCC,* 633.

where the damned reside, but rather those in the outer part. These he released and brought with him into heaven.

This idea can be found in some passages of the New Testament, as in 1 Pet 3:18–19, 4:6, and John 5:25, while other passages merely hint at it, such as Phil 2:10. The early Christian authors Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian pass it on, and the Church Fathers as well.[56] Knowing that Bonaventure has the doctrine of the *limbus patrum* in the background helps to explain why he simply accepts Solomon's gloomy views of the afterlife as fact. Truth be told, there was not much to be said for being dead before Christ came. The ancient idea of the underworld as a shadowy realm of gibbering half-men may well be the way things were.[57]

Concluding Reflections

Looking back on the two commentaries we have surveyed, we see different strengths in each. Murphy seems to be more historically aware, so to speak: He stops to question whether "breath" or "spirit" really means the same thing as "spirit" does for us today. When Qoheleth says that the spirit returns to God, is he *really* talking about the soul's relation to its creator? Murphy's linguistic skills are another strength. While Bonaventure chose not to use much of the linguistic and textual-critical data available to him, Murphy devotes a special section (the "notes") to such matters. With such careful attention to ancient thought and language, Murphy measures up well against the words of Vatican II:

> To rightly understand what the sacred author wished to assert in writing, one must give due attention both to the customary and native manners of perceiving, speaking, and narrating which were in force at the time of the hagiographer, and to the customs which were wont to be observed at that time in men's dealings with one another.[58]

Bonaventure's strength seems to lie in what one might call theological awareness. How do Ecclesiastes' statements about death and the state of souls after death relate to what the New Testament teaches, or for that matter to what theological or philosophical arguments can demonstrate? How does this treatment of death relate to the revealed cause of death,

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[56] See the citations in Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma,* trans. Patrick Lynch (Rockford, IL: Tan, 1974), 192; see *ABD* 2:156.

[57] See the gloomy biblical passages quoted in Paul Heinisch, *The Theology of the Old Testament,* trans. William G. Heidt, OSB (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1955), 280–81.

[58] *Dei Verbum* 12; this and all other translations are my own.

namely the fall of Adam? Bonaventure measures up well against the next line of the document just quoted:

> But, since Sacred Scripture must also be read and interpreted by the same Spirit by whom it was written, to rightly unearth the sense of the sacred texts one must attend no less diligently to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture, with account being taken of the living tradition of the Church and of the analogy of faith.[59]

Just as each commentator has particular strengths, so each commentator has particular weaknesses. Bonaventure's heavily theological approach risks keeping Ecclesiastes on a leash, so to speak: In the attempt to fit Ecclesiastes into the analogy of faith, there is a danger that we will not allow the sacred text to challenge our way of thinking about the contents of that faith.

But there is also a weakness in Murphy's very historical approach. Perhaps the most striking difference between Bonaventure and Murphy is that the question of whether Ecclesiastes teaches truth or falsehood does not seem to occur to Murphy, while for Bonaventure it is a constant concern. For Bonaventure, if Ecclesiastes has a gloomy view of the afterlife, this has to be explained by reference to the *limbus patrum*; in fact, he has a special section of his commentary (the "questions") devoted mainly to this sort of question. For Murphy, if Ecclesiastes teaches that there is nothing after death—well, then that is what the author thought, and an exegete's job is to recover an accurate historical account of what the author thought.

This is the danger peculiar to the historical-critical approach: to make history itself the goal rather than the means of interpretation. Historical considerations are necessary as a means of interpreting Scripture, and this is the great strength of modern efforts. But at the same time, one must keep firmly in view that the ultimate *goal* of using historical considerations in exegesis is not to discover history, not to discover merely what a historical individual historically thought, but rather to discover "the truth which God wished to be recorded in the Sacred Letters for the sake of our salvation."[60] NV

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[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., 11: "Since therefore everything which the inspired authors or hagiographers asserted must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, the books of Scripture must be confessed to teach firmly, faithfully, and without error the truth which God wished to be recorded in the Sacred Letters for the sake of our salvation."

The Philosophical Category of "Faith" at the Origins of Modern Scepticism

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Toward a New Interpretation of the Cartesian Novelty

IT IS OFTEN SAID that modern philosophy represents a rupture with the whole of the preceding tradition, classical and Christian, mainly through the epistemic turn performed by René Descartes with the *Discours de la méthode*, launching the long process that leads to the primacy of the subject and to immanentism.[1] This historiographic interpretation boasts a tradition of several decades and is supported by many qualified authors.[2] I supported it myself more than once, always in connection with the historical developments in epistemology.[3] Even so, upon closer consideration, this interpretation is not altogether satisfactory

[1] Translated by Juan Francisco Franck.

[2] Cf. Cornelio Fabro, *Introduzione all'ateismo moderno,* II ed., 2 vol. (Rome: Edizioni Studium, 1966); Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Ideality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). Referring to Fabro, and quoting his celebrated motto—*"Incipit tragoedia moderna"*—Ralph McInerny wrote recently: "Descartes famously sought the beginnings of certain knowledge its primary instances, as the result of the application of a method. The application of this method to the contents of his mind, the inventory of cognitive claims he and others would make, revealed them all to be dubitable. This means that every claim to know for certain has been shown to be mistaken. More precisely, all knowledge claims dependent on sense perception and all mathematical propositions are susceptible of doubt, it is imaginable or conceivable that they are false, and therefore they must be set aside. No one has any warrant simply to assert that he knows these to be true." See "Implicit Philosophy," in *Sensus communis* 3(2002): 56.

[3] See A. Livi, *Filosofia del senso comune: Logica della scienza e della fede* (Milan: Ares, 1990); *Il senso comune tra razionalismo e scetticismo: Vico, Reid, Jacobi, Moore* (Milan: Massimo, 1992); *Il principio di coerenza: Senso comune e logica epistemica* (Rome:

because it does not tell the whole truth. After having studied the ventures of modern epistemology in more depth (the developments of rationalism and of empiricism, their final stages in skepticism, criticism, and idealism), I became convinced that the rupture, which certainly exists, is not so much with medieval philosophy—even if the polemics against the Scholastic characterize the time of Renaissance humanism, up through Descartes himself—but with classical philosophy. We must indeed admit that the epistemological question, so essential to modern thought, revolves around the problem of certainty, and that the problem of certainty, as set out by Descartes and by all philosophers who follow his method, consists specifically in the attempt to *determine the conditions of assent to what is not, or is not considered, self-evident*. In other words, it is the problem of faith, understood precisely as the firm assent to what is not self-evident. Now this problem does not exist in classical Greek philosophy but is instead at the core of Christian thought.

Christian revelation, with its novelty and speculative fecundity so well brought to light by Étienne Gilson in the thirties,[4] has not only had a positive impact in philosophy at the level of metaphysical, anthropological, and ethical notions, but also at the level of logical notions, among which the most important is doubtless that of "faith." It is here that, in my opinion, modern philosophy so radically differs from classical philosophy, whereas it is homogeneous with Christian–medieval philosophy.[5] Therefore, the rupture with tradition produced by the Cartesian method must be considered *within the Christian philosophical universe*. This universe, in turn, is at the roots of the modern theoretical framework, distinctly different from the pre-Christian philosophical universe and not reducible to it.

In this article I will examine an emblematic case, that of skepticism. My conviction is that the origins of modern skepticism are to be found in the hypothesis—induced from the typically Christian problem of faith—that *what is essential lies beyond the immediate* and that *the certainty about the essential is reached after a long critical journey and with the decisive participation of an act of free choice*.

Modern Skepticism as Catholic Fideism

Even if in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries skeptically oriented philosophers were called "Pyrrhonists," thus recalling ancient skepticism,

Armando, 1997); *La filosofia e la sua storia,* vol. II: *La filosofia moderna* (Rome: Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, 1999).

[4] See Etienne Gilson, *L'Esprit de la philosophie médiévale* (Paris: Vrin, 1931–1932).

[5] See A. Livi, *Il cristianesimo nella filosofia: Il problema della filosofia cristiana nei suoi sviluppi storici e nelle prospettive attuali* (L'Aquila: Japadre, 1969).

modern skepticism, having developed within Christian culture, is very different from its pre-Christian precursor, since the latter, as Brochard pointed out, never denies completely the metaphysical value of common sense.[6] The new elements in modern skepticism have been brought to light by the historian Richard H. Popkin,[7] who has examined philosophical thought in a specific moment of transition, the years 1500 to 1675. During these years the reappearance in Europe of the works of Sextus Empiricus provoked a renewed interest in Hellenistic skepticism, precisely when the discussion about the epistemological problems raised by the Reformation was most intense. The main epistemological problems raised by the Reformation were about individual conscience and subjective certainty about faith, but the problem of philosophy and in general that of reason outside the domain of Revelation, and the problem of the doctrinal authority of tradition and of the Magisterium were also raised. Simona Morini, summarizing Popkin's research, remarks that "at the origin of modern thought and science there is not a conflict of science and faith in the first place, but a religious one, a problem *within* faith."[8] I agree with this interpretation; furthermore, I extend it to the whole philosophical venture that begins with the encounter between Greek thought and Christian faith, which has given birth to entirely new problems and solutions, in relation to pre-Christian classical times. In particular, in the general context of the influence of Christianity on philosophy, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries represent the beginning of modern philosophy, characterized—always through the influence of Christianity—by the primacy of gnoseology. One typical trait of the period from the mid-1500s to the end of the 1600s is precisely the skepticism of a large part of Catholic philosophical thought, whereas Catholic theological thought strengthened its dogmatism. Both dimensions—skepticism in philosophy and dogmatism in theology—seem to come from the crisis of religious conscience, and, more particularly, from the heightening of the problem of certainty about the "truth that saves": namely, its sources, the channels through which it is transmitted, the criteria of verification, and the space for freedom of interpretation.

It is well-known that Luther, against whom Erasmus of Rotterdam argued, denied the authority of the Church, or of any human magisterium

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[6] See Victor Brochard, *Les Sceptiques grecs,* II ed. (Paris: Vrin, 1923), 413.

[7] See Richard H. Popkin, *History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* (New York: Assen, 1960).

[8] Simona Marini, *Introduzione* to Richard H. Popkin, *La storia dello scetticismo: Da Erasmo a Spinoza,* Italian translation from the second English edition (Milan: Anabasi, 1995), 12.

whatsoever, in interpreting the Scriptures. After Luther, then, Christianity faces the problem of the *regula fidei*": What is the criterion by which one can identify the true doctrine of faith? The criterion of truth taken up by Lutherans was subjectivist and individualistic: For the believer only that is true which his conscience constrains him to believe from the reading of the Scriptures. Erasmus, on the contrary, considering the insurmountable difficulties in determining the true meaning of Scripture, embraced skeptical wisdom and advised trusting the apostolic succession (Tradition), submitting oneself to the interpretation given by the Church. In this sense, Erasmus can be seen as the founding father of a tradition of Christian–Catholic fideism that extends throughout modernity and eventually becomes the prevailing position in Catholic culture in postmodern times. After him, many "will use the skeptical argument to defend their own faith: in the absence of incontrovertible rational arguments in favor of one confession instead of another, why not trust faith or tradition?"[9] Paradoxically, a significant number of Catholic thinkers argued against the Lutherans on their same ideological ground, marked by antidogmatism and irrationalism.[10]

However, it is Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) who expresses at the time of Erasmus the attitude of skeptical modern Catholics (the *"nouveaux pyrrhoniens"*) in all its radicalism. He writes that "man's plague is the conceit of knowledge" and the only way we have to know ourselves is God's Revelation: "Everything we see without the light of his grace is nothing but vanity and madness."[11] The priest Pierre Charron (1541–1603) and the bishop Jean-Pierre Camus (1530–1600) were followers of Montaigne. The former, in a book written immediately after the death of his teacher Montaigne, extolled "the marvellous beauty of the union between skepticism and Catholicism."[12] The latter, who was also secretary of the bishop Saint Francis of Sales, argues against "protestant rationalism" and tries to protect Catholic faith from the dangers of a conceited human reason. The best thing, in his opinion, is a faith that does not rely on human certainties, easy to be destroyed, since the only truths that men know are those which God wanted to reveal to us: "All

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[9] Armando Massarenti, "Il dogmatismo (non la religione) è il vero nemico," *Il Sole–24 Ore* (February 26, 1995): 28.

[10] See Ramón García de Haro, *Historia teológica del modernismo* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1969); R. Popkin, "Fideism, Quietism, and Unbelief: Skepticism For and Against Religion in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in ed. Marcus Hester, *Faith, Reason, and Skepticism*, (Pennsylvania, PA: Temple University Press, 1992).

[11] Michel de Montaigne, *Apologie de Raymonde Sebond,* I, 3.

[12] Pierre Charron, *Les trois livres de la Sagesse,* III, 1.

the rest is nothing but dream, wind, smoke and opinion."[13] In France, Montaigne's, Carron's, and Camus's skeptical perspective becomes in the first decades of the 1600s the philosophy of the "erudite libertines," including Gabriel Naudé (Richelieu's and Mazzarino's librarian), Guy Patin (rector of the School of Medicine at the Sorbonne), Léonard Morandé (Richelieu's secretary), Pierre Gassendi (the famous priest, scientist, and philosopher, who corresponded with Descartes), Isaac la Peyrère (secretary to the Prince of Condé), and François de la Mothe le Vayer, for whom "the soul of a Christian skeptic is like a field clear of weeds, devoid of the dangerous axioms that cram the minds of so many cultivated people, and therefore ready to receive the dew of divine grace with much more happiness than if it were still full of the presumption that it has certain knowledge of all things and no doubts of any sort."[14] Few succeeded in opposing the cultural hegemony of the "Pyrrhonian" Catholic intellectuals. The Jesuit François Garasse dared to stigmatize Charron's "alleged piety," calling it a "very bad service done to his Country and to his faith." Another religious, François Ogier, replied to Garasse in an irritated way: "Charron's works are too elevated for a low and vulgar mind like yours." Even Saint-Cyran reacted violently against Garasse, and his criticism of the Jesuit was so insistent that the authority of the Sorbonne finally censured Garasse. Meanwhile, the work of the Portuguese Francisco Sánchez (1560–1632), published in Lyon in 1581 and, significantly, titled *Quod nil scitur*, was becoming popular. This work expressed for the first time the idea of a voluntary and systematic doubt,[15] which certainly inspired Descartes for his *Discours de la méthode*.

Apologetic Attempts and Skeptical Value of the Cartesian Method

In his history of skepticism, Popkin describes Descartes as somebody who, while claiming to have "triumphed over skepticism," remained substantially its prisoner, to the point of becoming a *"sceptique malgré lui."*[16] This interpretation, if correct, entails a clear characterization of rationalism in terms of skepticism. Rationalism, accordingly, would be much closer to British empiricism (Locke, Berkeley, Hume) than critics

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[13] Jean-Pierre Camus, *Essay sceptique,* I, 2, 3.

[14] "Cinq dialogues à l'imitation des Anciens," Frankfurt 1606, in *Oeuvres*. vol. 1 (Mons 1671), 275.

[15] Francisco Sánchez, *Quod nihil scitur, ad lectorem: "Ad me proinde memetipsum retuli, omniaque in dubium revocans, ac si a quopiam nil unquam dictum, res ipsas examinare coepi, qui verus est sciendi modus."*

[16] See Popkin, *History of Scepticism,* chap. 10.

usually say. Moreover, this interpretation would offer a better account of how the "critical" Kant could perform a synthesis between the rationalism inherited from Wolff and the empiricist stances coming from the reading of Hume. In short, the novelty of transcendental philosophy would have to be severely reassessed, in the sense that it would be evident that the true "Copernican revolution" was the one brought about, well before Kant, by René Descartes with his new method.

The Cartesian method, implicitly based on an a priori choice, namely the choice to privilege the certainty of self-consciousness (the consciously exercised indubitability of doubt) over the certainty of the "things" present to consciousness, represents indeed a turn of prime importance in the history of philosophy. From then on, the history of philosophy presents all thinkers necessarily aligned for or against the new methodological starting point, for or against "Cartesianism." It being a question of choice—as Del Noce justly observed—modern philosophy after Descartes has always been aligned either for or against this choice of making the *"primum cognitum"* a pretext for affirming the subject's freedom, for releasing consciousness from every dependency on the object.[17]

As is known, for Martin Heidegger this is not the essential point of the turn Descartes inaugurated. For Heidegger, the essential point was rather shifting the focus from the question of truth to the question of certainty, or, in other words, giving up of the Greek notion of truth as manifestation of being *(aletheia)* and adopting instead the Scholastic notion of "conformity" of thought to the object *(adaequatio intellectus ad rem)*, but exaggerating the subjective dimension: namely, the dimension in which the object of thought is not "being" but only the "representation" of being.[18]

I do not want to focus now on the concept of truth proposed by Heidegger, which is compatible with the concept of truth as conformity of the thought to its object;[19] neither do I want to discuss here Heidegger's interpretation of the Cartesian turn, regarding which I would refer to Messinese's accurate historiographical and critical study.[20] In my opinion, Descartes's turn consists rather in the substitution of the certainties proper to the common sense—which refer to the indubitable presence of

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17 See Augusto Del Noce, *Cartesio* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1989).

18 See Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides,* trans. A. Schuwer and R. Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); and *Nietzsche,* trans. D. F. Krell (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979).

19 See A. Livi, *La ricerca della verità: Dal senso comune alla dialettica* (Rome: Leonardo da Vinci, 2001).

20 See Leonardo Messinese, *Heidegger e la filosofia moderna: L'"inizio" della soggettività: Descartes* (Milan: Mursia, 2000).

things in the world—with the certainty of the *"cogito."* Cartesian *"cogito"* is nothing else but *the doubt itself assumed as a limit that cannot be transcended*, or, in gnosiological terms, *thought without an object different from itself*. So, even if the declared aim of Descartes's philosophy was to overcome the skepticism of his time and to elaborate a new apologetics of Catholic faith,[21] this aim finally turns out to be substantially frustrated. Skepticism remains the substance of the method adopted by Descartes, even if his skepticism and that of his followers are radically different from the ancient one. In fact, Descartes's skepticism was born and developed in the context of problems related to faith in Revelation and its defense from rationalistic criticisms. It must be acknowledged that post Cartesian skepticism is truly a new form of skepticism, theorized above all by Catholic thinkers who have followed Descartes's method. In this regard, the different view adopted by Giambattista Vico is very interesting because this Neapolitan thinker dialectically opposed Cartesianism by focusing, not on its final outcomes, but precisely on its methodological principles.

We can and must admit without suspicion that Descartes was entirely sincere when he declared that the final aim of the *Discourse on Method* is to remake the whole building of science, "first philosophy" at its head, upon a new and most certain alethic foundation.[22] The problem with his alethic foundation, that is, with the indubitability of thought in act (the *"cogito"*), is that it does not recover what has been hopelessly lost at the beginning with the hyperbolic doubt, namely *the object of thought (as knowledge)*, which primarily consists *(primum cognitum)* in the reality of the world. The *"cogito,"* in fact, is thought closed in upon itself, a thought that remained "empty," having expelled from itself, via the *"volo dubitare de omnibus,"* the reality of the object. Certainly, this thought in act, *from the point of view of formal logic,* appears as indubitable. However, considered in relation to its content, that is, *from the point of view of material logic,* the *"cogito"* is nothing else but the same doubt with which the Cartesian investigation has begun its journey; the same doubt that has excluded all possible certainty about the world and all other evidences of common sense, considering them incapable of adjusting themselves to the concept of evidence previously adopted by Descartes. For this reason, I admit that

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[21] "Not only the aim of the Cartesian doubt differs from the aim of the sceptical doubt, but its method is not the same either." See E. Gilson, in René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode (Texte et commentaire),* VI ed., ed. Etienne Gilson (Paris: Vrin, 1925, 1987), 269.

[22] Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* trans. D. A. Cress (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1980), (II, 15) 8: "My plan has never been more than to try to reform my own thoughts and to build upon a foundation which is completely my own."

Descartes sincerely (from a psychological point of view) set out to overcome skepticism in a rigorous and definitive way. But he actually continued to revolve within a skeptical logic, whose reasons he accepts and grants altogether. The novelty of his method to find the alethic foundation of knowledge lies precisely in the extreme radicalization of the skeptical stance, with the conscious (and voluntary) acceptance of doubt even from the foundations of knowledge, to the point of holding back the assent to the *"primum cognitum."* The "hyperbolic" doubt is therefore the most explicit expression of skepticism as universal *"epoché."* It suffices to think that the rules of public morality and the dogmas of catholic faith are only *pragmatically* secured, that is prescinding from its truth. Such truth could eventually be recovered in a second moment, but only as conclusions that dialectical reasoning obtains from the certainties resulting from the new method: namely, the certainty of the thinking self and the certainty of the existence of God as an innate idea. Let us recall how Descartes refers to the maxims of provisional morality and to the dogmas of catholic faith:

> After having assured myself of these maxims and having put them aside, along with the truths of the faith, which have always held first place in my set of beliefs, I judged that, as far as the rest of my opinions were concerned, I could freely undertake to rid myself of them.[23]

In these words the typical traits of "Catholic Pyrrhonism" are easy to recognize. Faith is separated from philosophical reason, in the sense that whereas faith means to profess certainty (only externally?) without any rational foundation, philosophical reason adopts as starting point the *"doute hyperbolique."*

I repeat that at the psychological level there is no difficulty in admitting that Descartes's programmatic intention is actually that of finally overcoming the skeptical doubt. The fact is that, contrary to his good intentions, he will never be able to get out of a doubt that embraces the evidences of common sense. The new certainties are of a different kind, as are different the criterion of truth and the credentials that those certainties can exhibit (in fact, such certainties will be abandoned one by one by those modern thinkers who adopted the Cartesian method).

Regarding sixteenth-century Catholic skepticism, which was more ideological than theoretical, the Cartesian method presents itself as the powerful and suggestive synthesis of two opposite stances: on the one hand, the deconstructive stance, which leads to the hyperbolic extension of doubt; on the other hand, the constructive stance, which leads to the

[23] Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* (III, 29) 15.

ambitious project of a total science based upon absolutely incontrovertible foundations. The possibility of uniting both opposed rational stances (which the Baroque defines as the humility or weakness of human reason, opposed to pride or self-consciousness of one's own faculties) lies in having changed the place of the verification of truth from the domain of *knowledge* (relation of thought with the object *extra mentem*) to the domain of *consciousness* (relation of thought with itself as representation, in the immanence of the object in the mind). With the methodical doubt the immediate presence of extramental reality to consciousness is eliminated, and so for the first time in the history of philosophy all certainties of common sense are disqualified in their pretension to truth. They had been until then, for all philosophers—Greek and Christian, the certainties that had to be rightfully considered, from a logical point of view, the primary, absolutely incontrovertible self-evident truths. For the first time then, philosophy expresses an act of *freedom of thought*: which means that thought emancipates itself from the metaphysical presence of things, of the self, of God, and of the moral law. The Cartesian revolution changes the way of understanding alethic logic. The world and all other objects of experience—until then a starting point of absolute alethic value for philosophical reflection—become with Descartes precarious and provisional conclusions one can obtain starting from the *"cogito,"* considered as a founding certainty and model of truth in general. From then on, the itinerary of the mind, for those who accept the Cartesian method, is *from the self to the world* (with the mediation, for Descartes, of divine truthfulness), where the "self" means thought in act, or thought as act (of "representing," of "identifying" the object).[24]

Since we had previously mentioned the Catholic intellectuals (including clerics) who in the seventeenth century professed skepticism, we now want to point out that the Catholic Descartes, despite all his precautions, was finally subject to the condemnation of the Church, who could not help noticing that the Cartesian method, with regard to revealed dogma, implies the voluntary decision of doubting also faith, which for a Catholic equals to an act of apostasy. (In 1680 all Descartes's works were

[24] The language of scientists is still borrowed from that of the philosophers who continue to hold the Cartesian turn as necessary and irreversible. See among others the Italian philosopher Virgilio Melchiorre, from the Catholic University of Milan, who has recently written: "That philosophy has regenerated herself finding the own starting point in the certainty of the cogito, is to be understood firstly as an essentially methodological gain, rather than as an ontological one." See *Dialettica del senso: Percorsi di fenomenologia ontologica* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2002), 16).

included in the *Index librorum prohibitorum*.) But what is more interesting for us is that from a specifically logical viewpoint Descartes doubts the certainties of common sense, which have a capital importance for faith, as they are its necessary premises. Indeed, it can be said that the logic of common sense is even more fundamental than the *notional contents* of common sense, which constitute the *"praembula fidei."*[25] This logic can be condensed in the modern philosophical formula of "realism," understood as Gilson did, namely as "methodical realism," that is as the only method that allows philosophy to be seen as a "search for the truth" about the world, man and God.[26] Metaphysical realism is indeed faith's own logic, insofar as divine revelation is addressed to man with a language that presupposes in him a true experience of the world and of himself, and that he knows God as different from the world, as the first Cause and the ultimate End of everything—and all this with his natural reason alone, even if "as through a mirror, and in mystery."

The Cogito as "Thought Without Object"

We now have to analyze Descartes's way of expressing his conviction of having overcome skepticism, even though he had begun with hyperbolic doubt; that is, with the discovery of the evidence his mind has of the doubt itself: "I think, therefore I am *[Je pense, donc je sui]*." Let us read what he writes:

> And noticing that this truth—*I think, therefore I am*—was so firm and so certain that the most extravagant suppositions of the skeptics were unable to shake it, I judged that I could accept it without scruple as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking.[27]

The doubt—here lies the force of the Cartesian argument—*is thought in act,* and as such it is indubitably present to consciousness (presence of thought to thought). However, since this act of thought is a doubt—that is, a holding back of the judgment about the hypothesis of knowledge—it cannot be the thought *of something*; it can only be the thought of nothing (of nothingness as object of thought, of nothingness as true). The

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[25] See, about these contents, what John Paul II teaches in the encyclical *Fides et ratio*; see A. Livi, "Filosofia e fede nella *Fides et ratio*: Un'analisi epistemologica," in *DT* 95 (1999): 123–45; "Verità della fede e verità della ragione: Considerazioni di logica aletica in margine alla *Fides et ratio*," in *Aquinas* 44 (2001): 175–97.

[26] See E. Gilson, *Le Réalisme méthodique* (Paris: Ed. Téqui, 1935). See A. Livi, "Il realismo gnoseologico, oggi," in *Aquinas* 40 (1997): 221–35; Maria Antonietta Mendosa, *Un sentiero interrotto: l'impossibile esito realistico del "cogito"* (Rome: Aracne, 2000).

[27] Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* (IV, 32) 17.

certainty of the *cogito*, therefore, does not refer to anything outside the mind *(aliquid extra mentem)*, let alone the realities from which hyperbolic doubt had freed itself. As has been rightly observed, "the *cogito* is not an act of reflection, it does not consist in thinking of the thought—since this would require a mental word—but it consists directly in pure thought, free from every thought object."[28] If somebody were to object that this interpretation is arbitrary, one should answer that it is Descartes himself who validated it. Indeed, to the objection that "there is no thought without object" he replied: "I deny that the thinking substance is in need of anything other than itself in order to perform its own activity."[29]

The concept of "empty thought" misses a characteristic of subjectivity that I highlighted elsewhere,[30] and that had already been analyzed by Antonio Millán-Puelles,[31] namely that *the subject*, properly speaking, *is never to himself an immediate object of knowledge*. The reason is that the (human) subject knows himself only by reflecting upon his own acts (especially thoughts and wishes), which have the material world as their proper object. The (human) subject, accordingly, knows directly not himself (i.e., the source of thought and free will) but an object of his own knowledge. In other words, the knowledge that the subject has of himself is a second intention knowledge attained by reflectively focusing on his acts of knowing the world—this is the logical order that must be respected in philosophy.[32] Now, this feature of human self-knowledge does not prevent thought from being "full" rather than "empty." Empty thought is postulated only when the thinking self *(res cogitans)* wants to make of the existence of his own thought the first certainty absolutely speaking, in place of the certainty of the existence of the world. But this "empty thought" makes the very notion of "subject" meaningless, as well as that of "knowledge."[33] As Rafael Corazón incisively observes, "as long as the thought focuses on something, on an object, self-consciousness is

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[28] Rafael Corazón, "Naturaleza de las ideas innatas cartesianas," in *Anuario filosófico* 62 (1993): 49.

[29] Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy, Ad II Obiectiones, Responsiones,* in ed. C. Adam and P. Tannery, *Oeuvres de Descartes:* vol. VII (Paris: J. Vrin, 1964), 136.

[30] See A. Livi, *Filosofia del senso comune*.

[31] See Antonio Millán-Puelles, *La estructura de la subjetividad* (Madrid: Rialp, 1970).

[32] See Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 87, aa. 1, 3.

[33] On this point, see Alberto Caturelli, "Meditaciones sobre el sentido y el alcance del cogito cartesiano," in ed. Juan Fernando Ortega and Marco Parmeggiani, *Retorno crítico a los orígenes de la modernidad* (Málaga: Contrastes, 1997), 123–44; D. Murdoch, "The Cartesian Circle," in *Philosophical Review* 29 (1999): 234–45; A. Livi, "Verità e certezza nella dialettica cartesiana," in *Sensus communis* 2 (2001): 263–75.

impossible, because the subject is never object: Descartes seizes the act of thinking, not the thought being thought of *[il pensiero pensato]*."[34] Corazón concludes his analysis of the *cogito* (which he locates in the doctrine of innate ideas) as follows: "If the *cogito* is indeed an act of self-consciousness, thought is immediately known, without reflection: consequently, there is no thought thinking itself *[pensiero pensato]*, because what appears is only thinking thought *[pensiero pensante]*. What is distinctive in this, as well as in the other innate ideas, is that they are not ideas as objects of thought, they do not lie 'in front of' the thought. The reason is that, were they objects of thought, Descartes would have fallen again into the state of doubt; now, instead, he cannot absolutely doubt that he doubts, i.e. that he thinks."[35]

It should be noticed that, unlike ancient skepticism, Descartes's does not consist in extending doubt to the widest possible range of objects of knowledge, but in remaining within thought, having removed its object. If it is true that Descartes, in so doing, finds a most certain starting point, which is a judgment of existence (as alethic logic requires), it is also true that, unlike the concept of first judgment in ancient philosophy—that is, a judgment that allows for the research of an always wider and better knowledge, starting from a most certain knowledge, or a *primum cognitum*, with objective value—the Cartesian judgment is, strictly speaking, the elimination of knowledge.

The logic of founding science on the *cogito*, then, turns out to be a complete epistemic rupture with the whole of classical tradition, above all pre-Christian one. As a French critic points out: "[I]n the *dubito*, or *cogito*, thought is grasped in a pure state, as gold after being purified from the slag. It is a first and absolute notion, because it is perceived independently of everything that is not itself. . . . It is a notion that presupposes none other before."[36] We are therefore completely immersed in the realm of a "logic of presupposition" to which I referred elsewhere as the foundation of alethic logic,[37] and which consists in looking for the "first uncaused cause" of the cognitive process. This cause is, for Descartes, thought perceived as actual by the thinking subject. This is the authentic revolution in the

[34] R. Corazón, 49–50.

[35] R. Corazón, 51. For similar (and even more radical) criticisms to Descartes, see Leonardo Polo, *Evidencia y realidad en Descartes,* II ed. (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1983), 92–97, and Ferdinand Alquié, *La Découverte métaphysique de l'homme chez Descartes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), 185.

[36] Jean Laporte, *Le Rationalisme de Descartes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), 17.

[37] See A. Livi, *Verità del pensiero: Fondamenti di logica aletica* (Rome: Lateran University Press, 2002), 12–34.

history of philosophy, the complete reversal of the logical order, starting from the self-evident perception of the self that comes before the self-evident existence of the world. And, since this self is understood as pure thought without the world as its object, it is empty thought nourished by its sole self-consciousness. Let us see again how Descartes's argument goes:

> I will now close my eyes, I will stop my ears, I will turn away my senses from their objects, I will even efface from my consciousness all the images of corporeal things; or at least, because this can hardly be accomplished, I will consider them as empty and false; and thus, holding converse only with myself, and closely examining my nature, I will endeavor to obtain by degrees a more intimate and familiar knowledge of myself.[38]

When Descartes says that he "will consider empty and false" "all the images of corporeal things," he makes a judgment of alethic value (or disvalue) about the immediate self-evident truth of the world. In this way, this truth is condemned to be insignificant, whereas the self-evident truth of thought (of an empty thought) is privileged.

That this thought is empty results from a careful reading of a passage of the *Meditationes de prima philosophia* in which Descartes, arguing for the certainty of the self, makes recourse to the hypothesis of an evil genius:

> But there is some deceiver or other who is supremely powerful and supremely sly and who is always deliberating deceiving me. Then too there is no doubt that I exist, if he is deceiving me. And let him do his best at deception, he will never bring it about that I am nothing so long as I shall think that I am something.[39]

The key words in this text are "so long as I shall think." Descartes is clearly referring to the act of thinking. It is *thought in act* that is self-evident to itself, that is always self-evident in and of itself, independently of its content, whatever it may be; even independently of having a content at all.

> Surely, in this first instance of knowledge, there is nothing but a certain clear and distinct perception of what I affirm.[40]

More explicitly: "I only perceive the fact of perceiving, that is the fact that I think." The object of thought does not exist any more, or better it becomes irrelevant. Therefore, the doubt about the reality of the objects

[38] Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy,* (III, 35) 24.
[39] Ibid., (II, 25) 18.
[40] Ibid., (III, 35) 24.

of thought is not eradicated. The skeptical doubt, Descartes argues, may still remain, and the hypothesis of error and complete deceit may be admitted. In order to give the new science a foundation it is enough to be aware of doubting, of thinking in some way whatsoever.

> Yet I certainly do seem to see *[certe videre videor]*, hear, and feel warmth. This cannot be false. Properly speaking, this is what in me is called "sensing." But this, precisely so taken, is nothing other than thinking.[41]

Not without reason do many scholars speak of Descartes's substantial "skepticism."[42] In fact, the undeniable reality of the thinking self does not solve any problem about the truth of our knowledge; it just makes the subject "certain" (that is, it compels the subject to assent due to the intrinsic self-evident perception thought has of its own act of thinking). This interpretation is confirmed by the studies of those who have qualified the *cogito*" as a mere *deixis [deissi]*, that is, as something of a purely indicative nature *[di indicalità pura]*, without any notional content, but with an exclusively pragmatic function. As Andrea Bonomi states,

> The first guaranteed certainty is only possible on the basis of an experience that each of us can and should personally *have*. In this sense, the whole demonstration can be seen as an invitation to have this experience. . . . The use (essential here) of the *indexical* "I" makes this argument *pragmatic* in a double sense: first, in the ordinary one, since it prompts an activity, a "doing something" (which is basically a becoming aware from a first-person viewpoint); and, second, in the sense in which one speaks of pragmatic as opposed to syntax and semantics, as the argument is centered around the *indexical* "I," which allows one to denote each time a different subject.[43]

A further confirmation is the impossibility of moving from this individual subjective certainty to a universal criterion of certainty. A deep logical inconsistency immediately becomes manifest as soon as Descartes tries this step. Some have even spoken of an "ontological fall," in the sense that the step from the *deixis* of the *cogito* to the ontology of *sum* looks like a realistic remainder Descartes probably inherited from the medieval Scholastics.[44]

[41] Ibid., (II, 29) 20.

[42] See Marjorie Grene, "Descartes and Skepticism," in *The Review of Metaphysics* 89 (1999): 553–72.

[43] Andrea Bonomi, "Sul Cogito cartesiano: natura inferenziale e criteri di giustificabilità," in ed. Gabriele Usberti, *Problemi fondazionali nella teoria del significato* (Florence: Leo Olschki, 1991), 27.

[44] See Michel Henry, *Généalogie de la psychanalyse: Le commencement perdu* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), 53–56.

A New Concept of Truth as "Methodology of the Unverifiable"

To conclude on this point, we should say that from a historical viewpoint great attention should be given to the reversal brought about in the concept of truth by the Cartesian revolution. Indeed, Descartes understands the truth of the *cogito* as merely *indicale* [indicative]. The "I" which is grasped with complete certainty is not a substance, but the act of thinking: thought in act. Consider the following sentence: "But doubtless I did exist, if I persuaded myself of something."[45] This and similar expressions should be interpreted in the light of what Descartes says immediately afterward:

> I am, I exist—this is certain. But for how long? For as long as I am thinking; for perhaps it could also come to pass that if I were to cease all thinking I would then utterly cease to exist.[46]

As has been rightly observed, "the *cogito* is the paradigm of every truth, because if there is thought, there is necessarily a thinking subject. . . . It is not a matter of having a subject that is 'thought of,' or of having an idea of the subject. . . . The criterion is the facticity of the subject, its existence as a plain and empirical fact, so much so that the investigation of the nature of this subject comes subsequently, and is not included in the first self-evident knowledge. . . . The reflexive dimension of truth is substituted for in Descartes by self-consciousness, because in him, much more than in the philosophy before him, *truth resides properly in the faculty of knowledge, since reality is never known*. Truth in short is not conformity, but consists in the clarity and distinction of ideas, which allow the formulation of a judgment."[47] Using the same paradigm, the empiricist David Hume says that the simplest and most "vivid" sensations are those which deserve to be taken as "true," even if they do not provide us with the knowledge of substances and of causal processes.[48]

The existence of the physical world is reached by Descartes only at the end of his new metaphysical construction. The world is admitted as a *conclusion of a demonstration*, which starts with the *cogito* and continues by deducing the existence of God from the innate idea of the infinite. This

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[45] Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy,* (II, 25) 18.

[46] Ibid., (II, 27) 19.

[47] R. Corazón, 54–55.

[48] See, on this point, A. Livi, "L'uomo alla prova del metodo empirico," in *Nuntium* 18 (2002): 152–60.

long and winding way takes the world as "non self-evident."[49] It is unavoidable, therefore, that the *certainty* about the existence of the world, which depends on an unlikely and complex demonstrative process, turns out to be a "faith," a "belief" based upon the *will* to believe (in fact, William James in the twentieth century will speak of a *will to believe*). Among the Cartesians, David Hume was the first who called the belief about the existence of the world a "faith" *(belief)*. Hume's openly skeptical outcome brings to light the logic at the bottom of the Cartesian method, which we could define—borrowing the expression from Pietro Prini, who applied it to Gabriel Marcel—the "methodology of the unverifiable."[50] Unverifiable, in Descartes, is not, as in the Christian philosophy of the Fathers and of the Middle Ages, the supernatural mystery—that is, God, Who absolutely transcends the world, and demands faith in His revealing word. It is rather the world itself that experience can no longer verify, and which is—hypothetically, in a precarious way—reached via a sequence of logical arguments that, incidentally, involve concepts (like "causality") that in turn presuppose the knowledge of the world.[51]

But it is the *will* to believe in the existence of the world *(res extensa)* that makes what in itself is unverifiable an object of "faith." Precisely the same will sets in motion the deconstructive method of hyperbolic doubt *(volo dubitare de omnibus)*, and, for Descartes, has a power of determination over the intellect:

> [T]he will is also required, in order that assent may be given to the thing which has been perceived in some way. Moreover, complete perception of the thing is not required, at least not in order to judge [it] in some way or another; for we can assent to many things which we know only very obscurely and confusedly.[52]

Many interpreters of Descartes oppose demonstrative reason, which confirms the existence of the world, to *faith*, which in no way is able to

[49] "The primordial and founding certainty, universally accepted by common sense—that is, the certainty of the existence of the visible world, made of matter—becomes problematic, and must be recovered by means of a complex reasoning, which is only possible at the end of the philosophical itinerary" See Salvatore Nicolosi, in ed. Angela Ales Bello, *Pensare Dio a Gerusalemme* (Milan: Mursia, 2000), 186.

[50] See Pietro Prini, *Gabriel Marcel o la metodologia dell'inverificabile* (Rome: Studium, 1968).

[51] See A. Livi, *Il principio di coerenza,* 55–65.

[52] Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy,* trans. V. Rodger and R. P. Miller (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1939), (I, 34) 16.

confirm the existence of what has been revealed through supernatural mysteries.[53] In reality, Descartes does not distinguish between demonstrative reason and faith, but assumes as the paradigm of "pure" or "separated" philosophy precisely what should only appertain to faith, namely the certainty of what is not self-evident.[54]

Cartesianism at the Center of the Debate on Faith and Reason in France

After Descartes, the fortune of Cartesianism and anti-Cartesianism in France—related also to Spinoza's and Leibniz's philosophies—shows how rooted the persuasion was that philosophy should be confronted in the first place with faith: a confrontation that should take place in the field of the *certainty of what is not self-evident*. The results of this confrontation are called "dogmatism" (or rationalism), on the one hand, and "neo-pyrrhonism," on the other. These two approaches both assume the Cartesian *non-self-evident truth of the sensible world*, replaced by the equally Cartesian *self-evident truth of (empty) thought*.[55]

An attempt to open new critical horizons can be seen in Blaise Pascal's (1623–1662) apologetic project. Pascal understood very well that the non-self-evident truth of the world was such only if one assumed deductive demonstration as the paradigm of rationality. We should recall the famous "thought" in which Pascal tries to distinguish the *intuitive* function from the *discursive* function (calling the former "heart," and leaving the term "reason" to the latter):

> We know truth, not only by the reason, but also by the heart, and it is in this last way that we know first principles; and reason, which has no part in it, tries in vain to impugn them. The skeptics, who have only this for their object, labour to no purpose. We know that we do not dream. And however impossible it is for us to prove it by reason, this inability demonstrates only the weakness of our reason, but not, as they affirm, the uncertainty of all our knowledge. For the knowledge of first

[53] See Jean-Pierre Deschepper, "Comptes-rendus" in *RPL* 89 (2001): 758: "The strict delimitation of the comprehensible of first philosophy, regarding the incomprehensible of faith, opens the field of philosophy to the sole reason."

[54] See Thomas C. Vinci, *Cartesian Truth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); André Robinet, *Descartes, la lumière naturelle: Intuition, disposition, complexion* (Paris: Vrin, 1999).

[55] See, e.g., the arguments adopted by each party in two famous controversies: that of Geulincx against Spinoza (see Bernard Rousset, *Geulincx entre Descartes et Spinoza* [Paris: Vrin, 1999]); and that of Arnauld against Malebranche (see, Denis Moreau, *Deux cartésiens: la polémique entre Antoine Arnauld et Nicolas Malebranche* [Paris: Vrin, 1999]).

> principles, as space, time, motion, number, is as sure as any of those which we get from reasoning. And reason must trust these intuitions of the heart, and must base on them every argument.[56]

It is clear from this and many other passages that Pascal tried to give a new foundation to apologetics starting from the recognition of a "minimum" of natural, prescientific cognoscibility of reality, thus indicating to French philosophy of his time the way out of the false dilemma rationalism skepticism. Pascal proposes an attitude of trust in reason that may overcome skepticism, but without pretending to possess truth always and indubitably. He writes in another fragment: "This is our true state; this is what makes us incapable of certain knowledge and of absolute ignorance."[57]

But it is also clear that Pascal's attempt was not able to succeed fully, due to the impossibility of avoiding, in his historical circumstances, the language and therefore the logical categories employed by Descartes.[58] No wonder then if we find as well in the *Pensées* clearly fideistic claims (selected and quoted later on by all those who, along the centuries, preferred to read Pascal as a fideist). For example: "Man is only a subject full of error, natural and ineffaceable, without grace. Nothing shows him the truth. Everything deceives him."[59] The unity of the human intellect in its two different but not conflicting functions of intellectus and ratio was still in need of being recovered.

In this environment, and shortly afterward, a first outline of a philosophy of common sense came from the Jesuit Charles Buffier (1661–1737), who inspired the philosophy of Thomas Reid (1710–1796) and the Scottish School with his *Traité des premières vérités et de la source de nos jugements*, and who is still studied today with interest by those who look for a way out of fideism.[60] But in those years in France, neither Buffier nor any other Catholic intellectual could contain the rising tide of fideism, which many theologians and clerics saw as the sole alternative to Cartesian rationalism and to the persistent attempts by Cartesians to rationalize Christian faith. Among Protestants, too (both Lutherans and Calvinists), fideism was the prevailing position; and philosophical skepticism seemed to be the only possible option for Christian believers.

[56] Pascal, *Thoughts,* trans. W. F. Trotter (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1910), no. 282.
[57] Ibid., no. 72.
[58] See, A. Livi, *Il senso comune tra razionalismo e scetticismo,* 50–55.
[59] Pascal, *Thoughts,* no. 83.
[60] See Louise Marcil-Lacoste, *Claude Buffier and Thomas Reid: Two Common-Sense Philosophers* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University, 1982); R. McInerny, "Implicit Philosophy," 47–65.

Indeed, this was the opinion expressed by Pierre Bayle (1647–1706) in his famous *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, first published in Rotterdam (1695–1697) and then in Amsterdam (1702).

On the Catholic side, Pierre-Daniel Huët's work (1630–1721) is emblematic. He was bishop of Avranches and a great friend of two other important ecclesiastics, Bossuet and Fénelon.[61] Huët, who corresponded also with Leibniz, is known for having started his philosophical production as a Cartesian and for having ended up as an anti-Cartesian, by publishing in 1689 his renowned *Censura philosophiae cartesianae*. In reality, both at the beginning and at the end, the bishop of Avranches reasons according to the skeptical assumptions present in the Cartesian method, even though his primary source is Gassendi. In Huët's apologetic work, "the question at stake was the preliminary role that reason should have in the act of adhesion to faith. Huët was convinced that Cartesian reason, instead of being *'auxilium fidei,'* constitutes a hardly surmountable obstacle. . . . In reassessing the boundaries between faith and reason, it was necessary to bring that *'superbe raison'* back. . . . to the limitations of its own constitutive weakness, so that it could accept *sua sponte* the submission to revealed truth. Skepticism seemed to be a suitable instrument for that end, because it was able to show reason's insufficiency already in the natural sphere. . . . The originality of Huët's strategy was in this apologetic use of classical skepticism, reread and modernized through elements taken from Gassendi, and from Cartesian philosophy as well. Of the latter, Huët stressed its Pyrrhonist outcomes, thus attacking the Cartesian pretension of the self-evident [truth of the *cogito*], showing that it is impossible to reach it in any domain, and justifying at the same time the need of returning to tradition and authority."[62] This is how Huët's argument proceeds. In his *Traité philosophique de la faiblesse de l'entendement humain* he holds that philosophy is the "search for truth" but is unable to reach some truths with certainty; philosophy must thus yield the way to faith. "Man cannot know the truth with perfect certainty if he relies upon his Reason alone," because the senses deceive us, the intellect is fallible, and self-evident truth itself is frequently deceitful. For all these reasons we must admit that human reason is not capable of "true knowledge," insofar it lacks a "certain rule of the truth," that is, a procedure that would allow to distinguish truth from falsity in a definite way.[63]

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[61] See Elena Rapetti's recent historiographic study, "L'epistolario di Pierre-Daniel Huet e la filosofia cartesiana," in *Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica* 93 (2001): 257–79.

[62] E. Rapetti, 266–67.

[63] Pierre-Daniel Huët, *Traité philosophique de la faiblesse de l'entendement humain* (Amsterdam: Henry du Sauzet, 1723), 234.

The *Traité philosophique* came out in 1723, after Huët's death. The Jesuit Baltus published a commentary in 1726, recognizing that the cultured bishop was motivated by the good intention of humiliating human reason—so prone to pride—by inducing it to submit itself again to the authority of Tradition. However, Baltus points out, Huët tended to grant too much to the stances of the *"nouveaux Pyrrhonisme."*[64] It is true—as Elena Rapetti rightly observes—that "Huët's apologetic work can be read as the history of a long battle against Cartesian self-evident [truth of the *cogito*], in the name of the certainty of faith and of the reassessment of the historical facts in which Huët saw the foundation of Revelation."[65] It is true too that such reassessment of the historical facts related to Christian revelation is absolutely necessary, and deserved a better reception by Christian theologians and philosophers—who, due to the popularity of rationalism in the interpretation of Christianity (particularly after Lessing and Kant), preferred to follow instead other paths.[66] However, it is also true that the discussion opposing rationalism to skepticism should have been overcome by bringing it back to its source; that is, by means of a radical criticism of Cartesian method and its assumptions, thus allowing for the recovery of the epistemic foundations of every truth in the incontrovertible self-evident truth of the existence of the world. Such a foundation is only implicit in Saint Thomas's philosophy, because nobody, in ancient Greek and Christian thought, nor in Christian medieval culture, had yet formulated the philosophical hypothesis of denying the self-evident truth of the existence of the world as the starting point of metaphysics. But it is precisely by going back to Thomas's method that many philosophers of the twentieth century have been able to oppose post-Cartesian immanentism with a valid realist theory, capable of resisting the criticism of dogmatism and ingenuity that Descartes's heirs have always addressed against it.[67] NV

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[64] See Jean-François Baltus, "Sentiment sur le Traité de la faiblesse de l'esprit humain à M. l'Abbé d'Olivet, de l'Académie Françoise," in *Continuation des Mémoires de Litterature et della'Histoire de M de Salangre,* 1(1726), part I, 220.

[65] E. Rapetti, 279.

[66] On the historical dimension of faith, see A. Livi, *La ricerca della verità: Dal senso comune alla dialettica* (Rome: Leonardo da Vinci, 2001), 170–79.

[67] See Fortunato Tito Arecchi, "Truth and certitude in the scientific language," in ed. F. Schweitzer, *Self Organization of Complex Structures—From Individual to Collective Dynamics* (London: Gordon and Breach, 1996), 3–20; A. Livi, *Tommaso d'Aquino: il futuro del pensiero cristiano* (Milan: Mondadori, 1997); *Il realismo come metodo necessario della metafisica: Riflessioni sul pensiero di Etienne Gilson,* in ed. Horst Seidl, *Realismus als philosophisches Problem* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2000), 131–38.

An Unnoticed Symposium on Moral Theory*

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IT WILL SOON be five years [at the time of writing in 2001] since Cardinal Jean-Jérôme Hamer left us. He had written in his spiritual testament, "I die in communion with the Church, in loving obedience to the Holy Father, in faithfulness to the Order of St. Dominic, of which I am a member and to which I owe much." Before becoming Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he had been professor of dogma at the Dominican Houses of Studies of La Sarte at Huy in Belgium and of the Saulchoir at Étiolles in France. We should recall here that one of the ways Cardinal Hamer's devotion to the Church showed itself was in the debates about the July 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, which divided Catholic moralists, and in the discussions concerning the existence and content of a Christian moral doctrine being developed at the time. To clarify the problems, the cardinal took an intelligent and broadly conceived initiative; he organized a symposium in Rome, from March 22 to March 28, 1981, which gathered together the most competent Catholic moralists to deal with the widely debated question of the existence of universal . . . unchangeable moral laws that apply without exception. These moralists represented the different opinions then current. For the sake of the discussion, they were divided into "classicists" and "innovators." Each one could express himself freely in the report expected of him, and in the linguistic group discussions as well as in the general assembly.

In organizing the symposium, care was taken to broaden the field of inquiry for the moralists by consulting, with the help of exegetes, Sacred

* Translation by Robert E. Williams, SSI of "Un Symposium de Morale Inconnu," *Nova et Vetera* 77 (2001): 19–34.

Scripture, all too absent from moral manuals, and also by examining the thought of the Fathers of the Church and the medieval theologians, especially Thomas Aquinas. They took philosophy and the social sciences into consideration and, more especially, they dealt with the Magisterium's role in moral questions. Finally, they put the New or Evangelical Law, too often ignored by moralists, at the forefront of their consideration.

The fruits of the symposium were brought forth in later years. It was, in fact, a distant preparation for the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* (August 6, 1993), which took up the same problems dealt with at the symposium, and we can easily recognize the influence of the symposium on the moral section of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* published in 1992. The symposium reports appeared in two publications. The Germanic group took the initiative of publishing the papers of the mostly "innovator" camp in *Sittliche Normen*,[1] edited by Walter Kerber. We ourselves published, in French, the other reports, whether "classic" or "innovator," in *Universalité et permanence des Lois morale*s,[2] edited by Servais Pinckaers and C.-J. Pinto de Oliveira, which follows the outline of the symposium. The names of most of those who took part in the symposium can be found in these two works.

As evidence of my gratitude to Cardinal Hamer, I am publishing here the symposium's concluding report, which I drew up. It will help the reader appreciate the interest of the debates that were held there, both in the presentations and in the discussions.

An Overview of the Symposium on Moral Theology (March 22–28, 1981)

Introduction: General Assessment

The symposium was a success in its genre, for it presented a real opportunity for meetings and exchanges among participants of different disciplines and schools on the subjects of fundamental moral theology, which is uncommon. It likewise established a good contact between the members of the congregation (for the Doctrine of the Faith) and theologians of diverse tendencies, which is not so frequent. The symposium also allowed for a certain clarification of problems and positions by getting to know people and through the points made in the debates.

We must keep in mind, however, the inevitable limitations of such an interdisciplinary and interscholastic undertaking, especially when people

[1] Walter Kerber, ed., *Sittliche Normen* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1982).

[2] Servais Pincakers and C.-J. Pinto de Oliveira, eds., *Universalité et permanence des Lois morales* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires; Paris: Cerf, 1986).

are meeting for the first time and within a limited timeframe. We should not confuse a symposium with a working group. If it wants to be effective, a working group must gather together persons sufficiently alike in their disciplines, methods, leanings, and views to form a coordinated team. A symposium offers the advantage of assembling persons whose disciplines, tendencies, origins, and opinions are different if not contradictory. It cannot claim to further a project, as would a team, but it can advantageously contribute useful information about the various problems and positions to clear up misunderstandings, to create agreement and collaboration, and to uncover new aspects, just as it brings to light the differences. In a word, it can help one see a problem as a whole and get a better view of trends. In this sense the symposium was a success, as seen in the assessments made by the three groups that composed it.

The study of moral problems proposed to us would have had to have to proceeded by way of personal effort or teamwork to have arrived at clear and solid positions, if possible. It could be able to draw much material from the acts of the symposium. We must not forget the hidden work that always takes place when men meet in a climate of free and frank discussion.

The Unfolding of the Symposium

To assess correctly the results and documents of the symposium we must be aware of the fact that it unfolded in three stages. First, before the symposium, the participants sent in preparatory reports following the outline and subjects proposed by the steering committee, which were summarized in three categories: summaries sent to all; a digest of the issues for the steering committee; and lastly, a synthesis that served as an introduction to the symposium. These preparatory reports formed a necessary foundation and first approach for the symposium but did not yet entail any dialogue among the participants, which explains their limitations.

The second stage consisted of the unfolding of the first part of the symposium, with its introductions, group discussions, and discussions in general assembly. The most interesting texts of this central stage are the reports of introduction to the sectors and the brief presentation of reports, which were able to take advantage of exchanges with a greater concentration on the issues of the symposium. They have the advantage of being more thought out and better written than accounts of the discussions in which interventions are at minimum length and which depend upon the give and take of exchanges. To them must be added certain longer interventions written throughout the symposium.

The third stage consisted of responses to the questionnaire proposed for the last two days of the symposium. We have to keep in mind that we are

dealing here with a group effort written within a limited timeframe. It had the advantage of forcing the groups to indicate their reactions to the different aspects of the problem of *intrinsece malum*, as the classical language of the manuals puts it. But the short time available did not allow for a deep or very exact elaboration of the answers. The divergences within linguistic groups slowed the work. Also, certain participants could have formulated personal answers that would have been more complete, more precise, and different from those of the groups to which they belonged.

The Germanic group experienced a particular division that concerned a fundamental problem. The Italian group split on most points. As for the French group, it wound up with two parallel, rather than opposed, texts. In conclusion, the substance of the symposium is to be found in the preparatory reports completed and clarified by the first part of the symposium. The responses to the questionnaire come as a complement and provide certain information of their own.

Outline of a Synthesis

We shall divide this attempt at synthesis into three headings:

1. The question of the relation between, on the one hand, Scripture, the patristic and theological tradition with the teachings of the New Law, and, on the other, current moral problems regarding norms and intrinsically evil acts, which brings in biblical scholars, patrology experts, and moral theologians.
2. The problem of unchangeable universal laws and objective judgment, or the *intrinsece malum* in moral discussions.
3. The question of the Magisterium's intervention in moral questions.

The Question of the Relations between Scripture, Patristic and Theological Tradition, and Current Research in Moral Theology

Two general observations emerge from the unfolding of the symposium:

1. The realization of the gulf existing between biblical scholars, patristic experts, et cetera, and moralists. At the end of the first day, after the presentations on Scripture, several moralists expressed their impatience to get to what they thought was the real problem under consideration, as if they deemed that the exegetes and patristic scholars could hardly present them with something important or with something they did not already know. By contrast, on the third day during the moralists' presentations and discussions, the other participants thought they were being completely sidelined by issues and by a technical language they could not penetrate.

2. After the exegetes and moralists had made their presentations on the New Law on the fourth day, we could notice a rather general satisfaction, expressed especially by the German-speaking moralists. It was evident that the theme of the New Law, drawn from the Gospel and the theological tradition, offered a broader perspective, and one that was better founded on Scripture, to serve as the basis for a renewed moral theology and a richer Christian anthropology. Thus, beyond the divisions and gulfs we had observed, there emerged, at least on the horizon, a point of agreement and unification that would likely steer further research and efforts. The criticisms voiced concerning the questionnaire of the last two days bore precisely on the fact that it seemed to forsake the perspectives the presentations on the New Law had opened and to confine the symposium once more within the narrower framework of traditional casuistry.

Here then is the situation: A real separation exists between the biblical scholars and the moralists discussing the problems submitted to the symposium on the issues and on the technical language. However, there is a possible meeting point on the teaching of Evangelical Law, which is both scriptural and theological. To this encouraging observation we may add the favorable assessments voiced by the different groups, stating that one of the major interests for them was the interdisciplinary work accomplished together and the wish that it continue. Nevertheless, many questions remain.

Let us look at things from the biblical scholars' viewpoint. The reports dealing with Scripture agreed in affirming that there are unchangeable moral laws and that these were ordered, each in its own way, to Evangelical Law. The same goes, generally, for the presentations on the Fathers and the medieval theologians, whose thought was nourished by Scripture but with the constant and explicit use of the natural law. We should note, however, that the presentations of the biblical and patristic scholars, unlike those that dealt with St. Thomas and later Scholasticism, received hardly any attention from the moralists, apparently because they did not address their problems sufficiently. The discussions among moralists only took into consideration Schürmann's contribution dealing with current topics.

Obviously the biblical scholars can retort that the categories the moralists use are not found in Scripture, or in the Fathers for that matter. They can reproach the moralists with elaborating their theories on a purely rational level without, in practice, feeling the need to refer to the Bible unless incidentally. Even if in principle they admit the importance of Scripture as the primary source of moral theory, in fact they take scarcely any

account of it in the method they use, in their research, their discussions, their presentations. On the other hand, we can ask ourselves if the biblical scholars themselves do not employ certain categories and adopt certain positions borrowed from the moralists without critiquing them sufficiently, without, in particular, examining them to see if they agree with the givens of Scripture. For example, these categories are often taken over from the morality of obligation, which sets aside the question of beatitude, wisdom literature, et cetera, only to concern itself with commands. We may also add that up to now Catholic biblical scholars have busied themselves very little with scriptural morality. Likewise we must say that certain exegetes are well aware of the concrete problems raised in the symposium and hope to be able to provide answers to them based on Scripture.

There remain different questions about the New Law and its relation to the Sermon on the Mount. Is the expression "New Law" adequate, especially as regards chapters 5 to 7 of St. Matthew? Besides the manifold interpretations of the Sermon, which we could not get into, and the question of its attribution to Jesus Himself, largely admitted by Monsignor Descamps, we may ask ourselves how far we should give a privileged place to this text. In this regard, let us point out that the Fathers' reading of Scripture is unifying, for they see the Spirit as its principal Author. In their thought, then, the Sermon must not be taken in isolation but as a text calling for all other scriptural texts that deal with Christian morals, notably the passages where St. Paul describes living according to the Spirit.

If we look at the problems of Scripture and the New Law from the standpoint of the moralists, it is appropriate that we distinguish the different positions among them. If we wish to employ the distinction between "classicists" and "innovators," we should note a division among the former, which gives us three tendencies:

1. The tendency we might call post-Tridentine, in line with the moral manuals, for which the natural law is the basis of morality, with reason as its main source.

2. The tendency, inspired by Thomistic thought (in the German sense of "thomanisch"), which has rediscovered the primary importance in moral theology of Evangelical Law's teaching, and tries to make Scripture's leading role as the source of morality a reality again.

3. The so-called innovating tendency has taken a critical position in regard to the first classical one and usually operates on a very rational and technical level, but is interested in the current re-reading of St. Thomas and by the re-appreciation of Evangelical Law.

Attitudes toward Scripture and biblical scholars differ. The first tendency questions whether Scripture, as well as the Fathers, can bring anything new and solid to the solution of the moral cases under discussion, especially if we consider the multiplicity of interpretations among exegetes, patristic scholars, and historians. Also, its ultimate and surest reference point lies in the stances taken by the Church's Magisterium. The second tendency insists upon a direct return to Scripture and the Patristic Tradition as sources of a renewed Christian morality. It seeks to establish a dialogue with the biblical scholars but wants to include in it the reading of Scripture done by the Fathers and the great theologians, which is rich in spiritual substance and experience. The third tendency is more attentive to Scripture and exegesis than it had been but it mistrusts any reading that might seem fundamentalist; it does not wish to get into Scripture without a hermeneutical reflection. However, this last requirement poses a serious question: Does not a hermeneutics, relying on rational criteria often elaborated a priori, risk setting up a distorting screen between the Bible and the reader and preventing the Word of God, with its power of truth, from reaching the moralist as well as the exegete himself? Hence we find ourselves presented with a fundamental problem of universal importance, the relationship between Scripture and moral theory, as well as with a hope felt during the symposium, that an interdisciplinary endeavor of collaboration among biblical scholars, patristic scholars, and moralists might be promoted. There is likewise the question of the renewal of Catholic moral theory with the help of the principles of Evangelical Law.

The Discussion on Moral Laws (Universality, Immutability, Objectivity of Judgment) and the Existence of Intrinsically Evil Acts

This is the core of the debate for the moralists, as well as the main preoccupation of the Congregation that organized the symposium. As we pointed out in the introductory synthesis, the reports and the discussion presupposed the Magisterium's pronouncements, especially the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* and the declaration of the Congregation on the problems of sexuality, the classical teaching of the manuals on the *fontes moralitatis*, the theory of *intrinsece malum* and the cause with double effect elaborated therein, and the debates of the last years with the theory of "consequentialism," in which the teleological perspective and the criterion of proportionate reason are dominant.

Throughout the reports, the discussions, the fine-tuning, the drawing closer, and the differentiations, two currents of thought and two positions showed up that we might describe in broad outline as follows.

The so-called "innovator" school of thought is critical of the theory of the *intrinsece malum* and has worked out a precise stance on the problem by means of several distinctions. First, there is the distinction between transcendental norms—which deal with principles—and categorial norms—which it divides into categorial norms (still formal) focusing on the virtues and concrete and material norms that focus on single acts. To this it adds a distinction between the proper moral goodness of the action (the personal-formal aspect, *sittliche Gutheit*) and the rightness of the action (the objective-material aspect, *Richtigkeit*). The question under discussion about the *intrinsece malum* would in fact concern the concrete norms, the realm of rightness, of *Richtigkeit*. This school fully admits the existence of intrinsically evil acts in the realm of transcendental norms and formal categorials, on the level of personal moral qualities (being unjust, a liar, unchaste), but it questions whether we are able to find and formulate universal and unchanging norms on the level of concrete actions taken in their materiality. Let us make clear that here we are talking about negative norms that forbid an act as evil in itself, and, moreover, that the debate is at the level of human relations.

The classic moralists based their judgment of acts mainly on a consideration of the object, while integrating into it the *finis operis* (inherent in the action), and thought of circumstances and the *finis agentis* (the goal of the one acting) as secondary, accidental elements. Unlike the classicists, the new school deems it necessary to take into consideration all the circumstances (as components of the action), including its historical evolution, that enter into the composition and situation of the act, and it especially stresses the importance of finality. This school considers the reasons of a deontological nature put forward by the classical moralists in support of the doctrine of the *intrinsece malum* as outmoded, and takes a mainly teleological view focused above all on the evaluation of the act's consequences in order to determine its rightness. This is where the criterion of proportionate reason comes in.

From this standpoint, the formulation of a concrete and unchanging norm becomes more difficult, for theoretically it presupposes a taking into account and an examination of all the possible consequences and all the potential finalities. Thus they would say that concrete norms of this sort are certainly universal, that they have value and are applicable *ut in pluribus* in most cases, but without excluding possible exceptions, especially if we keep in mind differences in culture.

During the exchanges, those with critical leanings made an attempt to close the gap: We may entertain the possibility of an *intrinsece malum* act from a teleological standpoint when one good or one value clearly over-

rides any other, but that cannot happen easily. We recognize also that there are actions that can never be justified in practice, such as torture. This closing of the gap corresponds to the tendency of the "innovator" group to show that the differences are not as great as they seem. Yet this way of thinking did not convince the representatives of the other school of thought.

We should add that the "innovating" trend of thought shows a particular interest in St. Thomas, who provides support for the teleological outlook, and for the phrase that laws are valid *ut in pluribus*. He likewise sheds light on the rich doctrine of the New Law and, lastly, gives grounds for a critique of the morality of the manuals. This school is also sensitive to how Christian morals are presented to the world of non-believers and to the data furnished by the social sciences.

Against the innovating trend, there is a certain convergence of the criticisms leveled at it, which argue for the existence of concrete norms and of intrinsically evil acts, whatever expression is used to designate them (the expression *intrinsece malum* dates from the time of Suárez). These criticisms often presuppose knowledge of the problem and of the debates that go beyond the data provided to the symposium.

First, there is the position of Monsignor Hörmann in regard to Father Fuchs. He uses the latter's categories but relates them to St. Thomas: If it is true that, along with the object, we must also consider the circumstances and the intention in order to establish the *Richtigkeit*, the rightness of a concrete act, nevertheless a defect in one of these elements, for example, in the object by itself, is enough to render the act unrichtig (not right) and to set up an unchangeable negative norm *(bonum ex integra causa, malum ex quocumque defectu)*. Obviously we have here a fundamental point. Yet we must add that the term "object" must not be taken too narrowly but may include the main circumstances to make up the substance of the act. The judgment of *Unrichtigkeit* would change if these elements were modified. Hence we really must agree on terminology. This narrows the gap with Father Fuchs, but is there any reality behind the words used?

The sharpest criticisms focused on the distinction between transcendental norms and formal categorials, and concrete and material norms, between moral and premoral goods, between moral goodness and "rightness." To be more precise, the criticism targets the too-great separation caused by these distinctions: On the one hand, without any direct intervention of so-called formal norms, *Richtigkeit,* judgment and norms in the concrete, are established by looking at all the circumstances from a teleological and consequentialist angle, which makes the establishment of

universal and unchanging concrete norms very problematic; on the other hand, the so-called formal, transcendent, and categorial norms (the theological and moral virtues, among others), which continue to be seen as abstract norms, find themselves deprived of the ability to be applied in the concrete and to be valued for their truly practical character. In such a case, it is easy to concede the existence of universal laws at the formal level, but the real problem lies in their application in the concrete, and it is precisely here that their ability to play a role is nullified by the distinction between formal and concrete norms. In practice, these latter can be treated apart from the former by an evaluation of the circumstances that considers all the factors for judging action expressed in the classical *fontes moralitatis*.

The stakes are high, since it is not only about the problem of intrinsically evil acts, it also calls into question the connection between human and theological virtues and, therefore, the Christian contribution to morals and concrete action, that is, concrete norms.

From the very beginning, Don Caffarra expressed this criticism: Is not the distinction between formal and concrete norms, as they employ it, based upon a certain anthropology, even a certain metaphysics? Can we use it to interpret Scripture? The criticism became sharper in regard to the basis of the so-called material norms: Knowledge of all possible factors and effects is not necessary, for only one essential factor is enough to establish that a concrete act is contrary to the truth about the human person.

Father Styczen likewise vigorously rejects the separation set up between transcendental or formal norms and categorial or material norms. This, he holds, implies a division within man himself, an axiomatic dualism that prepares the way for the separation between the "categorial" realm of relations among men and the "transcendental" realm of divine action; in other words, it breaks apart the Christian view of the world. For Father Styczen, the foundation of moral norms lies in the ontological make-up of man, which can be known by a moral intuition that is valid even if not everyone recognizes it. Particular or "categorial" ethical norms are only the translation into normative language of the affirmation of the human person in accord with his objective make-up. They express the content of the "personalist norm." We cannot at the same time affirm the general value of this latter while also denying the possibility of particular norms that are at the same time general.

We ourselves have highlighted the problem of this excessive separation between formal and concrete norms which practically ends up establishing two separate orders, reminiscent of the separation between morals and spirituality, and which deprives the formal norms and the virtues of their specific impact on concrete conduct.

It is no doubt possible to establish a parallel between the distinction between *Gutheit* and *Richtigkeit* and the distinction between interior and exterior acts, which St. Thomas puts in the order of form and matter in the *Summa theologiae*. Here we have two parts of the concrete act that can be analyzed separately. Nevertheless their connection is essential, as between form and matter, body and soul; the goodness or evil of the interior act communicates itself to the exterior act and vice versa. We should add that with St. Thomas we are dealing with a moral theology of virtues and not merely of the Commandments. Virtue is formed by the repetition of concrete right actions which necessarily return to the concrete, for we cannot be prudent without actually acting. To loosen the tie between virtue and the concrete is, in practice, to annihilate virtue. The comparison deserves a closer examination.

It is undeniable that here we have one of the nerve centers of the debate. Sometimes it may seem to come down to a tempest in a teacup, to an almost imperceptible difference. The criticisms that we have just presented help us to see that behind the hairline fracture there is a geographical fault big enough to affect all of moral theology.

Let us add that this fault is extended by a division that is hardly showcased but which is of great consequence: The innovators maintain that the concrete criteria for action are found precisely at the level of relations with other men, which they call the horizontal or categorial level. This allows them to deal with the concrete problems in dispute today on the human plane, without bringing in our relationship with God or with Christ, in other words, without bringing in the vertical or transcendental level as supplying essential factors and criteria for moral judgment. As regards this central debate, numerous elements that enter into it cry out for clarification.

"Finality" plays a leading role in the debate. The innovating school gives predominance to teleology, to consideration of the end as it relates to an evaluation of the action's consequences from the circumstances considered. The Thomistic school wants finality to regain its place in the forefront of moral judgment, as the object of an interior act ordered to an ultimate end, while also highlighting the objectivity of this finality. It criticizes the use of the distinction between *finis operis* and *finis operantis*, which in the manuals has served to reduce the finality of the one acting (that is, finality properly speaking), to the rank of a secondary and entirely subjective factor in the action. A distinction must also be made between the technical kind of teleology based on a consideration of usefulness, at the level of *Richtigkeit*, and a proper moral teleology based on a consideration of the moral quality of the goods pursued, which goes further than the consideration of usefulness

and would transcend the opposition between teleology and deontology. The link between short-term finality, reduced to a single act, and long-term finality, ordered to an ultimate end, would have to be reestablished. The role of finality in moral conduct, as a principle uniting behavior and life, certainly deserves to regain its value; but that cannot happen without a judicious analysis of the nature of finality, as well as of the role it plays in moral judgment in relation to the other factors that form it.

The terms "object" and "circumstances" must likewise be clarified. Object is spoken of in both a narrow and a broad sense, in which we also include circumstances; but, as the manuals show, object continues to be understood in a material, almost physical sense, in a word, as opposed to what is subjective and therefore to the finality of the one acting. The term "circumstances" is in practice used very broadly to designate all the elements that make up an action and constitute its status without making a distinction between the elements that are essential or substantial on the moral level and the accidental, secondary elements that, properly speaking, make up the circumstances. To sum up, it is the treatise on the *fontes moralitatis* that should be revised, not to shake the foundations of morality it presents, but to establish them more solidly and clearly.

The term "nature", which can be understood either as conformity to reason according to St. Thomas or as biological nature, conditions our understanding of the natural law. If, like Suárez, but unlike the Fathers and St. Thomas, we conceive of human nature as self-sufficient, the natural law becomes sovereign in morality and, strictly speaking, no longer has need of revealed law to govern our actions. The doctrine of natural law should undergo a deeper study, particularly in relation to the Evangelical Law. To be sure, it was astonishing to see that in the discussions and debates of the symposium, the natural law was hardly mentioned, which formed the main basis of post-Tridentine Catholic moral theology as the direct foundation of the universality of moral laws. This subject was left too much in the wings.

The term "reason" evokes an enormous problem: the relationship between reason and faith (Revelation), that is, between philosophy and theology. Even if we cannot deal with the question in its entirety, it would nonetheless be good to make a distinction between a "rationalizing" reason that sets itself up as sovereign judge of all truth and science, including the realm of morality, independently of faith if not in opposition to it, and a reason open to faith, a reason which recognizes that the faith has its own light, especially in the field of the activity of man oriented toward his ultimate end. Only this allows us to understand adequately what *right reason* defines prudence and determines the criteria of moral judgment and their

application, particularly in Christian conduct. Speaking of which, it would be good to look again at the old problem of the relation between *prudence* and *conscience* and to pay special attention to the latter's role: Is it simply declarative, imperative, or really creative, and, to a certain extent, legislative? Here again we encounter one knot of the main issue in the symposium. Indeed, contemporary trends tend to make personal conscience the last and decisive judge of whether any moral laws apply to concrete acts.

The terms "immutability" and "universality" also require clarification. Immutability, which has a negative connotation, could advantageously be replaced by the more positive "permanence." As for universality, we must study more precisely the scope of the expression *ut in pluribus* borrowed from St. Thomas and often used in a sense that diminishes the universality of laws. But above all, behind the adjective "universal," as it is applied to laws, we find the long-standing debate over universals, that is, over the application of laws to the concrete, which concentrates all the divergences observed at the symposium.

For the innovators, universal laws are abstract and formal, as are also the virtues, and of themselves do not come into contact with the concrete act. The concrete act is, indeed, entirely singular for, besides the object and the end, it is constituted by the totality of its circumstances. Thus, in order for a law to apply concretely in a universal way, we must be able to take into consideration all the concrete cases, present and future, with all the possible circumstances—individual, social, and cultural—which in practice makes the attainment and establishment of the universal impossible. Here we are in the nominalist and Kantian line of thought, separating the universal and the abstract from the concrete and from sense experience. Hence we must choose between the universal, which is often seen to smother the concrete, and the concrete, which somehow always escapes the universal: In a word, we must choose between law and personal conscience. The classical moralists opted for the law; the innovators favor the individual conscience. From this perspective, it is impossible to prove theoretically the existence of universal laws that apply without exception in the concrete and have a value in themselves, even though it is admitted that, practically speaking, there exist certain actions that are always evil. Yet this remains open to attack in theory and, therefore, is rather fragile.

For the other school of thought, the universal applies to the concrete and to reality, thanks to the distinction between the essential and the accidental. This is achieved either by distinguishing the essence of an act, made up of its object or matter, and its end, and the circumstances understood at the moral level as secondary factors, or also by the determination

of the essential requirements of man's dignity, of the human person in the concreteness of the action (Father Styczen), or again by the intuition, be it in one concrete experience only, of an absolute and unchangeable norm perceived as "intensive" at first, and which later the work of abstraction will develop to give it its general formulation (Newman). From this perspective, it is perfectly possible that there exist moral laws, at any rate negative, that are universal and which apply without exception even to the concrete and to personal experience. Here in fact, there is no choice to be made between the universal and the concreteness of the action, but the universal exists only if it becomes real in action, while the act can only acquire its moral value in conformity with universal laws. Such is quite clearly the task of the virtues: to unite the universal and the concrete in action, for we cannot really conceive of the virtues without the concrete action in which they are formed and which they regulate at the same time.

The Role of the Magisterium in Moral Doctrine

The question of the Magisterium's authority in moral doctrine was tackled in three ways: through a consideration of its theological components; through an exact determination of the problem here and now; and through an examination of the various theological positions.

Here again the positions and discussions proved the existence of two schools of thought: one traditional, defending the authority of the Magisterium in concrete moral questions, and the other rather critical in this respect, maintaining that other actors, such as the Christian people and moralists, have a role to play in solving moral questions.

To be more specific, everyone admits that in its extraordinary and ordinary Magisterium the Church, according to Vatican I, has the power to define *in moribus* as far as what is contained in Revelation. Necessarily tied to this, explicitly or implicitly, is the question of whether this power extends further and reaches matters that fall under the natural law, touching even the concrete norms of moral conduct derived from the natural law.

The Foundations of the Magisterium's Authority

Criticizing the modern separation of faith and reason, which is based on a concept of truth in which reason itself would be one of truth's components, Don Caffarra wishes to re-establish the coordination between faith and reason by starting with the notion of Christ as Truth equalling Christ as Norm. Such would be the foundation of the power of the Magisterium, which is Christ's witness in the fields of dogma and morals, as well as the source of the theological knowledge into which reason is

integrated in its search for truth and the good. Through faith reason is elevated, revealed to itself through metaphysical knowledge, and cured of its temptation to set itself up as its own end. In this way the Magisterium acquires a say even in matters concerning the natural law. It does not substitute itself for the personal judgment of conscience, but it offers conscience objective and necessary reference points. The work of the theologian implies fidelity to the Magisterium as witness to the Truth of Christ, and consists in removing the obstacles that are opposed to this normative Truth.

Criticism of this presentation, which came chiefly from the German-speaking group, had to do especially with the identification of Christ as Truth with Christ as Norm, holding that this identification could lead to a Monophysite conception in moral theology, with the concepts of truth and autonomy it brings into play, with the hierarchical ecclesiology it presupposes, and with the neglect of the distinction between a transcendental decision and the rightness of categorial conduct, as well as between parenesis and normative ethics.

The Problem Right Now

The calling into question of the Magisterium's authority in moral matters is quite recent, as it dates from the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. The First Vatican Council, by defining the infallibility of the Magisterium *in fide et in moribus*, put morality in the genus of dogma, but it did not say precisely what it meant by *doctrina de moribus*. The Council determined infallibility's subject but did not indicate how far exactly the power of the Magisterium extended beyond Revelation. The manuals of moral theology did not discuss this power, but assigned the field of natural law implied in Revelation to the Magisterium, which runs the risk of stretching the consequences too far into a foreign domain.

This new issue introduces different levels of the faith, of general moral principles, and of concrete norms, which must take into account material factors tied to historical conditions. Following these various levels, therefore, we would have to set up a differentiation in the application of the givens of faith to morals and in the Magisterium's power in moral matters. This brings us back to the question: Does the Magisterium have the power to define universal concrete norms that are valid without exception?

Thus posed, this question was extended in the exchanges to other aspects of the exercise of the Magisterium. The ecclesiology of Vatican II describes the Church first as the People of God. Does this not imply a greater participation of the Christian people in forming the positions of the Magisterium on moral matters by creating a certain consensus,

despite the difficulty of verifying its authenticity? Must we not acknowledge that the Church sometimes has been mistaken in or has modified its position on certain questions? Would it not be better pastorally to avow the corrections made throughout history? Finally, can we concede more than an exemplary value to the saints recognized by the Church?

The Theological Positions on the Ordinary Infallible Magisterium

It behooves us to clarify that which pertains to *certain faith*: the power to define in moral matters that which is contained in Revelation or which is necessarily connected to it, like the natural law; that which is *theologically certain*, namely, the infallibility of the ordinary teaching of the pope and of the bishops together with him on these matters; and that which must *be held publicly in theology*, namely, the extension of the infallible Magisterium to the realm of natural law. The opinion that the encyclicals are infallible is less probable.

The current controversy is provoked by criticisms of the traditional doctrine that tend to limit the Magisterium's role either merely to the domain of revelation, which deprives it of the ability to make pronouncements at the natural and rational moral level, or to the level of formal norms in the natural and human order, which deprives it of the power to determine, in a decisive manner, concrete norms of action and to intervene on the level of concrete problems and cases of conscience, in a decisive manner. Thus there exists a direct and close connection between the question of the Magisterium's authority and the questions about universal and unchanging laws, as about the relationship between morals and revelation.

Throughout the last centuries, a too great separation between revelation and moral teaching, where moral teaching was looked upon as essentially rational and which was seen to rest primarily on the natural law, has favored a separation between the Magisterium and the "scientific" reflection of moralists. The problem becomes particularly acute when moralists get to the point of criticizing or even rejecting the doctrine of natural law, compromising the basis on which the Magisterium grounds itself to intervene in the order of natural ethics. At least the theoretical refusal of the possibility of determining concrete norms that would be truly universal, without exception, touches the Magisterium itself, whose interventions are necessarily of a universal nature. In the final analysis, then, the judgment of concrete cases, which modern Catholic moral theology has focused on since casuistry, is given over to personal conscience alone. It is therefore the power of the Magisterium over the whole of morality, and more precisely over concrete cases, that is called into question.

The problem thus posed, with its many aspects, stands out as one of the forms of the fundamental problem of the existence of a moral doctrine that is properly Christian, and of the contribution of Revelation, the Gospel, to moral theory right down to the concrete human level. NV

The God of Israel and Jesus Christ: Luke, Marcion, and the Unity of the Canon*

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Introductory Remarks

IN THE STUDY of history it is now almost a commonplace to note that the portrayal of certain persons or groups by their enemies or opponents is at best not accurate to the degree that we would wish and at worst totally distorted by the nature of the polemic. A well-known example from the world of New Testament scholarship of the apprehension of this methodological principle is the debate over Paul's portrayal of the Judaism of his period. In opposition to much of the accepted view of Judaism disseminated by Bultmann et al., E. P. Sanders's 1977 *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* sparked a widespread rethinking of the relationship of Paul's portrayal of Judaism to a Judaism that would be allowed to speak on its own terms, that is, from its own sources. Though Sanders's own picture has received critique,[1] his methodological point is accepted by scholars on all sides of the debate: In order to come to the

* This paper was delivered as a lecture for a joint Heidelberg—Tübingen OT/NT conference (January 31–February 1, 2003) organized around the theme "In welchem Sinne ist die Schrift Verbindlich?" The text has only a few minor alterations and thus reflects in both orientation and style certain aspects pertinent to a set theme and to a particular location and audience. Further, due to the constraints of time and space, no attempt has been made within the footnotes to defend each subsidiary position taken herein with respect to complex and still-debated issues in Lukan scholarship.

[1] See, e.g., Charles H. Talbert's presidential address to the Catholic Biblical Association, "Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionists," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 63 (2001): 1–22 and the literature cited therein.

best understanding possible of a person or group, we must first let them speak for themselves.

When we come to Marcion this methodological conviction, however, does not get us very far, except in the way of cautionary warning, since no writings of his are preserved except for partial appearances in the works of others. We must begin our study therefore with a caveat: The representation of Marcion or Marcionite theology in, for example, Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem* is not necessarily the same as the way in which Marcion or his followers would have presented their own theology.[2] However, the position described by Tertullian does exist as a theological possibility, and it is to such a possible theological position that I take the word Marcionite to refer. But the precise relationship between the sources for Marcion's theology, their accuracy, and so on, I will have to leave to the Church historians.[3]

The God of Israel, Jesus, and the Gospel of Luke in Marcionite Theology

The purpose of this section is to remind us of the central issue that Marcionite theology raises and its implications for the relation of the Old and New Testaments (and, therefore, also for the possibility of the unity of the canon). The opening remarks of Book IV of Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem* bring the crucial point of importance immediately to the fore.

For Tertullian, Marcion's *Antitheses* (ἀντιθέσεις, "Contradictions"), a work in which the latter set parts of (what we call) the Old and New Testaments against each other, made "such a division between the Law and the Gospel as thereby to make two separate gods [*duos deos dividens*], opposite to each other [*proinde diversos*], one belonging to one instrument (or, as it is more usual to say, testament [*testamenti*]), one to the other" (IV.1). Tertullian had no problem agreeing to a difference in dispensation as reflected in the Old and New Testaments: "I do not deny a difference in records of things spoken, in precepts for good behaviour, and in rules of law . . ." (IV.1). His irreconcilable disagreement with Marcion, however, was at the most basic of theological levels: that of the identity of God. In point of fact,

[2] There is nevertheless a general and significant agreement between the diverse sources. For a very succinct discussion of this agreement, see the introduction of Evans's translation of *Adversus Marcionem*, ed. and trans. Ernest Evans (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), ix–xi.

[3] See, e.g., Gerhard May's brief piece "Marcion ohne Harnack" and the first section of papers from the Mainz 2001 conference, "Die Quelle zu Marcion," in *Marcion und seine Kirchengeschichtliche Wirkung/Marcion and His Impact on Church History*, ed. Gerhard May and Katharina Greschat in Gemeinschaft mit Martin Meiser, TU 150 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002).

Tertullian's admission of dispensational difference hinges on the self-sameness of the God of the Old and New Testaments, for the sentence cited just above continues "provided that all these differences [i.e., things spoken, behavioral precepts, rules of law] have reference to one and the same God [*unum et eundem deum*], that God by whom it is acknowledged that they were ordained and also foretold" (IV.1).[4] Thus Tertullian does not reject the manifest difference between the Old and New Testaments but denies that this difference requires us to posit two different gods.

This then is the issue raised by Marcionite theology: the relation of the God of the Old Testament to the God of the New Testament and to Jesus Christ himself. Marcionite theology holds that the God of the Old and the God of the New are not the same God; the creator and warrior god of the Old Testament is an entirely different entity from the good God and Father of Jesus Christ: "Marcion of Pontus developed this doctrine, with shameless blasphemy of the God of whom the law and the prophets tell, saying that he is the creator of evil things . . . but that Jesus came from that father who is high above the God who made the world."[5] Thus, for the Marcionites, the god of Israel and Jesus Christ have nothing to do with one another except for at the level of total discontinuity and contradiction, as the *Antitheses* were arranged to show.

It is of considerable interest for our purpose that in addition to certain "Pauline" epistles (the pastorals and Hebrews were omitted from the ἀποστολικόν), Marcion selected Luke for his two-part canon as the one Gospel that would best fit with his teaching of a theology—in the strict sense—of separation.[6] Of the explanations of his choice that have been offered, I wish to note especially Harnack's suggestion that "[d]er 'heidenchristliche' und asketische Charakter des 3. Evangeliums gegenüber dem 1. und 2., nachdem die drei ersten Kapitel des Werks getilgt waren, muß ihm sympathisch gewesen sein."[7] While Lukan asceticism has not seen great discussion lately,[8] the rest of Harnack's view fits well with the traditional emphasis of modern scholarship upon Luke's hellenism and further raises the important question of the theological significance of the opening scenes of the Lukan narrative for a reading of Luke's Gospel.

[4] Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem,* IV.1 (Migne, PL, 2.362BC).

[5] Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses,* I.27.2 (Migne, PG, 7.1.688A).

[6] The text was entitled simply εὐαγγέλιον, the one Gospel.

[7] Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott: Eine Monographie zur Geschichte der Grundlegung der katholischen Kirche,* 2nd ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996), 250*.

[8] Though see Susan R. Garrett, "Beloved Physician of the Soul? Luke as Advocate for Ascetic Practice" in *Asceticism and the New Testament*, ed. Leif E. Vaage and Vincent L. Wimbush (New York: Routledge, 1999), 71–95.

Though reconstructing Marcion's exact gospel text is not possible on the basis of the evidence we possess,[9] there is an important well-established fact about this text in relation to the beginning of the canonical Luke. In contrast to his treatment of the larger body of the Lukan Gospel, where for the most part it would appear that Marcion carefully excised and/or inserted what was necessary for his theology, Marcion's version of the Gospel of Luke retained only a small part of one verse of the first three chapters (3:1) and the last third of chapter 4.[10] Rather than to Marcion's knowledge of a Lukan text without chapters 1–2,[11] such a total omission points, I think, to a Marcionite insight of fundamental material significance: It is simply not possible to read the Gospel of Luke with its opening chapters along Marcionite lines.

Why not? The simple but accurate answer is that the feel of these beginning chapters is just too Jewish. All of it had to go. But we may ask further, Jewish in what sense? Custom, ethos, allusions, or references to the Old Testament? Certainly that is the case. The Jewishness of the beginning of Luke's Gospel, however, runs much deeper than the general feel or atmosphere and actually only emerges fully at the intersection of what we might call theology proper and Christology—exactly that place where Marcionism carved out its distinctive teaching and held its appeal. This intersection and its implications underlie the necessity of the Marcionite rejection of the beginning portions of Luke's Gospel. The God of Israel and Jesus Christ must be kept separate, but the opening of the Lukan narrative will not allow such a separation. In fact it eliminates the possibility of conceiving of the God of Israel apart from Jesus Christ and vice versa.

Whether or not the actual Marcion grasped this matter in the way I have put it cannot be known, but the *in toto* rejection of 1:1–4:30 could

[9] David Salter Williams, "Reconsidering Marcion's Gospel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108 (1989): 477–96, draws out several of the difficulties and then attempts to reconstruct twenty-three different "explicit correlated readings" (i.e., passages that both Tertullian and Epiphanius cite explicitly). Williams's conclusion is that while there are certainly differences from the "modern, eclectically restored form" of Luke, Marcion's gospel nonetheless stood "closer to Luke than any other extant Gospel" (482).

[10] At this point, I follow Harnack's reconstruction in *Marcion* (183–240).

[11] In asserting that Marcion did in fact know of Luke with chapters 1–2, I follow such scholars as Harnack, Loisy, Metzger, Zahn, et al. For the opposite position see, e.g., F. C. Conybeare, "Ein Zeugnis Ephräms über das Fehlen von c. 1 und 2 im Texte des Lucas," *ZNW* 3 (1902): 192–97; and, John Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament: An Essay in the Early History of the Canon* (Chicago: University Press, 1942). An important part of the question entails an opinion about the composition of Luke 1–2. For this matter, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke,* 2 vols., AB 28/28A (New York: Doubleday, 1981, 1985), 1.309–312, is brief and judicious.

be seen to point that way. Regardless, I began with Marcion because the theology of separation raises in acute form an important question in relation to the *Verbindlichkeit* of the canon both in its external and internal dimensions—who is the God of the Bible?—and because Marcion's rejection of the Old Testament and concomitant treatment of Luke's Gospel sets this issue before us in sharp relief.[12] We will now make a few remarks about reading strategy and Lukan Old Testament hermeneutics, and then turn to the opening portions of the Gospel of Luke and focus on the introduction of Jesus into the narrative as κύριος as a way to open up the Lukan view of the relation of the God of Israel to Jesus Christ.

The God of Israel, Jesus, and the Gospel of Luke: Lukan Theology

Reading Strategy

At least since the time of Heidelberger Martin Dibelius, it has been assumed with confidence that the birth-infancy narratives are by and large later in origin than most of the material of the body of the Gospel. One of Raymond Brown's monumental studies, *The Birth of the Messiah,* has in general confirmed this accepted hypothesis of an earlier generation.[13] At times in the history of modern scholarship, however, this historical point—the relative lateness of the birth-infancy narrative—has disproportionately, indeed incorrectly, influenced the interpretation of the Gospel as a whole, as in for example Conzelmann's relegation of Luke 1–2 to a position of unimportance in his famous book *Die Mitte der Zeit*.[14] Yet the basic fact

[12] I have not attempted to translate "Verbindlich" or "Verbindlichkeit" into English due to the absence of a one-word equivalent. Part of the reason for the translation difficulty has to do with the fact that this one German word points in two directions. First, it can point to the inner relation of scripture to itself, so to speak (a kind of internal Verbindlichkeit), and, second, it can point to our relation to the canon (a kind of external Verbindlichkeit). Thus the conference theme had two subheadings: (1) Vielstimmigkeit und Einheit der Schrift, and (2) Zum Problem der Normativität des Kanons. While the internal and external dimensions can be distinguished formally, they cannot be separated, hence the general idea of the lecture: to problematize the distinction between external and internal as one of separation while accepting the descriptive difference. In this light, the lecture is best understood if seen as beginning with a question of external Verbindlichkeit, moving toward internal Verbindlichkeit, and then on that basis back out toward external Verbindlichkeit.

[13] This is not to deny that the birth–infancy narratives contain traditions that may themselves be quite early.

[14] Cf., also, e.g. J. Wellhausen's slim commentary, *Das Evangelium Lucae* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1904), which begins outright with Luke 3:1.

remains that despite various attempts at reconstruction (proto-Luke, etc.), we have neither a single copy of Luke's Gospel without the birth-infancy narrative nor any really substantial evidence that the early followers of Jesus were acquainted with a Lukan Gospel minus the first two chapters.

The importance of this observation is at least twofold. First, if we want to understand *Lukan* theology we must read the Lukan Gospel as Luke shaped it,[15] and this means taking seriously the placement of the first chapters at the beginning of the Gospel. Of course, Luke himself makes just this point with the use of the expression ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς in his προοίμιον. His narrative, he claims, is written "accurately in sequence,"[16] at least in the literary sense.

Second, the importance of Luke's term διήγησις is presupposed. It is, in fact, the word that tells us in what way Luke wants his Gospel, or first book (πρῶτον λόγον; Acts 1:1), to be read: as a narrative. Despite the breaks or gaps in the narrative and the somewhat awkward but typical ἐγένετο δέ transitions, for example, the Gospel as a whole is nonetheless characterized by Luke in his highly self-conscious preface as a διήγησις, and the Gospel is therefore best understood if read this way. In terms of our particular study, this means that the way in which κύριος occurs in the narrative—its placement, its first and subsequent appearances, its relation to what comes before and after, and so forth—assumes first place in the order of interpretation. The uses of κύριος in the *Umwelt*, what we believe to have been likely, possible or impossible in the Jewish and larger Mediterranean world of the first century, Luke's relation to his sources, and so on, are all important hermeneutical factors with which we would have to deal in a larger study. But, acknowledging the necessary and helpful reflexivity that exists between narrative interpretation and factors

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[15] In this sense it really does not matter whether Luke composed chs. 1–2 first or last, whether he had them as a tradition and, after minor editing, simply affixed them to the body of the Gospel, etc. Whatever his compositional practice or treatment of his sources, it remains clear that he wanted 1–2 to be a part of his total narrative.

[16] "Accurately in sequence" seems to me to be the best literal translation of ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς. Whether or not, and, if so, to what extent, Luke meant this in the strict sense of chronological agreement with actual events is impossible to know for sure. That Luke meant "accurately in sequence" in terms of the literary presentation itself seems to me to be confirmed by the nature of the preface (διήγησις, ἀσφάλεια, etc.), his use of καθεξῆς elsewhere (Luke 8:1 [in order or sequence; NRSV: went on through; Acts 3:24 [in order or sequence; NRSV: those after him]; Acts 11:4 [in order; NRSV: step by step]; Acts 18:23 [in sequence or in order; NRSV: place to place]), and both his respect for and rearrangement of Mark. See the brief discussion in Fitzmyer, *Luke,* 1.288–299, who himself thinks "literary order" is "the most evident sense of the adverb" (1.299).

external to the narrative proper, such external factors set in relation to the meaning of κύριος in Luke's Gospel must not be allowed to override the meaning generated by the narrative. The narrative has the first move, as it were.

Lukan Old Testament Hermeneutics

It has become well-known in contemporary Lukan exegesis that Luke 1–2 display a remarkable concern for continuity with the events, prophecies, and promises of the history of Israel. Such continuity is frequently, and rightly in my view, seen primarily in terms of Luke's use of the Old Testament.[17] Luke Timothy Johnson may be correct that in its finer details Luke's method in using the Old Testament is subtle and "eludes . . . detection."[18] But there are nonetheless a number of important observations for us to make about Lukan Old Testament hermeneutics here in chapters 1—2 that have immediate bearing upon the interpretation of κύριος in the birth-infancy narrative.

Luke cites Scripture directly only twice (2:23, 24: both times prefaced with ἐν [τῷ] νόμῳ κυρίου), but the entire birth-infancy narrative is richly allusive,[19] to the point that Nils Dahl suggested that Luke's intention was to "write the continuation of the biblical history."[20] Against Raymond Brown's bridge metaphor,[21] which fails because for Luke there is no gulf between the old and the new, Dahl's choice of the word "continuation" is apt. This is, in fact, the very point of Luke's numerous Old Testament allusions: There is continuity in the continuation of the action of the God of Israel that stretches from the Jewish biblical history to Jesus Christ. However, this continuation is not wooden. The promises in the Old

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[17] See, e.g., Joel B. Green's excellent essay, "The Problem of a Beginning: Israel's Scriptures in Luke 1–2," *BBR* 4 (1994): 61–85.

[18] Luke Timothy Johnson, "Luke–Acts," ABD 4.409. For a comprehensive review of the treatment of Luke's use of the Old Testament, see most recently Dietrich Rusam's Bonn Habilitation, *Das Alte Testament bei Lukas,* BZNW 112 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003).

[19] E.g., Gen 11–21 (Luke 1:5–2:52); 1 Sam 1:1–2:10 (Luke 1:5–2:52, esp. 1:46–55); Judg 13:2–25 (Luke 1:5–24); Dan 7–10 (1:5–2:52); Zeph 3:14–17 (Luke 1:26–33); Isa 2:9–12 (Luke 1:46–55); Isa 7:14 (Luke 1:27); Isa 9:6–7 (Luke 1:26–38); Isa 42:6 (Luke 1:79; 2:32); 49:6 (Luke 2:32); 52:10 (2:30–-31).; 2 Sam 7:12–16 (Luke 1:32–33); Mic 4:7–5:5 (Luke 2:1–14); Mal 3:1 (Luke 1:17, 76); Mal 4:5–6 (Luke 1:17).

[20] Nils Dahl, "The Story of Abraham in Luke–Acts," in *Studies in Luke–Acts,* ed. Leander Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 139–58, esp. 153.

[21] Raymond Brown, "Luke's Method in the Annunciation Narratives of Chapter One," in *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, ed. Charles Talbert (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), 126–38, esp. 138.

Testament and their fulfillment in Luke's time are not perfectly balanced or correlated. Luke does not work from a rigid prophecy/fulfillment scheme;[22] nor are the prefigurations in the Old Testament of character and event (e.g., Abraham, Sarah, Hannah) read in simple typological correspondence with the characters and events of Luke's time. Rather, Luke's reading of the LXX[23] enables him to shape his story to exert pressure upon the reader by means of atmospheric resonance. The characters and events of the Old Testament are everywhere present and nowhere mentioned. The reader of the narrative in Luke 1–2 simply breathes the air of Old Testament, thereby rendering direct citation of the LXX superfluous. For those who have ears to hear, the stories of Abraham and Sarah and Isaac, and Hannah and Samuel, and Sampson, and King David, and the prophecies and promises of Isaiah, Daniel, Zephaniah, Micah, and Malachi echo throughout each line of the birth-infancy narrative. The hallowed past extends into the hallowed present even as this present reaches back into the past. The promises and their fulfillment form a single narrative grounded in the God of Israel's act in Jesus. As Paul Minear wrote nearly forty years ago: The "stories in Luke 1–2 unfold in such a way as to disclose a single skein of events, all of which stem from the marvelous fulfillment by God of his covenant promises to Israel."[24]

What Minear and others[25] have seen clearly as a result of Luke's use of the Old Testament in chapters 1–2 is that the unity of the birth-infancy narrative itself and the continuity of the "new" events with the "old"

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[22] Martin Rese, *Alttestamentliche Motive in der Christologie des Lukas,* SZNT 1 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1969), 37–41, 134–35, is correct when he argues in relation to the Luke–Acts as a whole that a rigid prophecy/fulfillment scheme can obscure the distinctiveness and uniqueness of Luke's Old Testament citations. Rese purposefully does not treat allusions to the Old Testment, but his point holds here as well. This is not to deny the strong elements of prophecy and fulfillment that are obviously apparent (Schubert, Farris et al.) but is instead to point to Luke's varied and multifaceted use of the Old Testament.

[23] In light of recent Septuagintal studies it is necessary to clarify in what way the term Septuagint/LXX is being used. At this point in this essay, "the LXX" (the article is grammatically preferable in normal English usage) is used in the very general sense of the Greek-language Old Testament (assuming here that Luke's Old Testament texts were in Greek). Elsewhere in the essay, when citing from the Greek Old Testament, I will use "the LXX" to mean the critically reconstructed text of the Göttingen edition LXX.

[24] Paul Minear, "Luke's Use of the Birth Stories," in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. Keck and Martyn (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 111–29, esp. 116.

[25] See, e.g., the interpretive aside "God's Purpose, the Scriptures, and the 'Beginning' of Luke–Acts," in Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke,* NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 51–57.

depend upon the purpose and action of God. Thus is such unity and continuity theological in the strict sense of the word, as it is the same God who provides the continuation of that which had been promised in the scriptures of Israel: There is fulfillment and unity of divine identity and purpose.

What has unfortunately not been as clearly seen is the depth or nature of this theological continuity. A primary reason is that Lukan theology and Christology have been kept too far apart. In this separation Luke's portrayal of God and of God's act in Jesus has been hidden from view. Conversely, Luke's view of Jesus and the animating power of his life have also remained insufficiently explored. In my judgment, both sides of this problematic could be helped by giving explicit and consistent attention to the question of the identity of God and of Jesus in relation to Luke's use of κύριος.

Luke 1:43

In the birth-infancy narrative, κύριος is used frequently in an unambiguous way to refer to the God of Israel (κύριος ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ; 1:68), and this usage normally displays septuagintal influence in both tone and diction. Luke writes, for example, in 1:6 of Zechariah and Elizabeth that they were righteous before God, πορευόμενοι ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐντολαῖς καὶ δικαιώμασιν τοῦ κυρίου ἄμεμπτοι, and in 1:9 that Zechariah entered τὸν ναὸν τοῦ κυρίου to perform his priestly service. The use of κύριος for God alone that began in 1:6 extends through 1:38 where we encounter Mary's famous response to the news that she will bear God's Son: ἰδοὺ ἡ δούλη κυρίου γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου. Between 1:38 and 1:39, however, there is a narrative gap during which time the conception of Jesus occurs. We are not told directly that he is conceived, but we can infer it on the basis of the encounter between Elizabeth and Mary in which Elizabeth refers to the "fruit" (καρπός) of Mary's womb (1:42) and addresses Mary as ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου. And it is with this address that Jesus himself appears in the narrative for the first time: ὁ κύριος in the womb.

As mentioned above, prior to 1:43 κύριος is used exclusively for the God (ten times), but now Jesus himself enters the narrative for the first time and is given the name/title ὁ κύριος. Elizabeth's acclamation, furthermore, is rooted in the Holy Spirit and, rather than issuing in a greeting of mere oriental politeness,[26] shows Jesus to be the κύριος to

[26] Werner Foerster in G. Quell and W. Foerster, "κύριος κτλ.," *ThWNT* 3.1038–98: "In orientalischer Höflichkeit mag (rein auf den Sprachgebrauch gesehen) Elisabeth die Maria 'Mutter meines Herrn' nennen" (1085) = *TDNT* 3.1039–98: "It is probably with oriental politeness, so far as linguistic usage is concerned, that Elisabeth can call Mary 'the mother of my Lord' " (1086).

whom she gives her allegiance: She calls him "my" κύριος. Elizabeth then continues: "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her παρὰ κυρίου." In this crucial moment of Jesus' introduction, Elizabeth's confession effects a double referent of the word κύριος between the as yet unborn and human κύριος of Mary's womb and the κύριος of heaven, who has taken away Elizabeth's shame (1:25, κύριος) and given the promise of the fruit of Mary's womb.

Perhaps the fact that an overlap now exists between κύριος and κύριος is an obvious linguistic observation. Yet it is a crucial one. If one were to hear the Gospel read aloud (as would have been the case in the ancient world),[27] one would not be able to hear a difference between κύριος and κύριος but would instead experience a resonance, especially if the occasion was a Christian gathering for (charismatic) worship and edification in the 80s or 90s A.D.[28]

1:6: τοῦ κυρίου
1:9: τοῦ κυρίου
1:11: κυρίου
1:15: τοῦ κυρίου
1:16: κύριον τὸν θεόν
1:17: κυρίῳ
1:25: κύριος
1:28: ὁ κύριος
1:32: κύριος ὁ θεός
1:38: κυρίου
1:43: τοῦ κυρίου
1:45: κυρίου
1:46: τὸν κύριον

In light of the Old Testament context of Luke 1–2, Luke's frequent use of κύριος for the God of Israel, and the movement of the Lukan narrative, it becomes possible to draw the conclusion that the dramatic moment of 1:43 in the narrative bespeaks a unity of identity[29] between

[27] For an excellent discussion of early Christian literacy, see Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), esp. 2–10.

[28] By the time Luke's Gospel would have been read, Jesus had already been acclaimed and worshipped as κύριος for at least three decades (cf. the pre-Pauline hymn in Phil 2:5–11).

[29] In this context I use identity to mean that which is essentially related to identifying the thing in question: As we will see, to speak of who Jesus is in Luke's Gospel is already and simultaneously to speak of the God of Israel, and to speak of who the God of Israel is, is already and simultaneously to speak of Jesus. One

YHWH and the human Jesus within Mary's womb by means of the word κύριος. Such a unity is not for Luke, as one might want to claim in the case of John, theologically propositional or based upon predication. Rather, the unity is narratively constituted: By means of the same word and the flow of the narrative, Luke creates a space wherein an overlap cannot help but to take place, and which thus results in a doubleness in terms of the referent of κύριος.

Two further points are important in helping us continue to move forward. First, it is possible to speak this way because of the Holy Spirit. The reason that κύριος is now constitutive of Jesus' identity and that the one word κύριος has a twofold referent is because of the work of the Holy Spirit in the conception of Jesus. In the birth-infancy narrative of Luke, Jesus' life cannot be thought of apart from the Power of the Most High, as it is the Holy Spirit, God in his life-giving *Seinsweise*,[30] or τρόπος ὑπάρξεως,[31] who begins the new baby's life as ὁ κύριος. Thus it is that by the power of the Spirit, God's life is now bound up with Jesus' life to such a great extent and with such intensity that they share the name/title κύριος.

Second, unlike the tetragrammaton, κύριος is not univocal. The word can refer to rulers, deities, slave masters, colt owners, and the like. Luke himself, for example, uses κύριος for Nero in Acts 25:26, and one can quite rightly assume that no overlap in identity between Jesus (or God) and Nero is intended (though there is a contrast). If, then, our interpretation of the overlap between the God of Israel and Jesus through the word κύριος is on target, we would need to see evidence in other parts of the narrative that would confirm the binding of the same word to these two different persons/characters in the narrative in particular, as distinct from other possible referents and/or overlaps. In other words, does our interpretation play out in the rest of the narrative?

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cannot identify Jesus as who he is apart from the God of Israel, and vice versa. There is a binding of the two persons (unity) with respect to who they are (identity). For Luke, there does not seem to be a "personal or individual existence" (OED, "identity") of Jesus in abstraction from God or of God in abstraction from Jesus. Yet there is a distinction between κύριος ὁ θεός and κύριος χριστός. On this point, see below.

[30] Karl Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik* I/1 §9.2, 379ff. *Church Dogmatics* I/1 §9.2, 359ff.

[31] Cappadocians: e.g., Basil of Caesarea, *De Spiritu Sancto,* 46 (Migne, PG, 32.152B); Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium,* 1 (Migne, PG, 45.316C). For other uses, see the list in *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (ed. G. W. H. Lampe), 1434–35.

Luke 2:11

Many scholars both past and present have taken χριστός to be the most important Christological title for Jesus in Luke.[32] I think that this assessment is incorrect, or at best highly debatable, but the details of this matter can wait for another time. What is important to note now is something that is significant in itself: The first time χριστός occurs in the Gospel narrative it occurs with κύριος. Luke does not write, as he is perfectly capable of writing elsewhere, χριστός or ὁ χριστός and leave it at that. Instead, he evidently wants the reader/auditor to read/hear χριστός together with κύριος right at the outset.

I agree with Fitzmyer et al. that we should, with the best Greek manuscripts and in light of Acts 10:36, read two anarthrous nominatives (χριστὸς κύριος) at 2:11 rather than correct to χριστὸς κυρίου in light of the expression ὁ χριστὸς κυρίου just fifteen verses later in Luke 2:26.[33] But this decision does not determine the meaning automatically. "Christ, the Lord" is the most common English reading, but the "anointed Lord" (taking χριστός as an adjective) is also possible. One might also propose the "lordly Messiah" as the meaning, though this is somewhat awkward grammatically. The first rendering keeps the titles separate and distinct (so Fitzmyer); the latter two bring them together.

I submit that whatever their various etymological and cultural histories, Luke here uses both words together in a mutually determinative manner: χριστός conveys which and what kind of κύριος Jesus is, and κύριος discloses the depth of Jesus' messianic identity. This way of putting it would seem to require, in English at least, translating in a rather jarring way such that both titles are kept separate and intact as nominative nouns: "Christ Lord." This jarring translation, however, points immediately toward a larger narrative interpretation that would bring the words together (the messianic κύριος and the Lord who is the χριστός).

The importance of 2:11 for our focus is that it serves to maintain both a distinction and a unity. On the one hand, Jesus is not the same person in the narrative as the κύριος who remains κύριος πατήρ in heaven (cf. in this context 2:9, 15, 26; cf. 11:3); Jesus is the messianic κύριος, who is born on earth. On the other hand, there is a unity between them such that they are both κύριος with respect to their basic identity. Of interest in this connection is Dibelius's suggestion that Luke added ὅς ἐστιν χριστὸς κύριος with its titles to the pre-Lucan message ἐτέχθη ὑμῖν

[32] E.g., E. Earl Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke,* NCBC, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 9–12, 32–36; Fitzmyer, *Luke,* 1.197.

[33] Contra, e.g., Paul Winter, "Lukanische Miszellen," *ZNW* 49 (1958): 65–75.

σήμερον σωτὴρ ἐν πόλει Δαυίδ and thus created some tension with the other nearby uses of κύριος, which refer to God (2:9, 15, 26).[34] Whether or not Dibelius's hypothesis is true we cannot know—I am increasingly skeptical about unverifiable source hypotheses for Luke 1–2[35]—but his recognition of the tension speaks again for a narrative overlap between Jesus and the God of Israel arising out of the word κύριος. In other portions of the Luke–Acts narrative, such a tension between the proper referent of κύριος is so pronounced as to be fully ambiguous, rendering an exegetically responsible choice between Jesus and God impossible, as we shall see in Luke 3:4–6.

Luke 3:4–6

In order to see the significance of 3:4–6 clearly, we should first make mention of 1:76. In Luke 1:76 Zechariah, filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesies that his son John will go "ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἑτοιμάσαι ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ." Luke 1:76 is fully ambiguous in itself as regards the identity of the κύριος. That is, one cannot decide on exegetical grounds whether the κύριος is the God of Israel or Jesus. In fact, we can go further and assert that the *either* YHWH or Jesus forced upon the text by many exegetes turns out to be a false dichotomy. Alfred Plummer, for example, writes that "[h]ere κυρίου means Jehovah, not the Christ,"[36] while Bovon, Fitzmyer,

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[34] Martin Dibelius, "Jungfrauensohn und Krippenkind. Untersuchungen zur Geburtsgeschichte Jesu im Lukas-Evangelium," in *Botschaft und Geschichte: Gesammelte Aufsätze von Martin Dibelius,* 2 vol., ed. Günther Bornkamm (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1953, 1955), 1–78 (62–63).

[35] H. J. Cadbury's judgment is prudent: Luke's "personal style is never so totally wanting as to prove alien origins for a passage, and is never so persuasive as to exclude the possibility that a written source existed, although the source be no longer capable of detection by any residual difference in style" (*The Making of Luke-Acts* [London: Macmillan, 1927], 67). Though with a slightly different emphasis, Brown, *Birth,* 246, cites this passage from Cadbury in order to assess the current state of the question: "[t]he linguistic opponents have fought one another to a draw at the present moment of our scientific research."

[36] Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke,* ICC (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), 42. So also Friedrich Bleek, *Synoptische Erklärung der drei ersten Evangelien* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1862), 63; C. F. Evans, *Saint Luke* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 186; H. J. Holtzmann, *Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament. Erster Band: Die Synoptiker—Die Apostelgeschichte* (Freiburg im Breisgau: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1889), 36; Erich Klostermann, *Das Lukasevangelium,* Handbuch zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1919), 388; Schneider, "Gott und Christus," 167, and, idem, *Lukas,* 62 (though here Schneider asserts that in light of the whole Gospel κύριος may be seen to refer to Jesus, but the immediate context requires "God" to be the referent).

and Jeremias, among others, think the κύριος is Jesus.[37] Johannes Weiss shrewdly attempts to have it both ways—that is, he sees the ambiguity—but leaves the matter uninterpreted: κυρίου "scheint nach V. 17 auf Gott bezogen werden zu müssen; vielleicht aber hat Lk es auf Christus bezogen, da er sonst κυρ. so braucht (im Gegensatz zu ὕψιστος)."[38] In any case, in the next edition of the commentary, the ninth, father Bernhard flattened Johannes' judgment and, noting the change from the eighth edition, asserted that the κυρίου refers to YHWH.[39]

This either/or dichotomy is widespread, but in every case it begins with a false assumption about the relation of Lukan theology and Christology which, when carried over into exegesis, obscures the theological significance of the use of κύριος and smothers the actual dynamic of the text. The doubleness in the referent of κύριος retains the ambiguity present in the text and allows the ambiguity to be understood as both/and. To speak of the God of Israel as κύριος is to speak of Jesus as κύριος, and vice versa. This unity is confirmed in Luke 3:4–6.

[37] Bovon, *Lukas,* 1.108; Joachim Jeremias, *Die Sprache des Lukasevangeliums: Redaktion und Tradition im Nicht-Markusstoff des dritten Evangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 23; Fitzmyer, *Luke,* 1.385; So also A. R. C. Leaney, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke,* BNTC (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958), 90, and William Manson, *The Gospel of Luke,* The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), 15.

[38] Bernhard Weiss and Johannes Weiss, *Die Evangelien des Markus und Lukas,* Meyer Kritisch exegesticher Kommentar über das Neue Testament, 8th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892), 318. The eighth edition of the Meyer series commentary was done by Johannes.

[39] Bernhard Weiss, *Die Evangelien des Markus und Lukas,* Meyer Kritisch exegesticher Kommentar über das Neue Testament, 9th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901), 294. Klostermann, *Das Lukasevangelium,* 388, mistakenly disagrees with "Bernhard" (it should be Johannes; Bernhard thinks otherwise, at least by 1901). Perhaps Klostermann realized his mistake, for in the second edition (1929) he drops the reference to Weiss. One also wonders if Klostermann did not in fact become more sympathetic with Johannes's statement in the eight edition of the Meyer commentary. After declaring that in light of 1:16–17 the κυρίου of 1:76 certainly refers to God, Klostermann writes: "Lc selbst müßte dann die Beziehung auf den Messias Jesus hineingelegt haben" (28). Johannes Weiss himself, however, later seems to have agreed with his father (see *Die Schriften des Neuen Testament. Erster Band: Die drei älteren Evangelien. Die Apostelgeschichte* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1906], 392, where Jesus/Messiah is not even mentioned). A serious problem with the approach of Weiss and Klostermann is that while they attempt to work on two different levels, that of the pre-Lukan context and the Lukan one, they frequently merge the two levels and lose consistency. Such a merger also creates methodological and hermeneutical confusion, as can be seen in the use of other Lukan narrative clues (1:16–17) to support the pre-Lukan hypothesis about referent (1:76).

Luke 3:1 begins formally the body of the Gospel and opens with specific historical indications of the time at which the "fulfilled" (1:1) events took place. John the Baptist, now a grown man, appears from the wilderness as a prophet, fulfilling his vocation as a herald by trumpeting forth anew the words of the prophet Isaiah:

φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ
ἑτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου
εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ
πᾶσα φάραγξ πληρωθήσεται
καὶ πᾶν ὄρος καὶ βουνὸς ταπεινωθήσεται
καὶ ἔσται τὰ σκολιὰ εἰς εὐθείαν
καὶ αἱ τραχεῖαι εἰς ὁδοὺς λείας
καὶ ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ

The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
Prepare the way of the Lord!
Make straight his paths!
Every valley shall be filled,
And every mountain and hill shall be made low!
And the crooked places shall be made straight,
And the rough places shall be made smooth!
And all flesh shall see the salvation of God!

This citation of Isa 40:3–5 in Luke 3:4–6 is the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy in Luke 1:76 and forces again the question of the identity of the κύριος. In the Isaiah quotation itself the κυρίου of 40:3 (Luke 3:4) clearly refers to YHWH, as does the τοῦ θεοῦ of 40:5 (Luke 3:6). In Luke's narrative, however, the referent of the κυρίου is, as in the prophecy of 1:76, ambiguous. Because 3:4–6 is an Old Testament quotation, the κύριος in 3:4 is unquestionably the μόνος κύριος of the Old Testament; because John the Baptist in Luke's narrative literally does prepare the way for Jesus structurally, sequentially, and as his prophet, the κύριος indubitably refers to Jesus (the absolute ὁ κύριος is used at least thirteen times in Luke's Gospel). Exegesis that would see here only a reference to Jesus simply ignores the multiple uses of κύριος for God earlier in the narrative and the force of the point that this passage is an indisputable citation from the Old Testament.[40] Conversely, exegesis that would see here only a reference to God simply ignores the structure and movement of the Gospel.[41]

[40] So, e.g., I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1978), 136, who identifies the κύριος as Jesus, "not as God."

[41] So, e.g., Bleek, *Synoptische Erklärung,* 159, who gives the complete weight to the Old Testament quotation and speaks of a people prepared for YHWH.

Furthermore, as in Mark 1:3, in Isa 40:3 (Luke 3:4) there is a small but significant difference between the septuagintal text and Luke's citation of this same text. Where the LXX reads εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν, "make straight the paths of *our God*" (Isa 40:3), Luke reads εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ, "make straight *his* paths" (Luke 3:4).[42] It is tempting to argue with Bovon, Green, Schneider, Schürmann, et al. that the αὐτοῦ adds clarity and provides the interpretative key.[43] The exegetical move would then be to assert on this basis that Luke, with Mark,[44] intends that the κύριος of 3:4 refer to Jesus—hence the substitution of αὐτοῦ for τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν. This argument, however, moves in the wrong direction. In reality, the αὐτοῦ produces precisely the reverse effect. It removes clarity and creates ambiguity, as it removes the noun and substitutes a pronoun, thus throwing all the weight back upon κύριος. As a result the referent of the αὐτοῦ in itself is unclear and is dependent upon whom one takes the κύριος to be—a decision which is fraught with ambiguity.

It is exegetically impossible to resolve the ambiguity of the κύριος with an either/or dichotomy. There is simply no way to settle the issue with certainty. A both/and exegesis avoids pressing the text into a preconceived either/or mold and instead reflects the tension inherent within the text. As in the prophecy in 1:76, so here in its fulfillment the ambiguity of the κύριος overlap captures the fundamental correlation between the God of Israel and Jesus expressed in the doubleness of the single κύριος.

Wirkungsgeschichte: The impact of the overlap and ambiguity in Luke's use of κύριος can be seen already in the clarifying tendency of the scribes of Codex Bezae (D), though for D one cannot speak of a systematic clarification. A good example is the reading of Bezae here at Luke 3:4–6. The best way to see the significance is to compare the relevant parts of the text of the LXX, the best Lukan reading, and D.

φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ
ἑτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν ***κυρίου***
εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν
. . . καί ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ (LXX)

φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ
ἑτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν ***κυρίου***

[42] On the reading of Codex Bezae, see below.

[43] Bovon, *Lukas,* 1.170.; Green, *Luke,* 171; Schneider, "Gott und Christus," 167 nt. 36, Schürmann, *Lukas,* 1.160 nt. 98. So also, e.g., Evans, *Saint Luke,* 106; and, Plummer, *Luke,* 87.

[44] Mark is much more clear here than Luke. Mark begins outright with Jesus and John the Baptist, and there are no other previous occurrences of κύριος, as in the Lukan text, that cause one to wonder about the referent of κύριος.

εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους *αὐτοῦ*
. . . καὶ ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον *τοῦ θεοῦ* (Luke)

φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ
ἑτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν ***κυρίου***
εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους *ὑμῶν*
. . . καὶ ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον *κυρίου* (D)

The differences of D are striking. Whereas in the septuagintal text the κύριος ambiguity does not exist because of the clear continuity of θεός (τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν to τοῦ θεοῦ; this is not to mention that the possibility of ambiguity did not yet exist), in the D text, the ambiguity does not exist because of the change to direct address (the significance of the ὑμῶν)[45] and scribal adjustment toward κύριος. Thus, in the Bezae reading the removal of θεός and the second use of κύριος, coupled with John's direct address to the crowds, clearly points toward a scribe's Christological interpretation of κύριος. The Lord of whom John speaks in D is Jesus. In the Gospel alone, a similar Christological tendency can also been seen, for example, at 7:13; 13:15; and 22:61, where D reads Ἰησοῦς in place of κύριος.[46]

Luke 20:41–44

There no need here for a detailed investigation of our final passage from the Gospel, but it is important nonetheless to mention. A significant question emerges from the fact that Jesus is clearly ὁ χριστὸς κυρίου (2:26) and simultaneously ὁ κύριος (1:43, etc.) and χριστὸς κύριος (2:11): How do the nominative and the genitive fit together? That is, how can Jesus be both *the Lord* (κύριος) and the Christ *of the Lord* (κυρίου)? Precisely this matter is at issue in Luke 20:41–44, where on the basis of Ps 110:1 it is the Lord who raises the same question: "David therefore calls him κύριον; how then is he his son?" (20:44).

Two observations are pertinent to our purpose here. First, as with 2:11, Luke preserves a distinction between the messianic κύριος (David's son,

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[45] So, rightly, George Edward Rice, "The Alterations of Luke's Tradition by the Textual Variants in Codex Bezae" (Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1974), 44. Rice treats only Isa 40:3 and argues that the purpose of the Bezae scribes was to heighten the role of John the Baptist. That such a tendency exists in D may well be the case. But if one looks at the entire quotation from Isaiah (40:3–5), the more immediate explanation here is that of an alteration for Christological purposes.

[46] Cf. Luke 1:9 where D reads θεοῦ instead of κυρίου and 24:3 where D omits τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ altogether.

ὁ χριστός) and the κύριος in heaven (ὁ κύριος)[47] at whose right hand the exalted Messiah will sit. Conzelmann's description, therefore, of Luke's use of κύριος for God and for Jesus as a *Vermischung* is inaccurate.[48] Even within the single word κύριος Luke is careful to preserve a distinction between, to use other language, the κύριος υἱός and the κύριος πατήρ. In light of this preserved distinction, the overlap in the referent of the word κύριος should not be understood in terms of a meshing or mixing together of two different persons/characters (as *Vermischung* implies), but rather in terms of the narrative continuity and unity of identity of Jesus and the God of Israel together as κύριος, as I have attempted to describe above.

Second, this distinction between the messianic and heavenly κύριος (or Father and Son) is grounded in an Old Testament text, which is to say that there is scriptural justification for Luke's use of κύριος for both the God of Israel and for Jesus. The connection to the Old Testament highlights once again the importance of the Jewish scripture for a major facet of Lukan Christology.

Acts 2:36 and 10:36

The last two passages we need to consider are in Acts. The first passage is Acts 2:36b, which, after citing Ps 110:1 (109:1 LXX), reads: "God has made him [Jesus] both Lord [κύριος] and Christ [χριστός]." We cannot know for certain whether this confession is an early piece of kerygma adapted by Luke or an original part of the Lukan speech-composition.[49] Regardless, to read this verse in itself as an expression of Lukan theology is wrongheaded. It is clearly not the case that Luke believes Jesus to have become κύριος and/or χριστός only with his resurrection and exaltation—the entire Lukan narrative tells against such an interpretation. Instead, we should see this passage as strategically incorporated into the larger narrative and seek to discern its meaning and function in that connection. With the larger narrative context in mind, the contribution that Acts 2:36 makes to the understanding of κύριος has to do with the significance of the resurrection for Jesus' identity as ὁ κύριος.

[47] NA[27] does not print the article. The text-critical problem here is difficult to solve. However, when one takes account of the fact that the D scribes have a noticeable tendency to alter uses of κύριος throughout the Gospel text, then B is the only strong ms. left with an anarthrous reading. In this light, I would tend to go with the majority of the best Greek mss. and read the article. But an articular reading is not certain, and, in any case, Luke's point remains the same with both readings.

[48] See *Die Mitte der Zeit,* 4.I.2 "Vater, Sohn, Geist," esp. 165 & 172.

[49] On speeches in the Mediterranean world, Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 45–47, manages to be lucid and brief without oversimplifying the matter.

Between the earthly and exalted Jesus is his crucifixion and death. Jesus' crucifixion as a criminal[50] and ultimately his death quite understandably threatened his identity as ὁ κύριος. But in raising Jesus from the dead, God the Father ensures the continuity of the messianic κύριος through suffering and death. From his conception by the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus is κύριος, but the resurrection nevertheless makes a profound difference for Lukan Christology, for it vindicates Jesus as the κύριος πάντων and establishes his rule overall (effected in the spread of the Gospel). Thus the difference between Luke 1:43 and Acts 2:36 is not one of identity but one of place (earthly and heavenly Lord) and effect (universal mission). Through its development the narrative "appears as the path of character,"[51] meaning in this case that the identity of the character is inseparable from the narrative in which he appears. Indeed, "the identity of the character is constructed in connection with that of the plot."[52] Jesus κύριος, then, is in Acts the same character in the still-unfolding same story that began in Luke 1–2: There is a narratively constituted continuity of identity through his crucifixion, death, and resurrection.

Acts 10:36 declares that Jesus is κύριος πάντων. Epictetus says the same thing of the Roman Emperor,[53] and similar pronouncements exist in surviving inscriptions.[54] So also, from the domain of the mystery cults, in Plutarch's *Moralia* Osiris is ὁ πάντων κύριος. In relation to the Roman Emperor, I would see here a rival claim to ultimate and definitive lordship, and in relation to the gods and goddesses of the mystery cults, a clash with the κύριοι πολλοί, to use Pauline language. But what about in relation to the Jewish God, who in Old Testament theology is certainly the only κύριος πάντων? Nehemiah 9:6, for example, says simply: σὺ εἶ αὐτὸς κύριος μόνος (You yourself are the only κύριος!; LXX 2 Esdras 19:6).[55] This universal Lordship continues

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[50] In Luke's story, I take the centurion's judgment of Jesus as δίκαιος (23:47) as pointing toward existing accusations of Jesus' criminality. Cf. Jesus' question to the arresting party in 22:52 (λῃστής is used frequently in Josephus for the "bandits"), the description of Barabbas (λῃστής), and the crucifixion of the two criminals (κακοῦργοι) alongside Jesus.

[51] Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another,* trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University Press, 1992), 146. See especially chapter 5 "Personal Identity and Narrative Identity" and chapter 6 "The Self and Narrative Identity."

[52] Ibid., 141.

[53] Epictetus, *Discourses* IV.1.12 (the Roman Emperor is ὁ πάντων κύριος καῖσαρ).

[54] E.g., ὁ τοῦ παντὸς κόσμου κύριος Νέρων (Ditt., Syll[3] II.814, lns. 30–31).

[55] Cf. e.g., Deut 6:4: ἄκουε Ἰσραὴλ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστι (Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!); Isa 2:11 (cf. 2:17): καὶ ὑψωθήσεται

clearly even within the Gospel of Luke itself, where Jesus addresses the God of Israel as πάτερ κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς which is, of course, formally the same thing as κύριος πάντων (10:21; Marcion omits καὶ τῆς γῆς).[56]

The only way the κύριος πάντων predication of Jesus would not constitute a rival claim or a clash—indeed an outright Marcionite rejection of the God of Israel—would be if God and Jesus could both be κύριος πάντων in such a way that there was no conflict between them. On Old Testament theological grounds, there is simply not room for two κύριοι πάντων. Indeed, in an Old Testament framework the idea of two κύριοι πάντων is a logical contradiction.

Ἰησοῦς κύριος πάντων is in the end only a possibility because in some way Jesus shares an identity with the Lord of Israel that is narratively constituted through the word κύριος. This shared identity as κύριος both derives from and interprets the κύριος overlap and ambiguity of the narrative (the latter of which is considerably more pronounced in Acts). The possibility and continuity lie with God himself in the power of his Holy Spirit, and thus is the continuity between the Old and the New, strictly speaking, theological.

Conclusions

We began with the Marcionite severing of the God of Israel from Jesus Christ and the attempt to read some of the Lukan Gospel in light of such a complete separation. We then turned to a few important texts in Luke's Gospel and in Acts and saw that contrary to the Marcionite reading, the unity between the God of Israel and Jesus Christ in the Lukan narrative is so strong that we could say with Hans Frei that Jesus κύριος is the

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κύριος μόνος ἐν τῇ ἡμέρα ἐκείνῃ (And the only κύριος will be exalted in that day!); Isa 42:8: ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεός τοῦτό μου ἐστιν τὸ ὄνομα τὴν δόξαν μου ἑτέρῳ οὐ δώσω (I am the Lord God, this is my Name; my glory I will not give to another!); Ezek 39:7: καὶ τὸ ὄνομά μου τὸ ἅγιον γνωσθήσεται ἐν μέσῳ λαοῦ μου Ἰσραὴλ καὶ οὐ βεβηλωθήσεται τὸ ὄνομά μου τὸ ἅγιον οὐκέτι καὶ γνώσονται τὰ ἔθνη ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι κύριος ἅγιον ἐν Ἰσραήλ (And my holy name will be made known in the midst of my people Israel and my holy name will no longer be blasphemed. And the Gentiles will know that I am κύριος, the Holy One of Israel), etc. For similar expressions in the OT apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, see Henry J. Cadbury, "The Titles of Jesus in Acts," in *The Beginnings of Christianity. Part I: The Acts of the Apostles,* 5 vols., ed. Kirsopp Lake and Henry J. Cadbury (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1933), 5.354–75 (361–62).

[56] Luke also has Paul say this of God in the Areopagus speech (Acts 17:24). Interestingly, Fitzmyer, *Luke,* 1.117, classifies the phrase "Lord of heaven and earth" as an Aramaism in light of the parallel with 1QapGen 22:16.

"manifestation of the presence of God acting."[57] Or, to put it more precisely for our question here: Jesus is the presence of the God of Israel acting. In this connection clarity emerged with respect to a material agreement between the Lukan narrative and Marcionite theology, namely, that the person of Jesus Christ is a potential theological threat to the Old Testament precisely at the point of his relation to the God of Israel: If the God of the Jewish scripture and the God of Jesus Christ are not the same God the unity of the old and the new collapses. But it is also exactly at this point that Marcionite and Lukan theology part ways, toward a strict separation and discarding of the Old Testament on the one hand, and toward a unity of the old and the new at the most basic level of the identity of the God of Israel and Jesus Christ on the other.

When one looks at Luke, then, the *Verbindlichkeit* in relation to the Old Testament inheres less in explicit textual clues than it does in the presentation of the divine reality, or, differently said, the continuity of the self-same God. So, at both a theological-confessional level and a literary-presentational one, the binding authority of the Old Testament derives from God.

This raises for us the following interconnected questions: What exactly is the relation between internal and external *Verbindlichkeit*? Is it simply that as a community we have decided that a positive relationship to the Old Testament is necessary, and that we could have just as easily decided on the Marcionite option, only we did not? Or, is there some logic or force—or something—within this sort of internal *Verbindlichkeit* that guides us of necessity in certain ways rather than in others in terms of our binding attachment (external *Verbindlichkeit*) to the Old Testament?

Luke's answer—that is, the internal answer—is that it is the same God. Must not that also be our answer—the external one? And, if so, does not that raise the question of the divine authority of the text vis-à-vis the community's reception of this text? (Which points again, of course, toward the relation of internal and external *Verbindlichkeit*, as well as to the question of legitimate and illegitimate forms of *Sachkritik*.) NV

[57] Hans W. Frei, "The Identity of Jesus Christ" in *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays,* ed. George Hunsiger and William C. Placher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 74.

An Inseparable Connection: The Fruitfulness of Conjugal Love and the Divine Norm

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ELSEWHERE I have argued for the inseparable connection within Christian marriage of the love of God and the love of one's spouse based upon the eucharistic meaning of Christ's life.[1] The love of God is revealed by Christ—through his life, death, and resurrection—as a historical communication of the eternal love with which he has been loved by the Father and has, in turn, loved the Father. Hence "the love of God" simultaneously expresses *the Father's love for the Son* (Jn 6:35; 17:24; cf. 10:17), *the Son's love for the Father* (Jn 14:31), and *the Father's love communicated through the Son to the world* (Jn 15:9; 3:16; 17:23; 1 Jn 4:9; cf. Jn 10:29; 13:1; etc.). Once received, this same "love of God" also refers to *God's love in us* (Rom 5:5; 1 Jn 4:12; 16; etc.) whereby we simultaneously love God and neighbor. Just as *(kathos)*[2] Christ expresses his love for the Father by means of his love for the disciples (Jn 14:31), Christians express their love of God as *a love of neighbor* (13:34–35; 15:12). Hence Christian spouses may live their vocation to marriage as a specific form of their love of God.

Here I will argue that this conjugal love is, for the same reason (i.e., its participation in the eucharistic meaning of Christ's life),[3] fruitful. Without

[1] See my article, "The Eucharistic Meaning of Marriage," *Anthropotes* 10 (1994): 161–76. This is published under my maiden name (Herbst).

[2] The Greek term *kathos*, "as," implies more than is conveyed by the English word. The argument, like the term itself, presumes that the likeness is not one of simple analogy. What is implied, rather, is a true participation of the one relationship in the other. See Olivier de Dinechin, "*Kathos*: La similitude dans l'evangile selon Saint Jean," *Recherches de Science et Religion* 58 (1970): 195–236.

[3] By this I refer to a life, like that of Christ, which is identified with a mission to reveal and communicate the Father's love. See Jn 17:23; 3:16; etc.

excluding the spiritual fruits of marriage, my present focus might be summarized in the significant formulation of *Humanae Vitae*, according to which conjugal love "is not exhausted by the communion between husband and wife, but is destined to continue raising up new lives." More specifically, I will present the divine love as the model and foundation, the specific norm, of conjugal love (including the conjugal act itself) according to which there exists an "inseparable connection *[nexu indissolubili]*. . . . between the two meanings of the conjugal act: the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning."[4] Without denying that this inseparable connection may be defended from a natural law perspective, I will thereby concentrate upon the fact that this teaching is "illuminated and enriched by divine revelation"[5] according to which Christian marriage is itself a revelation *(mysterion)*[6] of the mutual love between Christ and the Church (cf. Eph 5:32), which, in turn, is a revelation of the eternal love between the Father and the Son, a love which is eternally fruitful in the Person of the Spirit.

After arguing for the revelatory nature of Christian marriage (and of the conjugal act within marriage) based upon its participation in the union of Christ and the Church, I will maintain that the latter union is itself fecund, even to the extent that the sacrament of marriage is one of its fruits. This fecund union between Christ and the Church will then be presented as the fruit of the still more fundamental union of love between Christ and the Father in their common Spirit, who is, himself, the fruit of their eternal love. This normative love (i.e. with regard to Christian marriage) serves, I will argue, as the basis for the inseparable connection between the unitive and procreative meanings of marriage in general and of the conjugal act in particular. By way of preemption I will then argue that the term "fruitful" is not being used equivocally with regard, on the one hand, to the love of Christian spouses and with regard, on the other, to the love of the Triune God. I will likewise defend my position against the presumption that each specific conjugal act of love need not be open to life so long as the general state of marriage is fruitful. Finally, I will conclude that the inseparable connection between the two meanings of the conjugal act is founded within the Christian couple's participation (i.e., in virtue of their sacrament) in the Trinitarian love of God.

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[4] Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae,* encyclical letter "On Human Life" (July 25, 1968), nos. 9, 12. Translation by NC News Service (Boston: Pauline Books & Media).

[5] Ibid., no. 4.

[6] According to Max Zerwick, the term is used to refer to "matters made known through revelation." *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament,* 3rd ed. (Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1988), 589.

Marriage: A Revelation of and a Participation in the Mystical Nuptials of Christ and the Church

Traditionally and historically, marriage was recognized as a sacrament because of its sign value *(sacramentum signum)* in reference to the union between Christ and the Church, as presented in Ephesians 5:32. While Augustine was the first to relate this sign quality to the sacred bond *(sacramentum vinculum)* resulting from the spousal consent *(juramentum)*, both he and the Scholastic tradition, which followed his initial insight, recognized the sacramental value as lying not merely in the spiritual union of spouses *(consensus animorum)* but also and especially in the "one flesh" union of sexual intercourse whereby their consent is consummated.[7] When the medieval debate arose concerning that which constitutes marriage as such, the distinction was thus made between *consensus*—which legally and socially constitutes marriage—and *copula*, which concretely and existentially determines the biblical "becoming one," or "one flesh," of marriage.[8] Hence, Hugh of St. Victor argued that there are two sacraments of marriage: the external sacrament, which is the corporeal union of marriage and that whereby it was said to be an image of Christ and the Church, and the inner sacrament *(res sacramenti)*, which is the personal communion with God. Sexual intercourse in marriage was presented as a "great *sacramentum* in respect of Christ and his Church," while spiritual married love was thought to be a "greater *sacramentum* in respect of God and the soul."[9] Eventually, however, this distinction was maintained within a single sacrament as expressed in the formulation of Peter of Poitiers: "[T]he sacrament is the *consensus* of heart and of body; there are not two sacraments in marriage."[10] Within this one "sacrament of Christ and his Church," Bonaventure differentiated the *esse necessitatis* (conjugal love without sexual intercourse) from the *esse plenitudinis* (the integral sacrament of the same which includes sexual intercourse), while St. Thomas reasoned that the sacred sign consisted in marital intercourse, since it is by this act that the marriage bond becomes indissoluble.[11]

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[7] Augustine, like the Church Fathers, in general, viewed marriage primarily as a means of founding a family *(ad procreationem)*, with emphasis on the *bonum prolis*. See E. Schillebeeckx, *Marriage: Human Reality and Saving Mystery,* trans. N. D. Smith (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965), 282.

[8] Ibid., 303.

[9] Ibid., 322; see 321 & 323.

[10] PL 211, 1257; cited in ibid., 325.

[11] Bonaventure, *In IV Sent.*, d. 26, a. 2, q. 3; and Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Sent.,* d. 27, q. 1, a. 3, sol. 2, ad 1. Both are cited in Schillebeeckx, *Marriage,* 326.

Compared to its sign value, the effective power of grace was assigned to marriage relatively late in the historical recognition of its sacramentality. Thus at the time of Albert the Great there were said to be three views according to which marriage was considered a sacrament: (1) that it was simply (i.e., in the absence of grace) a "sign of a saving reality"; (2) that it was an instrument of grace considered negatively, i.e., as a *recessus a peccato* (a sort of remedial grace against concupiscence); and (3) that it was a means of sanctifying grace: *in ordine ad bonum*.[12] While Albert was clearly sympathetic toward the latter view, he did not formally assume a position. His student, Thomas Aquinas, however, argued that because marriage was recognized by the Church as a sacrament and because "sacraments effect that of which they are a sign," marriage is an instrument of grace whereby spouses "are included in the union of Christ and the Church."[13]

Thus was acknowledged the full sacramental value of marriage, in general, and of marital intercourse, in particular, as an effective sign of the "one flesh" union between Christ and the Church, whereby the one (natural) relationship is said to be a revelation of and a participation in the other (supernatural one), while the latter is, in turn, normative with regard to the former.[14] While the unity of husband and wife is, in other words, a sign or *revelation* of the union between Christ and the Church (Eph 5:21–33), the latter "helps us to see more deeply into the essence of marriage to which Christians are called." The moral obligation cited in this passage—"as the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands"; "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church . . ."—indicates, John Paul II reasons, "that in the very essence of marriage a particle of the same mystery is captured. Otherwise, the entire analogy would hang suspended in a void."[15] If, then, the Lord points to the "beginning" as the basis whereby "a man shall leave his father and mother and be

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[12] Albertus Magnus, *In IV Sent.,* d. 26, a. 14; cited in Schillebeeckx, 337. The latter explains that marriage was called a *sacramentum* from the 11th century onward primarily as a defense against Manichaean attacks whereby it was considered a fundamental evil. This view was eventually condemned in 1139 by Lateran Council II.

[13] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* IV, 78, 4.

[14] Normally a sacrament realizes that of which it the sign. Marriage, however, does not realize the union, which it signifies, of Christ and the Church. Rather, it is the preexistent reality of the relationship between Christ and the Church which confers upon the natural reality of marriage a new value. See Bernard Sesboüé, *Les Signes du Salut,* vol. 3 of *Histoire des Dogmes* (Paris: Desclée, 1995), 195–96.

[15] John Paul II, *The Theology of Marriage & Celibacy: Catechesis on Marriage and Celibacy in the Light of the Resurrection of the Body* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1986), 193–94 (General Audience of August 18, 1982).

joined to his wife, and the two shall become one" (Mk 10:7; cf. Mt 19:5; Gen 2:24), the author of the letter to the Ephesians argues the same (cf. 5:31) based upon the full revelation of Christ's love for the Church: "For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church" (v. 29). Indeed, the "reason"[16] for conjugal unity is not simply the original meaning of creation—that is to say, the meaning that is obtained by examining the integrity of Adam in his union with Eve—"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. . . ." (Gen 2:23)—but also and especially the preeminent union (cf. Eph 5:26–27) of the New Adam and the New Eve, of Christ and His bride-body, the Church, who is—as we shall see—the fruit of the mutual love of the Father and the Son. Even more profoundly, the revelatory dimension of conjugal love is founded—far from a merely *analogical* likeness to divine love—in a real *participation*, which is to say that Christian spouses "signify *and share* (cf. Eph 5:32) the mystery of the unity and faithful love between Christ and the Church."[17] To return to the insight of St. Thomas above, in virtue of the grace received in the sacrament, Christian spouses are "included in the union of Christ and the Church."[18] More specifically, in virtue of the sacrament of marriage, spouses are given "the grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved his Church; the grace of the sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity, and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life."[19]

It is not surprising, then, that while even in a "natural" marriage, one ought to admit the inseparable union of the unitive and procreative meaning of sexual intercourse,[20] this is all the more the case in a Christian

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[16] Zerwick compares the *anti toutou* of Eph 5:31 to the *toutou eneken* of Mk 10:37, suggesting that they share the meaning of "for this reason" (*A Grammatical Analysis,* 585).

[17] Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium,* no. 11 (emphasis added). See Leo XIII, encyclical *Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae* (February 10, l880), in Denz. 1854, and Philippe Gauer, *Le Mariage, Sacrement de l'Amour Trinitaire. Le mariage participation de l'homme et de la femme au Mystère Trinitaire* (Chambray, France: C. L. D., 1993), 59.

[18] *". . . nubentibus per hoc sacamentum gratia conferatur, per quam ad unionem Christi et Eclesiae pertineant"* (St. Thomas, *Summa contra Gentiles* IV, 78, 4).

[19] *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* 1661. Reference is there made to the Council of Trent: *Denz*. 1799.

[20] "Marriage is not, then, the effect of chance or the product of evolution of unconscious natural forces; it is the wise institution of the Creator to realize in mankind His design of love. By means of the reciprocal personal gift of self, proper and exclusive to them, husband and wife tend toward the communion of their beings in view of mutual personal perfection, to collaborate with God in the generation and education of new lives." Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae,* no. 8.

marriage, i.e., a marriage of baptized persons, to which is assigned "the dignity of a sacramental sign of grace, inasmuch as it represents the union of Christ and of the Church."[21] It follows that Christian couples are entrusted with the tremendous responsibility of preserving the meaning and significance of their conjugal expression of love as a revelation of God's own fruitful love.[22]

The Fruitful Union of Christ and his Body-Bride, the Church

It is worth noting that the union of Christ and the Church is fruitful, such that Christ simultaneously espouses the Church (i.e., unites her to himself as his body-bride) and "impregnates" her with the gift of his Spirit. Hence, corresponding to the image of the Church emerging as the New Eve from the side of Christ asleep on the Cross is that of the sacraments (the Eucharist and Baptism) pouring forth from his pierced heart in the form of blood and water.[23] "The water and blood which flowed from the side of Jesus on the Cross, the water of baptism, the blood of the Eucharist, first fruits of the mystical union between Christ and his Church, are, at the same time, the streams at which that Church is nourished."[24] In the image of the bridal bath (cf. Ephesians 5:25) is thus interwoven the idea of Christ's death, whereby he prepared the Church as a glorious bride for himself, and that of our participation therein through baptism by which we personally enter the communion of the Church, becoming corporate members of this Bride.[25] The Church, who has first been brought forth *from* his fullness, is "herself a living vessel *for* his fruitfulness," which is to say that "she gives birth to what she, as Christ's fruitfulness, has received from him." Bearing his members in her virginal womb and nourishing them by the sacraments entrusted to her, she is

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[21] Ibid.

[22] See Paul Quay, *The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 63.

[23] "Adam sleeps that Eve may be formed; Christ dies that the Church may be formed. Eve is formed from the side of the sleeping Adam; the side of the dead Christ is pierced by the lance, so that the Sacraments may flow out, of which the Church is formed. Is there anyone to whom it is not obvious that future events are represented by the things done then, since the Apostle says that Adam himself was the figure of Him that was to come?" Augustine, *In Ioannis evangelium tractatus* 9, 10; trans. W. A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers,* vol. 3 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1979), 117; cf. *Corpus Christianorum*, 36: 96–97) See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 766.

[24] Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism,* trans. Lancelot C. Sheppard (London: Burns & Oates, 1950), 33.

[25] See Schillebeeckx, *Marriage,* 113–14.

simultaneously the bride of Christ and his "mystical mother."[26] Hence, the famous formulation of St. Cyprian of Carthage: "He cannot have God for Father who does not have the Church for his Mother."[27]

Despite the obvious limitations of such an analogy—the relationship between Christ and his Bride, the Church, being non-sexual (and rightly so!)[28]—it nonetheless remains the case that the sexual union of husband and wife remains "the best symbol" for this love. That is to say, "a man's love for his wife, which is sexual, can be more like Christ's love for the Church than any other natural love a man may have."[29] Beyond the analogical likeness of the one relationship to the other, there is, moreover, an actual participation of the sacrament in the mystical nuptials of Christ and the Church, which is to say that marriage, not unlike the other sacraments, is itself a *fruit* of this relationship. In the

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[26] Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Ephesians 5:21–33 and Humanae Vitae: A Meditation," in *Christian Married Love* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981), 60–61. It is thus true to say that while the Church "creates" the Eucharist, she is herself created by it.

[27] *"Habere non potest Deum patrem qui ecclesiam non habet matrem."* Cyprian of Carthage, *De catholicae ecclesiae unitate,* 6, in Hartel, editor, *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* III, 1 (Vienna, l868), 214. Similarly, Augustine argues, "Let us love our Lord God, let us love His Church; Him as a Father, her as a Mother; Him as a Master, her as His Handmaid; for we are the children of the Handmaid herself. But this marriage is held together by a great love; no one offends the one and gains favor with the other. . . . Cling, then, beloved, cling all with one mind to God our Father and to the Church our Mother." *Enarrationes in psalmos* 88, *Sermo* 2, 14; trans. Jurgens, *Faith of the Early Fathers,* III: 19; *Corpus Christianorum,* vol. 39: 1243–44) "From this Church even those who are involved in various errors outside the Church can receive the forgiveness of their sins. . . . Let them hasten, then, while there is yet time, to their legitimate Mother, who diligently sustains and nourishes the sons born of her womb." St. Fulgence of Ruspe, *De Trinitate ad Felicem,* 1, 23,1; *Corpus Christianorum,* vol. 91A (1968), 633ff; trans. Jurgens, *Faith of the Early Fathers,* III: 292. The letter of Pope Gregory I to Bishop Quiricus and other Catholic Bishops of Georgia *(ad Quiricum Episcopum; "Quia charitati nihil")* (June 22, 601) speaks of heretics being "recalled to the bosom of Mother Church" (II, 52) (al. 67), trans. Jurgens, *Faith of the Early Fathers,* III, 312 (Migne, PL 77:1205).

[28] The point is of extreme dogmatic importance, for we are made children of the Father by being given a share in the life of the only-begotten one (cf. Gal 3:26–27) and by receiving his Spirit who cries out, "Abba, Father" within our hearts (Rom 8:13–17). Our sonship is thus by *adoption* (e.g., Gal 4:5; Rom 8:23, 29,30), which in no way precludes that we are thereby really, i.e., ontologically, changed. On the divine adoption, see Rom 8:13–17 and Jn 3:3–8. Paul Quay speaks of our spiritual birth, or adoption, as "the Father's regenerating us of the virginal Church into the life of Christ" by the agency of the Spirit, as contrasted with the "Father's begetting of the human nature of the Son of the virginal Mary" by means of the same (Spirit). See Paul Quay, *Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality,* 53, 54.

[29] Ibid., 54.

words of the Second Vatican Council, "authentic married love is caught up into divine love; is directed and enriched by the redemptive power of Christ and the salvific action of the Church" such that spouses "are penetrated with the Spirit of Christ" whereby "their whole life is suffused by faith, hope and charity."[30]

> The Spirit which the Lord pours forth gives a new heart and renders man and woman capable of loving one another as Christ has loved us. Conjugal love reaches that fullness to which it is interiorly ordained, conjugal charity, which is the proper and specific way in which the spouses participate in and are called to live the very charity of Christ who gave himself on the Cross.[31]

The love between Christ and the Church, which is fruitful in itself, is thus further fruitful in those who, especially through the sacrament of marriage, partake of this same love.

An "Inseparable Connection": Christ's Love for the Father and His Love for the Church

The love between Christian spouses is thus a fruitful effect of and a true participation in the "spousal" relationship between Christ and Church of which it (marriage) is itself an image and a foreshadowing.[32] This more fundamental "mystery" (cf. Eph 5:32) is itself, however, an expression or

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[30] Pastoral Constitution on the Church, *Gaudium et Spes,* 48. English translation by Austin Flannery, *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents,* I (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1979), 951. "In the epiclesis of this sacrament the spouses receive the Holy Spirit as the communion of love of Christ and the Church (cf. Eph 5:32). The Holy Spirit is the seal of their covenant, the ever-available source of their love and the strength to renew their fidelity." *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* no. 1624.

[31] John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio,* Apostolic letter on "The Christian Family in the Modern World" (November 22, 1981), no. 13; cf. ibid., no. 19, and The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1624. I direct my reader, once again, to my article, "The Eucharistic Meaning of Marriage," in which I argue in more depth the fact that the marital love of Christians is a participation in the love of God.

[32] "And if the visible woman was actually made by the Lord God in the beginning from the body of the man, it was not done thus without a purpose, so as to hint at some secret. Was there a lack of slime from which woman might be formed? Or, if He willed, could God not withdraw a rib without pain from a waking man? If those things were said figuratively, or even if they were done in this way our tenuous condition, or if there be some better explanation, they are to be interpreted and understood in accord with sound faith." Augustine, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 2, 12, 17; PL 34: 205–6; trans. Jurgens, *Faith of the Early Fathers,* III, 38. See John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio,* 13.

revelation—a fruitful outpouring—of a still more profound relationship of love between the divine Persons. Christ's love for the Church is itself an expression of his love for the Father.

To begin, it is worth noting that while it is unmistakably in virtue of the death of Christ on the Cross that the Church, his Bride, is formed,[33] the primary meaning of (and explanation for) the Cross lies not in the redemptive love of the divine Bridegroom for his Bride and Body (cf. Ephesians 5: 25–27), but rather in the filial love of the same vis-à-vis the eternal Father who sent him: "I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father" (Jn 14:31). The bridal love of the Savior is therefore the expression and fruit of a still more basic—that is, eternal—love: that of the divine Persons for one another. What one witnesses in the Son's gift of himself, even unto death (cf. Jn 10:18), is the love of the Father: "For God so loved the world that he sent his only Son . . . " (Jn 3:16). Hence the "command" that Christ receives from the Father ought not to be understood as the necessary shedding of (his) innocent blood so as to appease the divine anger, make amends to divine justice and redeem the human race of its sin. It consists, rather, in the mission to mediate divine love to this same sinful humanity by means of a generous outpouring: What Christ gives in the gift of redemption is *himself*, and this in the same generous manner in which he has given himself from all eternity to the Father: in response *(eucharistia)* to the Father's own wholly generous gift of himself to the Son. The difference lies not on the part of the giver but of those for whom the gift is destined: "He came to his own, and his own received him not" (Jn 1:11).

It follows that the "new" commandment (*entolé;* Jn 15:12; cf. 1 Jn 2:8) which Christ gives to his disciples—"love one another as I have loved you"—is, as it were, an "echo" and a fruitful continuation of the very command which he himself received from the Father: "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. . . . This command *(entolé)* I have received from my Father" (Jn 10:17–18; cf. 18:11); "For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment *(entolé)* what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment *(entolé)* is eternal life" (12:49–50; cf. 1 Jn 2:8).[34] Christ, the New Moses, giver of the New Law,

[33] See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 766.

[34] The profound unity of the two great commandments—love of God and love of neighbor—is part of the Old Testament heritage that Christ brings to fulfillment, not merely in his teaching (Mk 10:28–31; Mt 22:34–40; Lk 10:25–17; cf. 1 Jn 3:23; 4:21), but also and especially in his own life and person, i.e., in his person-mission unity (cf. Jn 3:13,34; 6:38; 8;28; 16:28; etc.). This he does by showing in

is himself the first to obey its precepts and, in so doing, he sets the standard of its perfection. "He himself becomes a living and personal law, who invites people to follow him."[35]

Thus is manifest the nature of divine love which, rather than being contained within its already perfect Tri-unity, is poured forth into the economy of creation and redemption. The Son's initial "glory" with the Father (cf. Jn 17:5, 24) is bestowed upon those whom the Father has entrusted to Him (v. 6). "Thou (Father) hast given him (the Son) power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him" (17:2).

> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. (Jn 6:38–39)
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> The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me. . . . May the love with which thou hast loved me be in them, and I in them. (Jn 17:22–23, 26)

By refusing to hold onto the glory which rightfully belonged to him in his eternal intimacy with the Father (cf. Ph 2:6), by giving his Spirit without measure (Jn 3:34), and by offering his own body as bread "for the life of the world" (Jn 6:51), Christ brings to perfection the "new commandment" of love—"No greater love is there than this" (Jn 15:13; cf. Jn 13:34; 2 Jn 5). This he does in the communication his own sonship as the gift of the Father who "loves the Son and has given everything over to him" (6:35), not excluding the gift of having "life in himself" (5:26; cf. v. 21). The inseparable unity of the love of God and the love of neighbor—the fact that they are "profoundly connected and mutually related"—is "attested to by Christ" in the culmination of his mission on the "cross of our redemption (cf. Jn 3:14–15), the sign of his *indivisible love* for the Father and for humanity (cf. Jn 13:1)."[36]

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word and action that our love for God is to take the particular form of love for one's neighbor (Mt 25:40; 10:40; cf. 1 Jn 4:20; Heb 6:10; Prov 19:17), even in the explicit statement that the "commandment we have from him" is "that he who loves God should love his brother also" (1 Jn 4:21). Hence, the disciple's love for the Lord, which is to be measured by obedience to his commandment (Jn 14:15, 21, 23, 24; 15:14), necessarily implies love for one's neighbor: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (15:12; cf. v. 17).

35 John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* (August 6, 1993), no. 15.

36 Ibid., no. 14 (emphasis added).

The Inseparable Connection between Union and Fruit in the Godhead

As a sort of continuation of Christ's own filial love, the obedience of his followers to the new commandment reveals the nature of divine love as it bears fruit in the disciples.[37] Beyond this—indeed, as its very source—there lies the eternal fruit of this love, the Spirit who accomplishes the conception of Christ whereby the source of divine life is opened in the history of humankind: "The Word, 'the first-born of all creation,' becomes 'the first-born of many brethren.' "[38] Thus is acknowledged as a single, complex mystery of grace,[39] the Spirit's mission of forming Christ in the womb of his Virgin Mother, and his role of forming "Christ in us" (cf. Rm 8:1; Gal 2:20; 3:28; Phil 3:9; etc.), that is, of strengthening "the inner man" (Eph 3:16) by drawing from the treasure of Redemption: "He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (Jn 16:14).[40] Together, these two dimensions of the Spirit's mission point to the mystery of salvation as an *admirabile commercium*, the "wonderful exchanges" whereby God becomes man (descent and humiliation; cf. Phil 2) so that the human person might become a child of God (ascent and exaltation; cf. Eph 1:3–6).

What is thus historically manifest as a *process* of divine love bearing fruit in the world—a sort of continued "Incarnation"[41]—actually reveals an eternal *simultaneity* whereby the one God is "always-already" fruitful. The point is of supreme dogmatic importance, for although we can (and must) admit a true procession within the Godhead,[42] the fact remains that the three Persons are "one God,"[43] and this from all eternity. That is to say, neither the "union" nor the "fruit" is subsequent to the real distinction of Persons within the Trinity, as opposed to the case within Christian marriage: "a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to

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37 This is a significant argument in my "The Eucharistic Meaning of Marriage."

38 Idem, *Dominum et Vivificantem,* encyclical letter "On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World" (May 30, 1986), no. 52; see also nos. 49–51, 53–54, 59.

39 John Paul II makes reference to the Thomistic teaching that the "grace of union," whereby the Son of God is the son of Mary, is the source of every other grace given to creation, including the habitual grace of Christ himself. See ibid., no. 50 and Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 2, aa. 10–12; q. 6, a. 6; q. 7, a. 13.

40 See John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente,* Apostolic Letter for the Jubilee of the Year 2000, "As the Third Millennium Draws Near" (November 10, 1994), no. 8. See idem, *Dominum et Vivificantem,* nos. 8, 45, 63 & Jn 16:7–11; 14:26.

41 The image is borrowed from Charles Journet. See *L'Eglise du Verbe Incarné* II: *Sa Structure interne et son unité catholique* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1951), 581.

42 Cf. *Denz.* 296, 428, 993, 994.

43 Cf. ibid., 254, 390, 428, 994.

his wife, and the two shall become one" (Mk 10:7–8). It is, in fact, precisely within the relational union that the divine Persons are identified and distinguished.

> In God, person is the pure relativity of being turned toward the other; it does not lie on the level of substance—the substance is *one*—but on the level of dialogical reality, of relativity toward the other.[44]

Hence, while it is true to say that *God loves*—as revealed in the economy of creation and redemption—it is even more fundamentally the case that *God "is love"* (cf. 1 Jn 4:8; 16), that is, "the essential love shared by the three divine Persons." More specifically, "personal love is the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Father and the Son."

> Therefore he (the Holy Spirit) "searches even the depths of God" (cf. 1 Cor 2:10), as *uncreated Love-Gift*. It can be said that in the Holy Spirit the intimate life of the Triune God becomes totally gift, an exchange of mutual love between the divine Persons, and that through the Holy Spirit God exists in the mode of gift. It is the Holy Spirit who is *the personal expression* of this self-giving, of this being-love. He is Person-Love. He is Person-Gift.[45]

While there exists a real distinction among the divine Persons which assures the authenticity of their love, their Tri-unity is as eternal as the Spirit himself. That is to say, the love of the Father for his eternal and consubstantial Son—like the love of the Son for his eternal and consubstantial Father—is eternally fruitful in their consubstantial Spirit. It is simply impossible to separate, even logically, the unitive and fruitful aspects of divine love. In the Godhead, union and fruitfulness are inseparably one.

The Inseparable Connection in Christian Marriage and in the Conjugal Act

Certainly the love of Christian disciples for one another (and even for their enemies; cf. Mt 5:44–48) is a revelation of Christ's love: "By this all men

[44] Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, "Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology," *Communio* 17 (1990): 444; cf. Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 29, a. 1. See Hans Urs von Balthasar, "On the Concept of Person," *Communio* 13 (1986): 18–26; and Kenneth L. Schmitz, "The Geography of the Human Person," in ibid., 27–48.

[45] John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantem,* no. 10; emphasis his. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I, qq. 37–38. According to Augustinian teaching, the Spirit proceeds simultaneously from the Father and the Son as from a single principle, because he is "the mutual love in whom the Lover and the Beloved base the unity of their mutual gift to one another of that which is, identical in each, the good of the other." (Unpublished course of J. Moingt on the Trinity as cited by Bernard Sesboüé in idem, *Le Dieu du Salut,* vol. I of *Histoire des Dogmes* (Paris: Desclée, 1994), 324.

will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35). Beyond this, Christian spouses are exhorted to be, precisely by their mutual love, a revelation of the love between Christ and the Church (Eph 5:32).[46] Characteristic of this (i.e., Christian) love, as we have seen in the context of the new commandment, is the fact that it is fruitful, and this as an expression of unity. Beyond the sacramental order whereby divine life is communicated through the Church to the disciples, the fruitful union of Christ and his Bride-Body is *itself a fruit* of the more fundamental love uniting the divine Bridegroom and his eternal Father, a love which is eternally fruitful in the Spirit who "is the Person-love, the uncreated gift, who is the eternal source of every gift that comes from God in the order of creation, the direct principle and, in a certain sense, the subject of God's self-communication in the order of grace."[47] It follows that the love between Christian spouses—at least to the extent that it is truly Christian,[48] that is to say, participating in the communion of love between the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Jn 4:13)—is one which, far from being contained within their relationship as a couple, seeks to raise up new life as a fruit of their self-giving union (cf. Mk 10:8).

> In its most profound reality, love is essentially a gift; and conjugal love, while leading spouses to the reciprocal 'knowledge' which makes them 'one flesh,' does not end with the couple, because it makes them capable of the greatest possible gift, the gift by which they become cooperators with God for giving life to a new human person.[49]

This new human person, moreover—not unlike the divine Person of the Holy Spirit, who is the fruit of the mutual love of the Father and Son—is "a living reflection of their love, a permanent sign of conjugal unity and a living and inseparable synthesis of their being a father and a mother."[50]

To put it in minimal terms, the two meanings of their conjugal love (and act) must not be willfully separated by an act (taking a pill, inserting a device, applying a gel, putting on a condom, etc.) that actually seeks to

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[46] See Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes,* Pastoral Constitution on the Church, no. 48.

[47] John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, no. 50.

[48] This is not to deny that the "norm" for the sexual relationship, which Hans Urs von Balthasar presents as the love between Christ and the Church, "holds true for all *non*-Christians as well, only they know nothing of this norm and therefore cannot consciously pattern themselves after it." See Balthasar, "A Word on *Humanae Vitae*," *Communio* 20 (1993): 445.

[49] John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio,* no. 14.

[50] Ibid., no. 13. See no. 28.

preclude the fruitful expression of this love.[51] To do so, would be to disfigure the face of love.[52] Certainly this is not to suggest that what rightfully remains a very intimate (one might even say "private") act of love is to be a widespread manifestation of the divine love. Rather, the point is that conjugal love is either a true participation in the love of Christ through the Spirit by whom we share in his sonship vis-à-vis the Father (cf. Gal 4:6) or it is simply no love (i.e., *agape*) at all: "In this is love . . . that he loved us and sent his Son as an expiation for our sins" (1 Jn 4:10; cf. 3:16; Jn 15:13). Hence, "we love because he first loved us" (1 Jn 4:19). By this is meant not merely that his love invites a response from us in the manner that a mother's smile awakens love within her child.[53] Rather, "if we love one another, God abides in us and *his* love is perfected in us" (v. 12b). "God is love, and he who abides in love, abides in God and God abides in him" (v. 16b).

Two questions still seek clarification. Is it not the case, first of all, that the term "fruitful" is being used equivocally with regard to the two relationships? Certainly there is a wide difference between the fruit of divine love—which is here understood, on the one hand, as the whole economy of the Incarnation and Redemption, and, on the other, as the uncreated Person of

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[51] In the language of *Humanae Vitae*, "excluded is every action which, either in anticipation of the conjugal act, in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes *[intendat]* either as end or as means, to impede procreation" (no. 14; private translation for reason of accuracy). One is to be cautioned against certain misunderstandings of the positive formulation of the same—i.e., that "every marital act ought to be open to new life" (*Humanae Vitae*, no. 11)—such as the idea that a couple may not engage in intercourse without the intention to procreate or that a couple ought not to engage in intercourse when they think procreation is impossible. See Grisez, Boyle, Finnis, May, "Every Marital Act Ought to be Open to Life" in idem, *The Teaching of Humanae Vitae: A Defense* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 35ff.

[52] "When couples, by means of recourse to contraception separate these two meanings that God the Creator has inscribed in the being of man and woman in the dynamism of their sexual communion, they act as 'arbitrators' of the divine plan and they 'manipulate' and degrade human sexuality—and with it themselves and their married partner—by altering its value of 'total' self-giving. Thus the innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality" (John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio,* no. 31).

[53] This is a constant theme in the writing of Balthasar. See *Love Alone* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969), 61–62; *Convergences: To the Source of Christian Mystery* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 128–29; *Unless You Become Like this Child* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 17–19; *Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics,* vol. I: *Seeing the Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982, 1989), 616–17; etc.

the Holy Spirit who transmits, "in its entire salvific power," the redemption accomplished by the Son[54]—and the fruit of the conjugal act, that is, the child born of marital love. "Christian spouses even if sanctified themselves cannot transmit sanctification to their progeny" but "must offer their offspring to the Church in order that by this most fruitful Mother . . . they may be regenerated. . . ."[55] Secondly, even if it be granted that this term is being used univocally, why (excepting the sign value of the sacrament as bearing directly upon the one flesh union of husband and wife, as explained above) should the inseparable connection be assigned to the conjugal act, rather than to the overall purpose and meaning of marriage? In other words, why should it not suffice that the marriage relationship be fruitful *in general* without insisting that *every act* of marital intercourse be open to life?

"Fruitful": Not An Equivocal Term

In response to the first question, it must be insisted that the presumed dichotomy between spiritual and physical fruitfulness is, in fact, a false one, due to the reality of the Incarnation that constitutes the "climax" of the divine self-giving in the order of grace. The Son's assumption of human nature is a communication to this nature—and to all human persons[56]—of the divine life and love; it is, as we have seen, the source of every other grace.[57] Precisely because the whole spiritual dimension of grace is communicated by way of this fleshly "becoming," life, death, and resurrection of the eternal Word (cf. Jn 1:14; Heb 10:5; Gal 4:4; Ph 2:6–7; Rm 7:4 ; etc.),[58] there remains no dichotomy between grace and nature, between spiritual life and physical life.[59] It is, in fact, precisely in the gift

[54] See John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, no. 11.

[55] Pius XI, *Casti Connubii,* encyclical letter "On Christian Marriage" (December 31, 1930) (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 9 (*Denz.* 2229).

[56] "For, by his incarnation, he, the son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each man" (*Gaudium et Spes,* no. 22, 923).

[57] See supra, fn. 39.

[58] With specific reference to Hebrews 10:5–10, Francis Martin argues: "The importance of human bodily existence and the consequent historical nature of human acts is dramatically brought out by the letter to the Hebrews when it states that the whole sacrificial system of Israel has been replaced by the offering of the body of Christ, through which the will and plan *(thelema)* of God was given historical existence." See Martin, *The Feminist Question: Feminist Theology in the Light of Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmanns, 1994), 340.

[59] Beginning with St. Augustine and continuing up to the Council of Trent, the occidental Church conceived of the sacramental realm according to the dichotomy of visible form and invisible grace: *"invisibilis gratiae forma visibilis"* (*Denz.* 876). The Greek *mysterion*, from whence is derived the Latin *sacramentum*, nonetheless refers to a fundamental unity. Its basic religious sense is that of God's salvific plan for

of his earthly body that Christ communicates his own divine (eternal) life and sonship and simultaneously forms his Bride-Body, the Church, in whom he unites himself to the faithful (1 Cor 12:13, 27; cf. 6:12–20). The "becoming one flesh" of Christ and the Church (cf. Eph 5:29), whereby the latter is rendered fruitful, supposes his real taking on of flesh and communicating it in the form of the Eucharist.

As the middle term of these two uses of the term "body" with respect to Christ (i.e., the individual, concrete one which he assumed at the Annunciation and that which he creates through the sacrificial offering of the former, the Church), the Eucharist actually cuts through the analogy, raising it to a higher level and likewise dismissing what otherwise appears as a dichotomy or equivocation: "The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor 10:16b–17).[60] The real gift of his physical—though nonetheless sacramental—body is the means whereby he communicates his life to the world: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:54).

A second argument for the same (i.e., the unequivocal status of the term "fruitfulness") is based upon the unequivocal nature of Christian love. Because there is, since the coming of the Son of Man, "no other form of love than the form with which he has loved us" (cf. 1 Jn 4:10; 3:16; Jn 15:12–14),[61] the fruit of this love (without denying that it may be expressed in different manners) must likewise retain some form of constancy. Indeed, one need not be constrained by an "either/or" option of physical or spiritual fruit, since the generous "all"[62] is both offered and mandated. That is to say, without denying that marriage is "by its

creation, while its more specifically Christian meaning is the content of the Gospel (Eph 6:19): Jesus Christ is the true mystery of God (Col 2:2; 4:3; Eph 3:3). See Peter Smulders, "L'Église sacrement du salut," in vol. 2 of *L'Église de Vatican II: Études autour de la Constitution Conciliare sur l'Église,* ed. Guilherme Baráuna, *Unam Sanctum,* no. 51b (Paris: Cerf, 1967), 317–28.

60 See Xavier Léon-Dufour, *Le partage du pain eucharistique selon le Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1982), 143.

61 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Christian State of Life,* trans. Sister Mary Francis McCarthy (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 244. Similarly, John Paul II asks, "Can we even imagine human love without the Bridegroom and the love with which he first loved to the end? Only if husbands and wives share in that love and in that great mystery can they love 'to the end' " ("Letter to Families," February 2, 1994, no. 19).

62 See John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio,* no. 13. Reference to the same is made in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1643.

very nature . . . ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring" in which it "finds its crowning glory," its fruitfulness nonetheless "extends to the fruits of the moral, spiritual, and supernatural life that parents hand on to their children," that is, as their primary educators. Those, moreover, "to whom God has not granted children can nevertheless have a conjugal life full of meaning, in both human and Christian terms. Their marriage can radiate a fruitfulness of charity, of hospitality, and of sacrifice."[63] In either case, the "measure" of conjugal fruit lies within the depths of Trinitarian love which has really taken physical form in the event of the Incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Christ. It follows that one cannot draw a dividing line between the married and consecrated states in such a way as to assign the former to the physical sphere of love and the latter to the spiritual. Indeed, even the physical self-giving of spouses is "an *explicit sharing in the Incarnation of divine grace*, which, in the Lord's life and Passion, no longer acts without the *instrumentum coniunctum* of his flesh and blood." Not unlike the consecrated life, then, marriage is fruitful in virtue of its participation in Christ's own love. That is to say, it bears within itself the same "principle of fecundity, namely, love itself which is poured into our hearts, together with faith and hope."[64]

Fruitfulness: An End of Marriage or the Specific Meaning of the Conjugal Act?

Based on the above argumentation, one is still left with the question as to why fruitfulness must be specifically assigned to the conjugal act—as "inseparable" from its unitive meaning—and not simply to the end of marriage in general. Indeed, procreation is traditionally listed among the ends of marriage (and even as the primary end),[65] along with that of conjugal faith (fidelity) and sacrament (by which is meant exclusivity),[66]

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[63] *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* nos. 1652, 1653, 1654. See John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio,* nos. 14, 28.

[64] Balthasar, *The Christian State of Life*, 247, 248. See Rom 7:4 and 5:5.

[65] See Council Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes,* Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, no. 48.

[66] See Pius XI, *Casti Connubii* (*Denz*. 2228), where reference is made to St. Augustine, *De bono coniug.,* cap. 24, no. 32. Augustine argues: "These are all the blessings of matrimony on account of which matrimony itself is a blessing: offspring, conjugal faith and the sacrament." See Decree of the Holy Office (April 1, 1944), *Denz*. 2295/*AAS* 36 (1944), 103; and John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 13 (quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1643). According to Canon Law (Canon 1055, par. 1), marriage is "of its own very nature" ordained to the good of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children.

and there is good reason to argue that the unitive meaning of marriage facilitates the procreative one and vice versa.[67]

To begin, one might continue the above refutation of dualistic thinking with regard to body and spirit. As Balthasar puts it, "only because the soul has [in Christian marriage] sacrificed the right to dispose of its life as it will can the right to dispose of the body also be sacrificed: 'The wife has not authority over her body, but the husband; the husband likewise has not authority over his body, but the wife' (1 Cor 7:4)."[68] As a "participation in Christ's life," moreover,

> [C]onjugal love involves a totality, in which all the elements of the person enter—appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of the spirit and of will. It aims at a deeply personal unity, the unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands indissolubility and faithfulness in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to fertility.[69]

More specifically, the Christian conjugal bond "represents the mystery of Christ's incarnation and the mystery of his covenant," according to which the gift of his *body* is the specific "means" whereby the Lord gives *Himself* (and the divine life) to the world (cf. Heb 10:5–10; Gal 4:4; Jn 1:14; 6:51; 1 Jn 1:1–2; etc.). Hence, the gift of the body in the conjugal act implies a total self-giving,[70] especially in Christian marriage, since the baptized are temples of the Spirit who testifies to their status as children of God (1 Cor 3:16; Gal 4:6; cf. Jn 2:21). It follows that this act ought not to be separated from the total gift of self in marriage as a whole (and thus to its overall meaning or ordination). Indeed, it is *by the act* that the marriage vows are consummated, as it is likewise *to the act* that marriage is, by its very nature, ordered.[71]

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[67] See, for example, William May, *Marriage: The Rock on which the Family is Built* (Ignatius Press, 1995), 69–70.

[68] Balthasar, *The Christian State of Life*, 245. Similarly, *Humanae Vitae* states that conjugal love is "fully human, that is to say, of the senses and of the spirit at the same time. It is not, then, a simple transport of instinct and sentiment, but also, and principally, an act of the free will, intended to endure and to grow by means of the joys and sorrows of daily life, in such a way that husband and wife become one only heart and one only soul, and together attain their human perfection" (no. 9).

[69] John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 13. Reference is here made to *Humanae Vitae,* no. 9.

[70] See ibid., nos. 13 and 11.

[71] "A valid marriage between Baptized persons is said to be merely ratified, if it is not consummated; ratified and consummated, if the spouses have in a human manner engaged together in a conjugal act in itself apt for the generation of offspring. To this act marriage is by its nature ordered *(ad quem natura sua ordinatur matrimonium)* and by it the spouses become one flesh" (Canon 1061, par. 1).

Because, furthermore, the conjugal act is considered (even profanely, i.e., within the secular sphere) as an act *of love*, it is necessarily governed by the love of Christ.[72] Thus the same logic applies: because the divine love is so fully generous—not merely in itself (as a mutual gift of Persons, bearing fruit in a third, divine Person) but also in the economy of creation and redemption whereby this love is extravagantly poured forth to become a source of lasting "fruit" (cf. Jn 10:17 and chapter 15)—the spousal love of Christians, and more specifically the conjugal act itself, ought to be generous. That is to say, beyond the mutual love of spouses, which the act expresses and accomplishes, it is willfully ordered (without necessitating a constant conscious awareness) to procreation. In minimal (i.e., negative) terms, it is of the nature of Christian conjugal love that it cannot permit an obstacle hindering this love from bearing fruit in the gift of life. Just as the general sanctification of the individual requires that his love for the Lord be expressed by love for neighbor, the fulfillment of the marital vocation (and the sanctification resulting therefrom) requires that the mutual love of the couple reaches beyond their own vis-à-vis so as to become (at least potentially, granting that they are not *creators* of life, but rather willing *cooperators* with the divine giver of life, cf. Gen 4:1) a source of new life, not just in general, but also and especially in the specific act whereby their conjugal love is most particularly expressed. Without denying that there may be legitimate reason for delaying, even indefinitely, the conception of children,[73] it must be nonetheless insisted that "each and every marriage act *(quilibet matrimonii usus)* must remain open to the transmission of life."[74] That is to say, the inseparable quality of the unitive and procreative meanings of the marital act is essential not merely to the "intimate structure" of that act, but also to the sacramental, or revelatory, quality of the marriage itself whereby it is an expression of and a means to holiness. More specifically, it achieves this end by participating in the eucharistic meaning of Christ's existence.

The Inseparable Connection of the Two Meanings of the Conjugal Act and Christian Spouses' Participation in Trinitarian Love

In concluding, it is important to acknowledge that although marriage has a natural foundation as "part of the very economy of creation . . . instituted by the Creator 'in the beginning,' "[75] it is nonetheless raised by

[72] See supra, fns. 20, 30, 62.
[73] See Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae,* no. 10.
[74] Ibid., no. 11.
[75] Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 68; see ibid., no. 3.

Christ to the level of a sacrament[76] so as to become a *signum efficax gratiae*. That is to say, its revelatory value lies not only in its own natural constitution, but also and primarily in its supernatural elevation. The "great mystery" of Ephesians 5—which simultaneously implies both spousal love and the mutual love of Christ and the Church[77]—supposes a real participation of the natural institution in the more "foundational" relationship between the New Adam and the New Eve. That is to say, if the apostle speaks of an analogy between the two, this is based upon the intrinsic unity of Genesis 2:21–24 and Ephesians 5:25–27. The mystery of Eve coming forth from Adam's side foreshadows the mystery of the Church born on Calvary from the side of Christ, while the latter mystery precedes the former to the extent that Christ is himself "the first-born of all creation" (Col 1:15) in whom all things were created (cf. v. 16). "For Adam, the first man, was a type of him who was to come, Christ the Lord, Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling."[78]

The connection between the two relationships is of the highest significance for the Christian who is overwhelmed by the demands of the Gospel: in this case, those that refer to the intrinsic unity, or "inseparable connection" between the unitive and procreative meanings of sexual intercourse. The Christian is to be reminded that these "commands" are presented as far more than norms to be imitated; for the *sequela Christi* is not a matter of *imitating* his love as might be implied by an isolated reading of Jn 13:15 and 15:12–13.[79] On the one hand, Christ clarifies that this *sequela* is not to be understood literally when he states in the context of his impending passion that, "Where I am going you cannot come" (Jn 13:33; cf. "Where I am going you cannot follow me now," v. 36). Instead, Christian discipleship is measured by love for God's people: "[B]y this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35). This is stated even more explicitly in Chapter 15: "You are my friends if you do what I command you. . . . This I command you, to love one another" (14, 17; cf. 14:15, 21). Finally, the disciples are commanded to "love one another as *[kathos]* I have loved you" (15:12), even to the point of death (v. 13). If there should be any doubt about the

[76] Cf. the Council of Trent, Sess. VII, Can. 1; *Denz.* 844.

[77] See John Paul II, *The Theology of Marriage and Celibacy*, 194.

[78] Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes,* no. 22.

[79] "I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you"; "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

value of *kathos* here, the preceding verses make it clear that Christ does not offer himself merely as a model to be imitated: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love" (15:9–10).

Far from an imitation of his love, Christ requires that his disciples follow his obedience to the Father. More specifically, to be faithful to the love commandment requires that one be rooted in Christ's life, that is, that one partake of his grace so as to "abide" in his love.[80] "[T]he Savior himself comes to love, in us. . . . His person becomes, through the Spirit, the living and interior rule of our activity."[81] Indeed, the full significance of the new commandment "involves holding fast to the very person of Jesus, partaking of his life and his destiny, sharing in his free and loving obedience to the will of the Father."[82]

Christians, it must be argued, love with the very "love of God" because this love is really communicated in the economy of salvation. "We love, because he first loved us" (1 Jn 4:19). "[I]n his body of flesh by his death" he reconciles mankind to himself so as to make possible the original command of holiness ("be holy, for I am holy," Lev 11:45; 19:2; 20:26), that is to say, "in order to present us holy and blameless and irreproachable before him" (cf. Col 1:22; cf. Eph 5:25–27). The call to perfection is thus accompanied by a gift that, far from abolishing the Law, makes obedience to the Law truly possible: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10; cf. Ph 2:12–13). Hence, Christians love not merely as a matter of principle or of justice, but because it is of the very nature of Christian love that it be communicated.

The "inseparable connection" between the unitive and procreative meanings of marital love is thus founded not only in its natural foundation in "the beginning," nor simply in its elevation to the sacramental realm in which it reveals the love between Christ and the Church, but also and especially in its *insertion* into the mystery of Trinitarian love through the latter's own generous outpouring. Just as the mutual love of the Father and the Son is characterized by its fecundity—both in itself and in the economy of creation and redemption whereby this love becomes a source in us—so also the love of Christian spouses (i.e., to the extent that it is a *Christian* love) is fruitful, at least in its generous openness to life. It is, in fact, precisely *because* the divine love is revealed in the fruitful act whereby

[80] Cf. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, nos. 11, 15.
[81] *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* no. 2074.
[82] John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 19.

the divine life is given to the world[83] that marital love is characterized by its own generous receptivity vis-à-vis the gift of life. Participating in the love of the Trinity, Christian spouses will express their love for one another in the conjugal act as a generous willingness to receive children through that same act. For them there can be no separation between the unitive and the procreative meanings of their mutual self-gift.[84] N V

[83] See, for example, Jn 3:16; 6:27–28; 10:10–18; 15:13; 16:28; 17:2–3; 20:31; Mk 10:45; Acts 17:25; Rm 2:7; 4:17; 5:10,21; 6:23; 8:11; Col 3:4; Jn 3:16; 5:11; etc.

[84] With special thanks to Professor William May and to my husband, Bernard, for their critical comments and suggestions.

Dietrich von Hildebrand and St. Thomas Aquinas on Goodness and Happiness

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DIETRICH VON Hildebrand's *Christian Ethics* is filled by a note of deep and stirring pathos directed against an account of the good and of happiness which appears to be, in Hildebrand's mind, Thomistic. It is the pathos of a personalist philosopher who experiences the Thomistic account as a naturalistic or cosmological reductionism from which the human person and its authentic subjectivity must be liberated.

Hildebrand does not explicitly attribute the account to St. Thomas. In all explicit references to St. Thomas, he mentions only points of agreement and never criticizes St. Thomas by name. Yet, the terms in which Hildebrand himself expresses the view he criticizes are in part those used by St. Thomas. Hildebrand does seem to have some kind of Thomism in mind, a Thomism that borrows central categories from Kant, above all in conceiving *appetitus* along the lines of Kant's "inclinations" *(Neigungen)* as prior to the good; a Thomism, moreover, which is influenced by the vitalistic biology of Hans Driesch, above all in the use of "entelechy" as the central explanatory category.[1] I will refer to the Thomism Hildebrand describes as

[1] It does not seem unlikely that Hildebrand actually encountered such a form of Thomism at the University of Munich or later in the United States, though some misunderstandings may have been involved as well. The early Twentieth Century saw combinations of St. Thomas with a wide range of contemporary philosophical views, Cartesian mechanism, Kantian transcendental critique, Hegelian dialectic, Heideggerian being, etc. Drieschian Thomism would not be entirely surprising in this scenario. Since Hildebrand does not reference the authors he has in mind, research would need to establish their precise identity. The use of Driesch's concept of "entelechy" is the most immediately revealing sign to be looked for in such research.

Entelechial Thomism. The position of St. Thomas himself is quite different from Entelechial Thomism. Indeed, it would be a catastrophic misinterpretation to attribute Entelechial Thomism to St. Thomas. It is with good reason that Hildebrand himself refrains from doing so.

Hildebrand frames the issue between himself and Entelechial Thomism in terms of a contrast between person and nature. The Entelechial-Thomistic view, this is his central charge, locks the human person in an immanent dynamism of appetites or urges rooted in human nature. It fails to grasp the most decisive feature of the human *person as person*, namely, self-transcendence.

> The capacity to transcend himself is one of man's deepest characteristics. So long as we consider his activities as *the mere unfolding of his entelechy, determined by his nature, or as immanent manifestations of principles proper to his nature,* we fail to grasp the most decisive feature of his character as a person. Man cannot be understood if we interpret all his activities as manifestations of an *automatic striving for self-perfection*. So long as we are confined to this pattern, so long as we see man differing from other beings only by the fact that their objective teleological tendency assumes in him a character of consciousness, we overlook the real nature of *man as a person*. It is not an immanent movement, unconscious or conscious, which is man's typical mark. Certainly this also is to be found in man's nature, in the physiological sphere as well as in the psychical. *But the specifically personal character of man as a subject manifests itself in his capacity to transcend himself.* . . . In all immanent trends to unfold our nature, our attitude has the character of self-affirmation; whereas in every value response our attitude has the basic feature of self-donation.[2]

Hildebrand on Entelechial-Thomistic Nature and *Appetitus*

The Entelechial-Thomistic concept of *appetitus*, Hildebrand claims, refers to an urge which is the reason or determining factor *(principium)* of the goodness of an object—that goodness in turn being the *principiatum*, something determined by the urge. Hildebrand partly agrees with this account.

> Many objects assume a character of importance because of their suitability to appease an urge or an appetite in us. Water becomes important for the thirsty person; though he looked with indifference at the water so long as he was not thirsty, it suddenly assumes a character of importance because of his thirst. . . . The object which is able to appease an urge or an appetite, so long as this urge or appetite is not appeased,

[2] Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics* (New York: David McKay, 1953), 218 and 20, emphasis added.

> presents itself to us either as something merely subjectively satisfying or as an objective good for the person. . . . The importance of the object is clearly something secondary; it is a *means of appeasement*. Its suitability is important only because the urge and appetite exists; as soon as the urge or appetite disappears, the object loses its importance and falls, so far as our experience is concerned, to the level of the indifferent.[3]

The Entelechial-Thomistic account of human nature and the corresponding account of the good is based on such urges or appetites.[4] Each being is endowed with its own "entelechy," a blueprint of what that being is supposed to be in accord with its nature, together with an inner drive that impels the being toward realizing its own blueprint. Hildebrand seems to connect this sense of "entelechy" with the Greek etymology of the word: ἐντελέχεια from ἐν (in), τέλος (end) and ἔχειν (to have), that is, having the end within. The end, which is the full actuality of the nature, is already in some sense within the being, when that being is still imperfect. It is already within, both in the sense of a blueprint and in the sense of an inner active principle that realizes this blueprint. Acorns unfold and mature into oak trees; lions develop from zygotes into cubs and from cubs into adult animals that do what lions naturally tend to do: hunt, reproduce, clean themselves, sleep, and so on.

Given a particular inclination or *appetitus* toward the end dictated by a thing's entelechy, some objects outside the being turn out to be suitable to serve that end. They help in the unfolding of the entelechy. A cat plays with a ball of wool twine. Its interest in the ball depends on the urge or appetite to unfold its own entelechy as it exercises and sharpens its motor reflexes. The ball is important *for* the cat because the cat happens to have this particular entelechy. For a snail the ball does not have this importance, because the entelechy of a snail does not unfold by the same activities. The entelechy is the *principium*, the importance of the ball the *principiatum*. In itself, the ball is indifferent. It remains indifferent for the snail and *becomes* important *for* the cat without, for all that, having any importance or goodness *in itself*.

Human nature has its own entelechy and its own corresponding tendencies or urges, following the general cosmological pattern set by subhuman nature. The very word *appetitus* shows that vegetative and sensitive patterns of tendencies or urges are what determine St. Thomas's understanding.

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[3] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 39.

[4] For texts on which the following summary is based, see Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 100–2, 85–8, 218–26.

> Every view that sees love as an *appetitus*, an urge *(Drang)*, and sees in it an analogy in the spiritual realm to drives *(Triebe)* like thirst in the bodily sphere completely misunderstands the nature of love. . . . There are postures *(Haltungen)* in man that are anchored in the subject; their actualization can be explained by the disposition and needs of man. Thirst is an example in the bodily sphere, the drive *(Drang)* to unfold one's talent is an example in the spiritual realm, and the need for social contact in the psychological. These needs play a great role in our lives. What is characteristic of them is that they are not engendered *(erzeugt)* by the object and its importance, but come to be spontaneously. They search, as it were, for an object that is able to appease *(stillen)* this need.[5]

The only difference between human beings and subrational living beings in the Entelechial-Thomistic account is that the unconscious or only semiconscious urges of the subrational become fully conscious in human beings. To the degree in which something is helpful in appeasing the urges of human nature, in furthering the full actualization of human nature, it becomes important *for* human beings. Virtue is good, not good *in itself*, but good *for us* because it corresponds to our nature as a means for fully actualizing it. God is good, not good *in himself*, but good *for us* because he corresponds to our nature as a means for fully actualizing it. In themselves, virtue and God are indifferent. They are desirable *for us*, because they serve our entelechial striving.

Hildebrand makes three important observations that specify further how he understands the Entelechial-Thomistic account of the good as the desirable *for* human beings on the basis of natural *appetitus*. They are at the same time the main starting points of his critique of the Entelechial-Thomistic account.

First, the Entelechial-Thomistic account explains goodness in terms of merely factual features of nature, in terms of "a mere neutral relation between some object and the actualization of our nature . . . a mere factuality."[6] It is an explanation based on a "neutral final cause."[7] Such a neutral final cause leaves open the question why it should be pursued: "every final cause calls for a 'why' as long as we have not grasped its value," that is, its goodness in itself.[8] For this reason, the Entelechial-Thomistic account of goodness fails in respect to what is supposed to be its greatest strength as a *teleological* account, namely, understanding the *telos*, the end of a being as the definitive explanation, the cause of causes.

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[5] Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe* (Regensburg: Josef Habbel, 1971), 49.
[6] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 102.
[7] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 105.
[8] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 105.

> If it is said that something is good because of its suitability to lead to the fulfillment of our entelechy what else can this mean but that everything which we call good, everything to which we attribute an importance-in-itself, has in reality only a secondary importance *as a means for the one value which matters*: the entelechy of our person? Would this attempt really replace the notion of value by suitability; would it dissolve our notion of value into a mere neutral relation between some object and the actualization of our nature? Rather, would it not tacitly presuppose the notion of value in man's entelechy as well as in the fact that the entelechy should be fully unfolded? Is it not obvious that this attempt at reduction is in reality only a postponement of the problem; that is to say, a tacit presupposition of the value in that which is at the basis of this relation?[9]

Second, the Entelechial-Thomistic account bypasses the rational center of the person and submits the person to subpersonal and blind natural forces.

> In speaking of that love which manifests itself in the fact that every fibre of our person longs for the beloved, or that his presence is as indispensable as the air we breathe, we still speak of a value response which is clearly distinguished from any urge. Here as in any real love, the intrinsic beauty and nobility of the beloved is the creative source of our love, the principle of its engendering; while in every urge this movement has its source in our own nature and its needs. . . . There is in the one case a blind force *a tergo* [from behind]; in the other, a spiritual attitude, rooted in a clear awareness of the value of the object.[10]

Third and most important, the relation between the entelechy of a being and its full actualization in the Entelechial-Thomistic account can be called "immanent" in the sense that the unfolding of the entelechy of a being brings nothing new, except precisely the full actualization of its own nature, the fullness of being of which that nature is capable. Everything contained in a mature oak tree is contained as an active potential in the acorn. Every perfection of a mature lion is present as a power for growth and perfection in the cub. It only needs to be unfolded. If something outside the being is used for full actualization, as the ball is used by the cat, no genuine self-transcendence occurs, since in such a use an outside being is "a mere means for self-perfection."[11] Human beings invariably desire self-perfection. They order everything else, including

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[9] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 101–2, emphasis added.
[10] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 224–5.
[11] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 222.

God, to themselves as something that can serve their prior and immanent interest in their own self-perfection.

> The difference between an appetite or urge (the tendency, for example, to develop a talent, to release spiritual energies) and a value response clearly reveals the essential immanence of the first and the transcendence of the second. There is an essential and decisive difference between a priest for whom preaching is the realization of oratorical talent, an occasion to unfold this gift, and a priest for whom preaching is motivated by the desire to spread the word of God and to serve the eternal welfare of his brethren. We constantly make this distinction either for others or for ourselves. There is a yawning abyss between the nurse who ministers to us with care because she wants to appease her motherly instincts and the nurse who surrounds us with all possible attention and care because of her love of neighbor and her real sympathy for our suffering and needs. . . . In all immanent trends to unfold our nature, our attitude has the character of self-affirmation; whereas in every value response our attitude has the basic feature of self-donation.[12]

Hildebrand's Overarching Concern: St. Augustine's Two Loves

Hildebrand's account of Entelechial Thomism becomes more fully intelligible when one understands it against the background of his own overarching concerns. He sees the fundamental difference between morally good persons and morally bad persons in the choice between the "two different points of view, the two directions of life analyzed by St. Augustine in *The City of God* (XIV, 3)."[13] In the text referred to by Hildebrand, St. Augustine writes,

> It is in fact not by the possession of flesh, which the devil does not have, but by living according to himself, that is, according to man, that man has become similar to the devil. For also the devil willed to live according to himself when he did not stand in the truth, so that he spoke the lie, not from God, but from himself, who is not only a liar, but also the father of lying.[14]

A little later in Book Fourteen, St. Augustine expresses the same contrast between two directions of life in terms of two loves.

> Two loves have built the two cities: love of self to the contempt of God the earthly city; love of God to the contempt of self the heavenly.[15]

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12 Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 220.
13 Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 45.
14 St. Augustine, *De civitate dei,* XIV.3, PL 41.406–7.
15 St. Augustine, *De civitate dei,* XIV.28, PL 41.436.

In developing the theme of the two directions of life, Hildebrand focuses above all on the alternative between a life lived for the sake of subjective satisfaction and a life of self-transcending love for the good in itself which he calls "value."

This concentration on the two loves may explain a feature of Hildebrand's account of goodness that is otherwise difficult to understand. The fundamental "datum" from which Hildebrand proceeds is not "good" and its contrary "bad" or "evil," but something more abstract than these for which he uses the technical term "importance."

> The character which enables an object to become the source of an affective response or to motivate our will shall be termed by us "importance." Fully aware that "importance" is often used in another sense, we shall here use this term technically as connoting that property of a being which gives it the character of a *bonum* or *malum*; in short, importance is here used as the antithesis to neutrality or indifference.[16]

It would be strange to say that the primary datum in the moral sphere are "important" people rather than good persons and vicious persons, or, in the case of food, important food rather than good food and bad food. The reason Hildebrand chooses "importance" as a point of departure appears to be that he is interested in St. Augustine's two positions of the self that are found equally in relation to good and bad.

One can observe these two positions in the first distinction Hildebrand makes between "categories of importance," namely the distinction between something merely "subjectively important" and something "important in itself" quite apart from any relation to the subject. As an example of the former Hildebrand takes a compliment, to some degree undeserved, that gives us a purely subjective satisfaction.

> We are fully conscious that the compliment possesses a character of importance only insofar as it gives us pleasure. Its importance is solely drawn from its relation to our pleasure—as soon as the compliment is divorced from our pleasure, it sinks back into the anonymity of the neutral and indifferent.[17]

As an example of the important in itself Hildebrand takes a generous act in which someone gravely injured forgives the guilty person.

> This again strikes us as distinguishable from the neutral activity of a man dressing himself or lighting a cigarette. Indeed, the act of generous

[16] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 24.
[17] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 34.

> forgiveness shines forth with the mark of importance, with the mark of something noble and precious. It moves us and engenders our admiration. We are not only aware that this act occurs, but that it is *better* that it occurs, *better* that the man acted in this way rather than in another. We are conscious that this act is something which *ought* to *be*, something important.[18]

John Crosby, who follows Hildebrand closely, chooses as his first example for the important in itself the scene in the *Brothers Karamazov* in which Zosima brutally strikes his servant and only later realizes the intrinsic moral evil of his action, a realization that eventually leads to his conversion.[19] In this example, it is *worse* that the act occurred; the act is something that ought *not* to be. Yet the main point to be illustrated is the same: The importance in question does not depend on the pleasure or pain of the subject, but stands in itself. Hildebrand reserves the words "value" and "disvalue" in a technical sense for the important in itself.[20]

In addition to value and the subjectively satisfying, there is a third category of importance, Hildebrand argues, which he calls "objective good for the person." When he introduces this category, he gives the example of gratitude for being freed by someone from prison. When I am grateful to the person who freed me, I consider my freedom as a good *for me*. I do not look on it only in its intrinsic value, but in its being *in my interest*.[21] This category, Hildebrand argues in detail in his great monograph on love, is very important in love between persons: to be interested in what is objectively good for the other is one of the essential marks of love.[22]

Hildebrand lists four main marks that distinguish "value" from "the merely subjectively satisfying."

1. Both the subjectively satisfying and value involve pleasure and delight. Yet pleasure and delight differ essentially in the two cases. The delight in a value presupposes an awareness that the value does not depend on the delight it gives us, but vice versa. The value is the *principium*, the origin or determining factor of our delight, while the subjectively satisfying is the *principiatum*, it originates in, and is determined by, subjective satisfaction.

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[18] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 34.

[19] See John Crosby, "The Idea of Value and the Reform of the Traditional Metaphysics of Bonum," *Aletheia* 1 (1977): 231–327, 248–9.

[20] See Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 35.

[21] See Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 49–51.

[22] Hildebrand, *Wesen der Liebe,* 199–240.

> This happiness is thus something secondary, notwithstanding the fact that it is an essential mark of the values to be able to bestow delight on us: we even *should* take delight in them. The value is here the *principium* (the determining) and our happiness the *principiatum* (the determined), whereas in the case of the subjectively satisfying good our pleasure is the *principium* and the importance of the agreeable or satisfying of the object, the *principiatum*.[23]

One can clearly see St. Augustine's two loves in this contrast formulated in terms of *principium* and *principiatum*. In the love of self, the self's pleasure is the *principium* of importance. The importance of the object is the *principiatum*. In the love of value for its own sake, corresponding to the love of God, the importance of the object is the *principium* and the delight we take in it the *principiatum*.

Hildebrand goes on to explain the larger picture of a life based on attachment to the subjectively satisfying versus a life based on response to values. The explanation further clarifies what he means by value.

> Self-centered happiness at length wears itself out and ends in boredom and emptiness. The constant enjoyment of the merely subjectively satisfying finally throws us back upon our limitedness, imprisoning us within ourselves. In contrast, our engagement with a value elevates us, liberates us from self-centeredness, reposes us in a transcendent order which is independent of us, of our moods, of our dispositions. This blissful experience presupposes a participation in the intrinsically important; it implies a *harmony* which is given forth by the intrinsically good, the essentially noble alone; and it displays to us a *brightness* which is "consubstantial" (congenial) with the intrinsic beauty and splendor of the value. In this priceless contact with the intrinsically and autonomously important, the important in itself, it is the object which shelters and embraces our spirit.[24]

2. Value confronts the person with a *claim or call*. It is not left up to our momentary mood whether we give a value its due. A value imposes on us the obligation to give an appropriate response. The subjectively satisfying, by contrast, has no such claim on us. "We all know how ridiculous it would be for someone to say that he submitted to the obligation of playing bridge, and overcame the temptation to assist a sick person."[25]

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[23] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 37–8.
[24] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 37–8.
[25] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 38.

3. The call of a value has a *specific quality* which Hildebrand finds clearly expressed in the *Confessions* where St. Augustine describes how he began to be freed from his excessive attachment to sexual pleasure.

> The austere beauty of Continence . . . was revealed, serene and indeed merry but not debauched, honorably soliciting me to come to her.[26]

The subjectively satisfying does not have such a freeing power. "The attraction of the subjectively satisfying . . . lulls us into a state where we yield to instinct; it tends to dethrone our free spiritual center."[27]

4. The *responses* which we give as persons to the call of value and to the lure of the subjectively satisfying differ as well.

> We clearly see that in the first case our response has the character of an abandoning of our ourselves, a transcending of the boundaries of our self-centeredness, a submission of some sort. Interest in the subjectively satisfying reveals, on the contrary, a self-confinement, a relating of the object to ourselves, using it for our own self-centered satisfaction.[28]

Hildebrand's understanding of the Augustinian distinction between two loves and his own division of the good in accord with it, articulated in terms of *principium* and *principiatum*, is the essential background on which his reading of Entelechial Thomism can be understood. His reading is very clearly shaped by the question of *principium* and *principiatum* in accord with St. Augustine's distinction between two loves. The question Hildebrand asks contains an implicit alternative: Either *the self* is the principle to which all good is related, or *God together with the whole world of values* is the principle. The answer he hears from this form of Thomism is: the self is the *principium*. Hildebrand does not mention the main context in which St. Thomas himself, following St. Augustine, does discuss the contrast between the two loves, namely, the common good (more on this point in the conclusion).

When one approaches St. Thomas with this question and its implicit exclusive alternative, and reads what he has to say about the natural *appetitus* toward self-perfection present in all things, it is not entirely implausible that one would find precisely Entelechial Thomism. Just as, in Hildebrand's own view (and here he differs from St. Thomas), the urge of the self is the principle of goodness in sensitive appetites such as hunger or thirst, so the urge of the self for self-perfection is the princi-

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[26] St. Augustine, *Confessions,* VIII.11.27, quoted in Hildebrand, Ethics, 38, footnote 2.
[27] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 38.
[28] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 39.

ple or measure of goodness in the rational appetite. After all, St. Thomas does say,

> Everything seeks its own perfection as its own good.[29]
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> Everything seeks its own perfection as its own end.[30]
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> Just as every thing seeks its own perfection, so also the intellectual nature naturally seeks to be blessed.[31]
>
> Since everything seeks its own perfection, anyone seeks as his ultimate end that which he seeks as a perfect good that is perfective of his own self.[32]

There is no third option in the way St. Augustine formulates the alternative in the *City of God*: love of self to the contempt of God—love of God to the contempt of self. In this particular text, St. Augustine mentions only an evil love of self and a salutary contempt of self. And yet, there clearly is a third option, namely the love of self which appears in the commandment, "Love your neighbor as yourself." The right love of self is not something to be left behind or replaced by contempt of self. St. Augustine himself clarifies this point a little earlier in the *City of God*.

> In order that man might know how to love himself, an end has been set to which he is to refer all that he does, in order to be blessed. For the one who loves himself wants nothing else than to be blessed. This end is to cling to God (Psa 72, 28). If he knows already how to love himself, when he is commanded to love his neighbor as himself, what else is he commanded than to commend loving God to his neighbor as far as he can? This is the worship of God, this is true religion, this is right piety, this is the service owed to God alone.[33]

In St. Thomas, the understanding of "nature," *"appetitus,"* and "self-perfection" does escape the dichotomy between defective love of self and praiseworthy contempt of self in precisely this way. It is impossible to imagine a view more deeply opposed to St. Thomas than the Entelechial Thomism Hildebrand combats. According to St. Thomas, the cause of all causes is the end, and the reason why the end is the cause of causes is its goodness. In Entelechial Thomism, the cause of causes is in each case the nature of each thing in its merely factual entelechy, its potential and power to unfold itself. One could almost say, the cause of causes is—matter. All form and every end is ordered to matter.

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[29] St. Thomas, *Contra Gentiles,* I, ch.37.2.
[30] St. Thomas, *De Caelo,* II.4.5.
[31] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 26, a. 2 c.
[32] St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 1, a. 5 c.
[33] St. Augustine, *De civitate dei,* X.3, PL 41.281.

It is a cosmic enormity, and, let us be clear on this point, a Satanic curvature over my own person, if I order all things including God to myself and measure them by their usefulness in serving the only thing I desire, namely, the immanent unfolding of my entelechy. If I only think this, while in fact I live differently, that is better. Still, it is an enormous error. Hildebrand's stirring pathos directed against Entelechial Thomism seems to have its roots here, and with good justification.

St. Thomas's Definition of the Good in General

Hildebrand makes an excellent point in the first of his three arguments against the Entelechial Thomism he describes. The Entelechial-Thomistic account, he says, explains goodness in terms of merely factual features of nature, in terms of "a mere neutral relation between some object and the actualization of our nature . . . a mere factuality."[34] It is, as he reads it, an explanation based on a "neutral final cause."[35] Goodness only arises secondarily as a *principiatum* in an object inasmuch as it happens to serve this tendency, which is the *principium*. Hildebrand is quite right to insist that such an account is not a teleological account at all. It lacks what teleology needs above all, namely, *telos*. It lacks the end as a true cause, because (as Hildebrand rightly says), ". . . every final cause calls for a 'why' as long as we have not grasped its value," that is, its goodness in itself.[36]

St. Thomas agrees with this affirmation of the priority of goodness over being an end and an object of *appetitus*.

> Nothing tends to something as to an end except inasmuch as that very same (end) is good. Therefore, it is the good as good that is the end.[37]

In the objective order of things, "good" is prior to "end." Something is desirable as an end because it is good, not good because it happens to be desirable as an end for a particular entelechy. "Desirable as an end" is an account of the good in terms of its proper effect. The point of reference for the good is not a neutral entelechy. The converse is true. The nature of all beings is designed in such a way that it *follows* the good and needs to be explained in terms of the *prior good*. The good is the *principium*, the nature and its *appetitus* the *principiatum*. St. Thomas's teaching on this point is the most direct and radical opposite of the Entelechial Thomism Hildebrand describes.

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[34] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 102.
[35] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 105.
[36] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 105.
[37] St. Thomas, *Contra Gentiles,* III, ch. 17 §2.

St. Thomas's Definition of the Good

This priority of the good over *appetitus* is clear in the manner in which St. Thomas understands Aristotle's definition of the good in the very first sentence of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

> Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and choice, seems to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that which all desire.[38]

Aristotle does not begin immediately with the good, but with art, inquiry, action, and choice, apparently because action and choice constitute the specific subject of ethics. Action and choice aim at some good. Good is related to them as a cause to its effect, in fact, as the cause that most fully explains action and choice. If I ask someone, "Why are you doing this?," the most definitive answer is, "My aim is this and that good?" Why? "Because it is good." That is the final answer. The good is the cause of causes.

The second part of Aristotle's sentence inverts the first part. Because all action and choice is caused by the good, one can describe the good as that which is the cause of the desire of all things. "That which all desire" is a definition of the good in terms of its effect. Instead of "desire" one can also say "love" since desire is the form love takes when the good is still absent. The good is that which all love.

Why does Aristotle only offer a definition of the good through an effect? He *could not* do otherwise, even if he attempted to. "Good" is utterly first. There are no prior causes or principles by which it can be made known. Just as there cannot be a definition of "being" in terms of anything prior, because being is prior to all other notions and implied in them, so there cannot be a definition of "good" from any causes because good is first.

> Regarding this (i.e., Aristotle's definition of the good as the desirable) one should keep in mind that the good is numbered among first things, so much so that according to the Platonists the good is prior to being. In fact, however, the good is convertible with being. First things cannot be made known by anything prior to them, but are made known by what comes later, as causes are made known by their proper effects. Since the good in its own character *(proprie)* has the power to move *appetitus*, the good is described through the movement of *appetitus*, just as in general a moving power is made known through movement. This is why he (Aristotle) says that philosophers have rightly said, "Good is that which all desire."[39]

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[38] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* I.1, 1094a.1–3.

[39] St. Thomas, *Ethic.,* I.1.9. One can translate "appetunt" also as desire or love.

In Entelechial Thomism, what is first is not the good, but the entelechy in its *appetitus* to unfold. The good can be defined in terms of a prior cause, the entelechy and its *appetitus*. According to St. Thomas, the definition of the good as the *appetible* is a definition a posteriori, a definition of something first in terms of a revealing effect that comes after it, namely, love.

There is an alternate way in which St. Thomas formulates the definition of the good. "The good is what is perfective of another in the manner of end . . . *perfectivum alterius per modum finis*."[40]

> According to its own *ratio*, the good is a cause in the manner of a final cause. One can see this from the fact that the good is what all desire. That to which the *appetitus* tends is the end. Therefore, the good is according to its own ratio a cause in the manner of the end.[41]

In the natural order of things, "good" is prior to "end" rather than the other way around. Something can reasonably be taken as an end because it is good. The reason for its goodness is not that it is an end. This fundamental point is clear in an argument St. Thomas gives for the thesis that all things are ordered to God.

> Nothing tends to something as to an end except inasmuch as that very same (end) is good. Therefore, the good inasmuch as it is good is the end. Therefore, that which is the highest good is most of all the end of all. But there is only one highest good, which is God, as was shown in Book I. Therefore all things are ordered—as to the end—to one good which is God.[42]

Particularly the second part of this text shows the objective priority of "good" over "end." The goodness of God comes absolutely first. This goodness is the reason why all things are rightly ordered to it as to an end. God is not first the end of some immanent entelechy in a merely factual manner to be thereby also constituted as good.[43]

If *"appetible"* (loveable) is a definition of the good taken from its effect, is it the definition from the most proper effect? Are there other effects of

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[40] St. Thomas, *De veritate,* XXI.1 c.

[41] St. Thomas, *Metaphys.,* I.11.9.

[42] St. Thomas, *Contra Gentiles,* III, ch. 17 §2.

[43] See Lawrence Dewan, OP, "St. Thomas and the Causality of God's Goodness," *Laval Théologique et Philosophique* 34 (1978): 291–304. Dewan explains, in particular, how St. Thomas's argument for the goodness of God from the fact that God is the end of all creatures (*ST* I, q. 6, a. 1), is an argument from effect to cause. The intrinsic goodness of God is the reason for all natures and their inclinations.

the good by which the good could be equally well defined? Honor is an effect of the good and might be proposed as a reasonable candidate. In fact, as I will show in the next section, "honorable" is the aspect St. Thomas uses to distinguish "good" in the most proper sense of the word from two derivative senses of "good," namely, the pleasing and the useful good.[44] The *bonum honestum* is the cause of honor in the sense of being worthy of honor. In this manner, honor is an effect that can serve to make the *bonum honestum* better known. Not only the good, however, is honorable, but so is beauty and any excellence. Honor is not, then, the proper effect of good.

Understanding is another effect of the good. In fact, in the order of causality, good is the first principle of intelligibility. In the order of intelligibility, simply speaking, "being" comes before "true" and "good" as the first object of understanding. Yet in the order of the intelligibility of causes as causes, "good" is first. Whenever there are causes, the good is the cause of them all. It is the cause of causes. The manner in which good illumines the understanding is a highly revealing effect of the good. Yet intelligibility belongs not only to "good" but also to "being." "Intelligible," therefore, is too universal to be the proper effect of good as good. Still, both effects, honor and understanding, do throw much light on the good. The good is that which all love. The good is the cause of love—this is most characteristic of it.

This understanding of the definition of "good" as a definition of a cause in terms of its effect makes sense in the overall framework of St. Thomas's philosophy and theology. The origin of creation, St. Thomas argues again and again, lies in the goodness of God. Since he loves his own goodness, God wills to manifest and communicate it by creating beings that reflect or attain his goodness in various ways. The natures and natural inclinations of creatures are designed for this goal, ordered to this goal. The inner reason for the natural tendency of plants to unfold, as that tendency actually operates, is the attainment of likeness with God. Why? Because such a likeness is good. Why? Because God is in himself good. This order is most clearly present in intellectual creatures. The inner reason for the inclination of the will to the good, a reason that can be observed at work in the actual motivation of a good person, is the ordering of the person to the highest likeness with God which lies in knowing and loving. Why is this likeness good? Because God is good. Since human beings have a rational nature, they are not only destined to be *like* God, a feature they share to some degree with other beings, but they can

[44] See St. Thomas, *ST* II–II, q. 145.

attain something infinitely greater than mere likeness. They are *capax dei*, they can attain God as he is in himself. Why is this attainment of God good? Because God is in himself good.

A Reading of the Definition according to Entelechial Thomism

Crosby offers a different account of St. Thomas's definition of the good, one that would seem to fit with Entelechial Thomism, though Crosby shares Hildebrand's caution and does not attribute the crucial theses of this Entelechial Thomism (namely, Driesch's understanding of "entelechy" and Kant's understanding of inclinations) to St. Thomas. Crosby argues that in St. Thomas's account, the good adds a relation to some *appetitus*, to some striving for self-perfection.

> Thomas teaches that good adds a certain relation between being and another thing: "A thing is called a being inasmuch as it is considered absolutely, but good . . . in relation to other things (secundum respectum ad alia)" (q. XXI, a. 5). and the relation which makes up the idea of good is the relation of a being to some appetitus, that is, to the striving in a being for its own perfection: "Good expresses the correspondence of being to the appetitive power" (D.Q.T., q. I, a. 1). Though "good" and "being" are not synonyms, it seems that "good" and "being as *appetible*" are.[45]

Does Crosby hold that the relation *appetible (loveable)* is merely grounded in the good, as one must hold if *appetible (loveable)* is a definition of the good from its effect? Or does he hold that *appetitus* is prior and offers the reason for the goodness of a being?

> Other transcendentals such as *res* and *unum* are "in themselves," "absolute," "non-relational"; but in this they are precisely distinguished from *bonum* and *verum*, each of which consists in a certain *respectum ad alia*. It is not just that *bonum* by its nature grounds a certain relation of an *appetitus* to itself; *bonum* partly *consists in* this relation. Thus for Thomas a thing cannot be "good in itself" in the same sense of "in itself" in which a thing has being *(ens)* in itself.[46]

It appears from this reading that the relation *appetible* is the reason why something is good rather than the other way around. Crosby is explicit: It is not just that the good *grounds* the relation *appetible*. The good *consists* of a being inasmuch as that being has taken on this relation. *Appetitus,* it would appear, comes first. Crosby does not interpret this point in the sense

[45] Crosby, "Idea of Value," 238.
[46] Crosby, "Idea of Value," 238.

of Entelechial Thomism, but one might do so as follows. Given a certain entelechy and its corresponding *appetitus*, certain things take on importance to the degree in which they serve the appeasement of this *appetitus*.

"Appetible" as a One-Sided Relation

A way of showing negatively that the relation *appetible* cannot be that which is added to being to constitute being as good is to note that, according to St. Thomas, this relation is strictly—nothing. If the good as good consisted in the relation *appetible*, "good" would be merely an extrinsic denomination brought to a being from an *appetitus*. When he introduces the way in which the notion "good" adds to the notion "being," St. Thomas writes,

> In a third way something is added to another only according to reason, namely, when something belongs to the very *ratio* of one thing while not belonging to the *ratio* of the other, which, however, *is nothing in the nature of things,* but only in the mind. . . .[47]

"Nothing in the nature of things." The status of the relation *appetible* is strictly and absolutely this: *nothing in the nature of things*. A little later in the body of the same article, St. Thomas explains what he means when he says, "Something belongs to the very *ratio* of one thing while not belonging to the *ratio* of the other." Some relations are asymmetrical in their reality, he says. For example, human knowledge is utterly dependent on being. In its own constitutive nature it contains a relation to being. The relation to being is part of the very *ratio* of what knowledge is in itself. Knowledge cannot stand on its own without this relation to being. The relation is intrinsic to knowledge and for this reason it is a real relation. The converse is not true. Being does not have the same intrinsic relation to human knowledge. It does not depend in its very *ratio* on human knowledge, but stands entirely and fully on its own prior to that relation. It is similar in the case of the good. In its own constitutive nature, love contains a relation to the good. The good, on the other hand, is not constituted by a relation to love. Granted, inasmuch as goodness involves being a kind of cause, the cause of all causes, a reference to its proper effect is necessary when one conceives it. Yet, to put it in Aristotle's terms, a relation to the effect is present in the good, not because the good is related to the effect but because the effect is related to the good.

In the *Summa*, St. Thomas uses the striking example of an animal placed next to a column to illustrate this asymmetrical kind of relation.

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[47] St. Thomas, *De veritate,* XXI.1 c, emphasis added.

> Sometimes relation is a thing of nature in one of the extremes, and a mere thing of reason in the other. . . . In knowledge and sensation, there is a real relation, inasmuch as they are ordered to knowing and sensing a thing, but the things themselves considered in themselves are outside this order. This is why no relation really exists in them to knowing and sensing, but only according to reason, inasmuch as the mind takes them as the ends of the relations of knowledge and sensation. This is why Aristotle says that they are not called relative inasmuch as they refer to something else, but because other things refer to them. In a similar way, "on the right" is said about a column only inasmuch as it is placed on the right in relation to an animal, whence this kind of relation does not exist in a real way in the column, but in the animal.[48]

If the animal were perfectly round, with eyes, ears, noses, legs, and tails equally distributed over its spherical surface, one would not be able to say whether the column was on its right, except by introducing the point of view of an observer who has a right and a left.

The relation *appetible* is something brought to the good from the outside, just as "to the column's left" is an exterior denomination of the column, not something intrinsic to it. On this level, the two relations are alike. The good differs from the example of the column, because the relation *appetible* (loveable) is founded or grounded in the good. The good itself, inasmuch as it is the good, is the reason for *appetibility*. For this reason, "appetible" reveals much about the good. "To the left of the column," by contrast, is grounded only in the animal, not at all in the column and so it says nothing about the column. Being capable of awakening love is essentially connected with the good, in the sense that good would be eliminated as good if, per impossibile, it were not in principle capable of awakening love in a person who apprehends it. The relation "appetible" grows out of the good and is in this way "fundamentally" intrinsic to it, while not being a formal cause "formally" intrinsic to the good, as Cajetan says (see below). The opposite is true of love: the good enters into the formal cause of love. "What" love is depends on the good, not the other way around.

In *Summa* I, q. 5, a. 1, St. Thomas says, *"Ratio enim boni in hoc consistit, quod aliquid sit appetible."* The Benziger edition of the *Summa* translates, "The *essence* of goodness consists in this, that it is in some way desirable."[49] The text says, *"Ratio boni,"* not *"essentia boni."* In this context, *"ratio boni"* is more accurately translated as "*account* of the good" rather than "*essence* of the good." This reading of I, q. 5, a. 1 is confirmed by Cajetan's commentary on the text. Cajetan introduces, as often, another

[48] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 13, a. 7 c.
[49] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 5, a. 1.

distinction. He begins by formulating an objection. The word "good" expresses the *ratio* of the "appetible." But the good is called "appetible" not because it is related to *appetitus*, but because *appetitus* is related to it. Therefore the good is not in reality appetible. Appetibility is nothing. Cajetan gives two arguments for the proposition that the relation appetible does not exist as a real relation in the good.

> Proof of the minor premise: (1) Something is appetible because it is good, and not the other way around. (2) The good is the formal object of *appetitus*; and "appetible" is an extrinsic denomination taken from *appetitus*. . . .

The objection moves Cajetan to make a distinction which St. Thomas himself does not explicitly make.

> One can give two answers, according to two ways in which something can have the ratio of the appetible, namely, *formally* and *fundamentally*. (1) If "appetible" is taken *formally*, then the good is said to have the *ratio* of it, not as intrinsic, but as something it receives (extrinsically). (2) If, however, it is taken *fundamentally*, then the good can be said to have the *ratio* of the appetible intrinsically: for the good's own *ratio* is the foundation and proper cause of appetibility, as color is of visibility. Even though both glosses, taken in themselves, are true, and the first is taken from the beginning of *St. Thomas's Commentary on the Ethics*, nevertheless in the present context [i.e., *ST* I, q. 5, a. 1] the second is what St. Thomas means directly, because the question is about the good's own account.[50]

Cajetan's main point seems to be contained in the words "the good's own *ratio* is the foundation and proper cause of appetibility—*propria ratio boni est fundamentum et causa propria appetibilitatis*." That the good itself grounds the relation *appetible*, Cajetan thinks, is what St. Thomas intends to point out in *Summa* I, q. 5, a. 1 when he says "the good has the *ratio* of the appetible." He wants to focus on the good itself (which, as something first, cannot be defined by anything prior) and he does so by attending to the manner in which the good is the cause of love. If the order were inverted, if "good" were determined by some *appetitus* directed at it, then "good" would say precisely as much about being as "the column's left" does, namely—nothing. One might design a robot programmed to tighten a certain size of octagonal screws, equipped with sensors that detect such screws on any object it encounters. For this robot, the world is divided into the to-be-tightened and the not-to-be

[50] Cajetan, *Commentary on the Summa,* Leonine edition, ad locum I, q. 5, a. 1.

tightened. Octagonal shape is a real property of some beings, but "to-be-tightened" says nothing about them, only about the robot, whose entelechial programming happens to be directed to octagonal screws.

The underlying question addressed by Cajetan is sometimes put in the form, "Do we love something because it is good, or is it good because we love it?" In one way of understanding this question, the first option is necessarily true, even in an account like Entelechial Thomism that sees *appetitus* as prior to the goodness of things.[51] Even if the only reason something is desirable lies in its capacity to give us some pleasure, as seems to be the case, for example, in a dose of morphine, which does not seem to be a *bonum honestum* in any sense, it remains true that we love it because of its derivative goodness rather than the other way around. Even if appetibility were the essence of the good, the good would still in some sense precede and ground a given appetitus (taken as a noun); my love here and now for some particular good would be grounded in the already existing appetibility of the being. It is in a stronger sense that Aristotle and St. Thomas define the good as the cause of love, as will become clearer below in St. Thomas's account of *bonum honestum*. This stronger sense of causality is what Cajetan seems to have in mind when he says "the good's own *ratio* is the foundation and proper cause of appetibility, as color is of visibility." *Appetitus* is entirely a *principiatum* of the good rather than the other way around.

This point can be further clarified by observing a certain contrariety between goodness and truth. Following Aristotle, St. Thomas points out that truth is primarily in the mind ("true" applies primarily to statements in the mind that correspond to what is) while the good is primarily in things (we love them because they are good).[52] For this reason, "good" says much more about being than does "true." What it says is conceptually irreducible to "being." One cannot simply and mechanically juxtapose the notion of "being" and the notion "appetible" to make up the notion "good." Since the definition of "good" as "appetible" is a definition a posteriori, one must see the relation "appetible" as a relation that is deeply grounded in the good while not being formally constitutive of it, and that, therefore, reveals something of the greatest importance about being that is not explicit in the notion "being."

The Most Fundamental Objection

In this perspective one can respond to what Crosby calls "the most radical, the most fundamental of our objections" against St. Thomas.[53] Crosby

[51] For this important point, see Crosby, "Idea of Value," 257–8.
[52] See esp. St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 16, a. 1–4.
[53] Crosby, "Idea of Value," 303.

understands Hildebrand's "value," that is, the good in itself, as a fundamental dimension of being comparable in weight to two other dimensions. The first of these is the *"inner unity, meaning, intelligibility"* of being which sets being off from the purely chaotic.[54] A second dimension of being is *"having real existence, . . . being fully real."*[55] Real existence adds significantly to the first dimension. An imagined person is intelligible, but is not real. It makes a big difference if someone merely imagined turns out to exist in real life.

> There is yet a third dimension of being, a third way in which a being can be opposed to nothingness: the dimension of having value *(des Wertvollseins)*. Its specific antithesis is neither the chaotic nor the [non-]substantial,[56] but the neutral. A thing is opposed to nothingness in a fundamentally new way when it is not only meaningful and not only fully real, but is also radiant with excellentia, and has the preciousness of value; when it not only is, but *ought to be*. . . . (T)he *excellentia* of a thing, its *dignitas*, gives the thing a "weight of being" which is altogether comparable to the "weight of being" which the thing has as really existing.[57]

When one compares Crosby's own position with his reading of St. Thomas, one can see a structural parallel. The relation *appetible* in St. Thomas's definition of the good, as Crosby reads it, corresponds to the distinct dimension of being called value inasmuch as both are, in their respective positions, that which constitutes the good as good. For this reason, the following objection is what Crosby calls "the most radical, the most fundamental of our objections."[58]

> If value represents a fundamental dimension of being, and one which is irreducible to real being, then it is impossible that value add nothing to real being except a certain relation to human striving. For this could never "amount to" a new dimension of being. . . . But if, as we have argued, valuable being is a *ratio* of being as fundamental as the *ratio* of real being, then it too is incomparably more than that being considered in relation to a possible *appetitus*. We conclude, then, that value makes a fundamental metaphysical "addition" to *ens*, an addition which is excluded by the Thomistic *bonum*; value represents a fundamental dimension of being which has gone unnoticed in Thomism.[59]

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54 Crosby, "Idea of Value," 296.

55 Crosby, "Idea of Value," 296.

56 The text has "substantial." A negative seems to be required. The contrast in the first dimension is meaningful/chaotic, the contrast in the second is substantial being/merely imaginary existence, etc.

57 Crosby, "Idea of Value," 296–7.

58 Crosby, "Idea of Value," 303.

59 Crosby, "Idea of Value," 303.

Indeed, if *appetitus* were first, as in Entelechial Thomism, and "good" were merely an extrinsic denomination imposed on being inasmuch as it happens to serve some pre-existing *appetitus*, then the bearing of "good" on being would be exactly like the bearing of "the column's left side" on the column—nothing. Using the term "good" would reveal nothing about being. Since, in fact, the good is first and the definition *appetible* is a definition in terms of proper effect, not in terms of formal cause, the notion "good" does reveal something momentous about being, something that the notion "being" does not by itself reveal. By its own intrinsic goodness, being has the power to move love. In the order of causality, which depends entirely on love, the intrinsic goodness of being is the cause of all causes. This is something momentous to know about being. It is something objectively contained in being, but not expressed by the notion "being," nor by the simple juxtaposition of "being" and "appetible." The notion "good" is indispensable. It brings the good news of the intrinsic goodness of being.[60]

[60] This common ground between Hildebrand and St. Thomas, important as it is, cannot entirely close the gap between their positions on the metaphysical status of goodness. There is a remaining difference which is deeply rooted in Hildebrand's phenomenological premises. St. Thomas sees the main difference between Plato and Aristotle in Plato's choosing as the point of departure of philosophy, not real being, but the "intelligible accounts" *(rationes intelligibiles)* formed by the mind. Aristotle, according to St. Thomas, takes his point of departure quite deliberately in sensible things, which are the first instance of real being for us human knowers (*Disputed Question on Spiritual Creatures,* a. 3, corpus). Aristotle is ever careful to take into account that the reception of sensible things in our mind follows the mode of the recipient. Our mind breaks up the unity of sensible things into various aspects that are distinct in the mind, but remain one in reality, e.g. the distinction between the aspect of genus and species. One does not find a similar corrective move in Plato with the result that the multiplicity of aspects in our mind is projected too quickly into things. And so Plato posits, for example, a distinct objectively existing idea of a genus and of its species, and correspondingly a distinct substance of the human body over against the soul, two substances in relation to each other, one corresponding to the genus, the other to the specific difference. Phenomenology is similar to Plato's position as St. Thomas understands it, because it takes its point of departure, not in real being, but in "the given" which corresponds closely to the Platonic *"rationes intellibiles."* "The given" pinpoints the objects of knowledge *as they are given in the mind*. Hildebrand's and Crosby's rejection of the Aristotelian and Thomistic convertibility of being and goodness seems to be an instance of this divergence at the very roots of philosophy. Invariably, Phenomenologists bring the charge of reductionism against the Thomistic approach. In the present case, they bring the charge that St. Thomas reduces the good to being. The response that good and being differ *secundum rationem* only, but are one *in re* does not make sense on strict phenomenological premises. "The given" in the case of "being" differs from "the given" in the case of "good." The claim that being and good are one *secundum rem* inevitably

St. Thomas's Definition of the Honorable Good in Particular

The reading of St. Thomas's definition of the good proposed above is confirmed by his understanding of the honorable good *(bonum honestum)*, which he considers the primary sense of "good." Aristotle proposes a threefold division of the good which St. Thomas adopts as his own: ". . . there are three objects of choice and three of avoidance, the noble [*to kalon:* alternate translations: the beautiful, the good], the useful, and the pleasing, and their contraries, the shameful, the injurious, and the painful."[61] The term "good," St. Thomas holds, is used analogously in these three cases, just as "healthy" is said analogously of the animal, the weather and the animal's urine. The animal alone is healthy in the primary sense. The weather is healthy in the sense of being conducive to the animal's health. Urine is healthy in the sense of being a sign of the animal's health. In the three senses of good, the prime analogate is the *bonum honestum* (Aristotle's *kalon*). The pleasing good is good as the resting of love in some *bonum honestum*. The useful good is good as bringing about some *bonum honestum*.[62] Since the *bonum honestum* is good in the first sense of good, since it is the prime analogate on which the other two senses depend, understanding it is the key to understanding all the forms of goodness. St. Thomas dedicates an entire question of the *Summa* to explaining what *"honestum"* means in the phrase *"bonum honestum."* This question *"De Honestate"* is not a well-known text. For reasons that will become apparent below, it is found in a seemingly obscure place, in a question of the *Secunda Secundae's* account of temperance (II–II, q. 145).

The opening issue in the first article of this question is whether the *honestum* is the same as virtue. The very first objection sounds like Entelechial Thomism.

> It seems that the honorable is not identical with virtue. For, Cicero says in his Rhetoric, that the honorable is what is sought for its own sake.

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appears on phenomenological premises as reducing one irreducible given to another. The counter-charge on the basis of a fundamentally realist philosophy is that the phenomenological premises when joined with a realist metaphysics (which Hildebrand adopted contrary to Husserl and Scheler) leads to an erroneous multiplication of entities (in the present case the multiplication of the "dimensions" of meaning, existence and goodness, each of which really adds something to the others) and to a consequent loss of the contours and unity of real being.

61 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* II.3, 1104b.30–32. See St. Thomas's commentary ad locum.

62 See St. Thomas, *Ethic.,* VIII.2.2, *ST* I, q. 5, a. 6, obj. 3.

> Now, virtue is not sought for its own sake, but for the sake of happiness, for the Philosopher says in the Ethics that happiness is the reward of virtue and the end. Therefore the honorable is not the same as virtue.[63]

Before considering the response to this objection, it is good to examine the body of the article in which St. Thomas takes as his starting point the definition of the honorable proposed by Isidore of Seville. He quotes only the last clause of Isidore's definition. The full definition reads, "*Honestus:* that which is such as to have no share in disgracefulness. For, what is *honestas* if not an enduring honor, that is, a state of honor, as it were?"[64] St. Thomas understands the *state* of honor not as honor actually given, but as being *worthy* of honor. He therefore reformulates the definition: "It seems that something is called *honestum* for this reason, that it is worthy of honor *(honore dignum)*."[65]

On the basis of this definition of the honorable, St. Thomas constructs the following argument for the identity between the honorable and virtue. Honor is owed *(debetur)* to excellence *(excellentia)*. The excellence of a human being has most to do with virtue because virtue is, in Aristotle's definition, "the disposition of the perfect for the best." The virtue St. Thomas has in mind is clearly moral virtue in a broad sense that includes charity, not intellectual virtue. Only moral virtue, he holds, can be called virtue without qualification.[66] The conclusion: "And therefore the honorable, properly speaking, is taken back to the same thing with virtue."[67]

The response to the first objection further clarifies the meaning of "honorable."

> As the Philosopher says in Ethics I, of things that are sought because of themselves, some are sought only because of themselves and never because of something else, such as happiness, which is the ultimate end. others are sought both because of themselves, inasmuch as they have some aspect of goodness in themselves, even if no other good comes to us through them. Nevertheless, they can be sought also because of something else, inasmuch as they lead us to a more perfect good. In this way virtues must be sought because of themselves. This is why Cicero says, "There is something which attracts us by its own power and draws us by its own dignity," such as virtue, truth and knowledge. And this is enough for the account of *honestum*.

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63 St. Thomas, *ST* II–II, q. 145, a. 1, obj. 1. "(Happiness is) . . . the reward and end of virtue." Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* I.9, 1099b.16–17.

64 Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX,* X.116.

65 St. Thomas, *ST* II–II, q. 145, a. 1 c.

66 See St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 56, a. 3 c.

67 St. Thomas, *ST* II–II, q. 145, a. 1 c.

Particularly the formulation "by its own power it attracts us, by its own dignity it draws us" shows that Cicero is thinking of an intrinsic good, though there is clearly also a reference to the person *for* whom virtue becomes a good: "attracts, *allicit*" and "draws, *trahit*." Yet precisely in these references to the attracted person, it is clear that the principle of goodness lies in the virtue, not outside it, for example, in the pleasure or joy one derives from virtue.

I will return to the question of virtue as a means for happiness. At this point it is enough to note that a means for St. Thomas is not simply a thing that causes another without itself participating in the goodness of the end, as medicine is a means for health. Knowing the first stanza of a poem is a means for knowing the whole poem, a means which nevertheless shares in the goodness of the end, even if only incompletely. In a similar way, virtue is an essential part of human goodness, so essential that there cannot be human good without it. Yet it is not the *whole* human good. In its incompleteness it cannot escape being a means.

The identification of *bonum honestum* with virtue in particular should not, of course, be understood as excluding goods that are less than virtue, such as health, or goods that are higher, such as God. What is lower than virtue deserves the name *honestum* mainly as ordered to virtue (here St. Thomas gives the examples of power and wealth); what is higher than virtue (above all God) deserves honor more, but it is further from our experience. And so virtue carries the name *honestum* as its very own name.

In the second article, St. Thomas uses Denys the Areopagite's account of beauty as a middle term to argue from the identity between *honestum* and virtue to the identity between *honestum* and *decorum*. Denys writes,

> The super-substantial beautiful is called beauty because from itself it gives to all beings, to each in its own way, a share in beauty, as the cause of the harmony and splendor of all things. . . .

In his commentary on this passage, St. Thomas focuses on two concepts: harmony (εὐαρμοστία) and splendor (ἀγλαΐα). These two, he argues, constitute the specific "face" of beauty, both in the order of bodily appearance, where due proportion of parts and splendor of color are aspects of beauty, and in the spiritual order where spiritual brightness or splendor together with due proportion makes for beauty.[68]

On the basis of this account of beauty he offers the following argument for his conclusion.

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[68] St. Thomas, *De div. nom.,* IV.5.339.

> Spiritual beauty consists in this that a person's conduct, i.e., his action, is well proportioned according to the spiritual splendor of reason. This is part of the account of the honorable, which we identified with virtue, since virtue moderates all human things according to reason. And so the honorable is the same as spiritual beauty. This is why Augustine says, "By nobility or honorableness I mean intelligible beauty, which we properly say is spiritual." And after this he adds, "There are many beautiful visible things which are less properly called honorable."[69]

The first objection of the second article is interesting because it correlates the *honestum* with *appetitus*. Quoting Cicero, St. Thomas says, "*honestum est quod per se appetitur* (the honorable is what is sought for itself.)" The beautiful by contrast, is not described as the object of *appetitus*, but as that whose very appearance pleases. St. Thomas's response does not deny this difference between the terms "good" and "beautiful," but nevertheless draws a connection between them.

> The object that moves the appetite is the good when it is known. Now, we receive as fitting and good that which appears beautiful in the very knowledge of it. And so Denys says, "To everyone the beautiful and good are lovable." For this reason the honorable is itself made desirable inasmuch as it has spiritual beauty. Cicero also says, "You see the form and the face, as it were, of the honorable. If it itself were seen by the eyes, it would stir up amazing loves, as Plato says, of wisdom."[70]

All three modes of goodness—the honorable, the pleasing, and the useful—St. Thomas claims in the third article, are found together in virtue, but they are nevertheless distinct as interconnected aspects of virtue. St. Thomas's starting point is a summary definition of *honestum*, gleaned from the preceding articles: "Something is called honorable, as we said, inasmuch as it has a certain beauty from the ordering of reason."[71] Virtue, which has this beauty, is suited to the nature of man, since man is rational and thus able to recognize beauty and delight in it. For this reason, virtue naturally gives pleasure to man. Virtue is also useful, because the honorable good found in it is related to a more comprehensive honorable good, to happiness, as a part is related to the whole. St. Thomas concludes,

> According to this argument, the honorable, the useful and the pleasing are one in subject but differ in aspect. For (virtue) is called honorable inasmuch as it has a certain excellence worthy of honor because of spir-

[69] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 145, a. 2. c.
[70] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 145, a. 2, ad 1.
[71] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 145, a. 3 c.

> itual beauty; pleasing inasmuch as it quiets the appetite; and useful inasmuch as it is referred to something else.[72]

The fourth and last article of the question *De honestate* is clearly the point of arrival of the whole *quaestio*. It shows why this extremely important teaching on a question so central to St. Thomas's entire account of the good is located in such a seemingly obscure place, the questions on the virtue of temperance. St. Thomas seems to have had a particular love for temperance, and within temperance for purity, as a virtue of compelling beauty. If St. Francis had a preferential love for poverty, St. Thomas had one for purity. And so he advances the thesis that *honestas* is part of temperance in the sense of attaching *particularly* to this one virtue. To see St. Thomas's complete understanding of purity, one must also consider what he says about the religious vow of chastity, as an aspect of the holocaust of love which defines religious life.[73] "Religious life . . . is a kind of whole burnt offering (holocaust) by which someone totally offers himself and all things that are his to God." Clearly, here we are in contact with the heart of St. Thomas's own sanctity translated into thought.

To conclude, St. Thomas's definition of the good and his account of *bonum honestum* show clearly that he sees the good as radically the cause of *appetitus*, not as dependent on *appetitus*. This point is the most fundamental point to be made in distinguishing Entelechial Thomism from St. Thomas's own view. To put the point in Hildebrand's terms, the good according to St. Thomas is the *principium*, and *appetitus* is radically the *principiatum*.

St. Thomas's account of the "honorable good" converges on a deep level with Hildebrand's account of value. Let us return to the four marks by which Hildebrand distinguishes value from the merely subjectively satisfying.

1. In the case of value, according to Hildebrand, the pleasure and happiness we feel flows from the value, the value is the *principium*, the pleasure or happiness the *principiatum*. According to St. Thomas, "Things are called pleasing in a restricted way when they have no other reason for desirability than pleasure, even though at times they are harmful and shameful. . . . They are called honorable when they have in themselves a reason for being desired."[74] Hildebrand quotes this text and comments, "St. Thomas clearly distinguishes the delectability resulting from a value and delectability resulting from the

[72] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 145, a. 4 c.

[73] See St. Thomas, *ST* II–II, q. 186, a. 4, *Contra Gentiles,* III, chs. 130–136, *De Perfectione Vitae Spiritualis,* VIII, *Super Ioannem,* on Jerome's prologue.

[74] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 5, a. 6, ad 2.

merely subjectively satisfying, although he does not use the concept of value."[75] Via Cicero, St. Thomas quotes a passage from Plato in a text already presented above.

> . . . the honorable is itself made desirable inasmuch as it has spiritual beauty. Cicero also says, "You see the form and the face, as it were, of the honorable. If it itself were seen by the eyes, it would stir up amazing loves, as Plato says, of wisdom."[76]

This is an abbreviated quote. The full text (Phaedrus 250c–d) which St. Thomas brings to bear on the honorable good reads.

> Now beauty, as we have said, shone bright among these visions, and in this world below we apprehend it through the clearest of our senses, clear and resplendent. For sight is the keenest mode of perception through the body. Wisdom, indeed, we cannot see by it—how passionate had our desire been for her, if she had granted us so clear an image of herself to gaze upon—nor any other of those beloved objects, except only beauty. For beauty alone this has been ordained, to be most manifest to sense and most lovely of them all.

2. According to Hildebrand, value confronts the person with a *claim* or *call*. It is not left up to our momentary mood whether we give a value its due. A value imposes on us the obligation to give an appropriate response. The manner in which St. Thomas modifies Isidore's definition of "honestum" goes in the same direction. "It seems that something is called honorable *(honestum)* for this reason, that it is worthy of honor *(honore dignum)*. Honor is due to excellence *(excellentiae debetur)*."[77] A similar point holds for delight, as is clear in St. Thomas's account of delight as a necessary consequence of happiness (see below).

3. Hildebrand finds the quality of the call of value well expressed by St. Augustine's statement, "The austere beauty of Continence . . . was revealed, serene and indeed merry but not debauched, honorably soliciting me to come to her."[78] St. Thomas has a strong sensitivity for the beauty of purity, though his love for it is freer than St. Augustine's since he never felt the anguish of being enslaved to sexual passion.

4. In our response to value, according to Hildebrand, we abandon ourselves and transcend the boundaries of our self-centeredness,

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[75] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 37, note 2.
[76] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 145, a. 2, ad 1.
[77] St. Thomas, *ST* II–II, q. 145, a. 1, c.
[78] St. Augustine, *Confessions,* VIII.11.27, quoted in Hildebrand, Ethics, 38, footnote 2.

while absorption in subjective satisfaction confines us to ourselves. This transcendence is particularly clear in St. Thomas's understanding of charity and of God as a common good (see the conclusion of this essay below).

Hildebrand's distinctive strength lies in being exceptionally alive to values in all their qualitative diversity, and exceptionally alive to the wealth of responses called forth by them in the person. He develops a deep personalist understanding of human subjectivity, in many respects parallel to that of Karol Wojtyla, particularly in the area of love between man and woman.

Nature and Appetitus in St. Thomas

The Origin and Meaning of "Entelechy"

Entelechial Thomism uses the concept of "entelechy" to assert an immanent natural dynamism that "has its end already contained in itself" and only needs to unfold it. This position immanentizes St. Thomas's teleology across the board and psychologizes it in the case of human nature as experienced appeasement. Such an understanding of "entelechy" cannot be derived either from Aristotle or from St. Thomas. For Aristotle, entelechy simply means act as opposed to potency. The Thomism sketched by Hildebrand seems to be based on Hans Driesch rather than on Aristotle or St. Thomas. It is Driesch, not Aristotle or St. Thomas, who has a concept of entelechy as merely factual tendency devoid of any true *telos*.

Hans Driesch (1867–1941) developed the concept of entelechy to refer to an inner organizing power or perfective principle that brings living beings to maturity from within.[79] Aristotle's own understanding of the term is quite different. Aristotle seems to have invented the word *entelecheia* (it is not found before him and rarely after him apart from his commentators) on the basis of the adjective *enteles*, which means perfect. He uses it in a sense close to *energeia*, both terms being usually translated as "act (Latin: *actus*)." "Matter is potency, form is entelechy."[80] It is in this sense that the word appears in the definition of the soul: "The soul is the first entelechy of a natural body having life in it potentially."[81] Aristotle's ancient commentators confirm this reading of entelechy as act. According to Arius Didymus (1st century B.C.), "(Aristotle) said that these principles

[79] See Hans Driesch, *Philosophie des Organischen,* 4th revised ed. (Leipzig: Quelle und Meyer, 1928). especially the long section on entelechy, 283–395. English translation: *The Science & Philosophy of the Organism* (London,: A. & C. Black, 1929).

[80] Aristotle, *De Anima,* 412a.9.

[81] Aristotle, *De Anima,* 412a.27.

were two in number, namely, matter and form. Form he also called entelechy and essence and substance (in the sense of the definition) and actuality."[82] The ancient dictionary *Suda* defines entelechy as "the perfection and the form of the underlying (matter)."[83] St. Thomas reads *entelecheia* in the same way. "[Aristotle] held that it (the soul) was the entelechy, that is, the act or perfection of a natural body."[84]

Driesch seems to have developed his own understanding of "entelechy" on the basis of Aristotle's definition of the soul. It is definitely a step, though an intelligible one, from viewing the soul as the form which accounts for the life of a living being to viewing that same form as an active principle that unfolds a living organism from within as a kind of efficient cause. The most important point to note is that in conformity with the rejection of the final cause widely shared by contemporary biology Driesch developed his account without reference to the causality of the good, that is, without the full Aristotelian teleology in which the good is the cause of causes. It is this absence of the good as true cause that turns up again in Entelechial Thomism as the disastrously ruinous first principle.

In addition to Driesch, Kant seems to play an important role in Entelechial Thomism. It is in Kant that one finds a consistently worked out account of the priority of appetites or inclinations *(Neigungen)*, conceived as mere accidental facts, over the goodness of things.

> All objects of inclinations have only a conditioned value, for if the inclinations and the needs based on them did not exist, their object would be without value.[85]

All inclinations, according to Kant, have this structure. They are the *principium* of the goodness of their object. Hildebrand himself partly follows Kant in describing sensitive appetites such as thirst, as the principle of the importance of their objects. St. Thomas's view is different.

Nature as the Order of the Divine Art

If the good is prior to *appetites*, if it is truly the cause of all causes, then the natures of things and their *appetitus* cannot be described as Drieschian "merely factual tendencies."

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[82] Arius Didymus, *Physica* (fragmenta) III.1–3.3.
[83] *Suda,* Epsilon 1454.1.
[84] St. Thomas, *De spirit. creat.,* 2 c, cf. *Phys.,* III.2.3, *Gen. et corrupt.,* I.5.2.
[85] Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten,* Akademieausgabe, 4.428.

> Nature is nothing else than the order of some art, namely the divine art, placed within things, by which things move to a definite end. [86]

God places the order of his art into his creation as the nature within things so that different things incline from within to their end. St. Thomas distinguishes three forms of *appetitus*, each one a reflection of the divine art. One of these three is the rational *appetitus*, rational in the sense of being based on knowledge. It can only incline toward a good *as known*. It cannot arise automatically, outside of the person's understanding of something as good. It arises only inasmuch as a person understands something as good. Entelechial Thomism interprets St. Thomas's concept of *appetitus* in general as a drive that arises within human beings from behind *(a tergo)* their free rational self without being engendered by a known good. According to St. Thomas, such being engendered by a rationally known good is precisely the specific difference of the *appetitus rationalis* in comparison with others. Here is how St. Thomas distinguishes the three kinds of *appetitus*:

> Since all things come forth from the divine will, all incline toward the good, but in different ways.
>
> Some incline toward the good only by a natural disposition, without knowledge, such as plants and inanimate bodies. And such an inclination toward the good is called natural *appetitus*.
>
> Some incline toward the good by some knowledge, yet not in such a way that they know the *ratio* of good itself, but they know some particular good, e.g., sensation, which knows what is sweet and white and anything of this kind. The inclination which follows this knowledge is called sensible *appetitus*.
>
> Some incline to the good with a knowledge by which they know the very *ratio* of good, which only the intellect can do. And these incline most perfectly to the good, not only as directed by another to the good like those that lack knowledge, nor only to a good in the particular like those in which there is only sense knowledge, but inclining, as it were, to the universal good itself. And this inclination is called will.[87]

It is clear according to this text that the rational appetite is an inclination that depends entirely on the good as understood. "[T]he understood good is the proper object of the will. . . ."[88] The rational appetite cannot begin to move in the way Entelechial Thomism claims it does, from behind, *a tergo*.

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[86] St. Thomas, *Physic.,* II.14.8.
[87] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 59, a. 1 c.
[88] St. Thomas, *Contra Gentiles,* I, ch. 81.3.

In St. Thomas's conception, the three orders of natures and the three modes of *appetitus* are *dependent on the good*, though in different ways. God conceives and creates them all on the basis of the prior end, which is his own goodness. To use Hildebrand's way of speaking, the good, which is God himself, is the *principium* of natures in God's creative art, and each nature, as the presence of the divine art in a created being, is in its own way a *principiatum* of the good, ordered to the good rather than the other way around. Everything exists to manifest the glory of God. In the Creator's intention, the glory of God cannot possibly be a mere means of bringing things to a purely immanent and private perfection.

In its threefold use, *"appetitus"* is an analogous notion. The prime analogate in terms of which the other two uses must be understood is the inclination of the will as a rational power, because only reason can know the good as such and incline toward it as good. The other two forms of *appetitus* involve inclinations to the good only inasmuch as they are ordered by reason. The key to understanding all forms of *appetitus* is therefore the movement of the rational *appetitus*, namely, love. According to Entelechial Thomism, lower appetites are the paradigmatic case of *appetitus*. This Thomism takes "some impersonal relationship as a pattern, thereby overlooking the essential personal character of the meaning of these terms" (i.e., terms like *desiderare*, etc).[89] Seifert understands *appetitus* in a similar manner.

> The thesis that the will is an *appetitus* seems to ignore the fact that the person can transcend nature in both discussed senses of "transcendence." For all *appetitus* seems essentially to be some *immanent* striving which simply proceeds from the inner principles of a nature and which only "happens" in man (and thus *appetitus* is the opposite of free self-determination). In addition, *appetitus* seems necessarily to lack the transcendence which is found in those acts of the will in which the person conforms himself to a good *"propter ipsum"* (for its own sake).[90]

Crosby finds that St. Thomas is under "the spell of certain cosmological analogies," which he takes to be present because the very word *appetitus* implies them: "the will is understood as a striving for perfection that has become fully conscious (hence the talk of *appetitus rationalis*, or rational appetite) . . . "[91] The exact opposite is the case. Far from considering

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[89] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 28.

[90] Josef Seifert, "Karol Cardinal Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) as Philosopher and the Cracow/Lublin School of Philosophy," *Aletheia* 2 (1981): 130–99, here 170.

[91] John Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1996), 181.

cosmological analogies the point of departure, St. Thomas understands subrational "cosmological" tendencies, such as the growth of plants, as deriving from God's love of his own goodness, as an echo of God's decision to share this goodness in various ways. The prime analogate of *appetitus* is rational *appetitus* whose first and fundamental act is a rational love motivated by the good as good.

The End of All Natures

In the present context it is helpful to consider some texts in which St. Thomas unfolds his understanding of nature and *appetitus* not only in terms of goodness but also in terms of beauty, since beauty is in some ways more akin to Hildebrand's "value."

> The multitude and distinction of things has been planned by the divine mind and has been set in things, in order that created things would represent the divine goodness in various ways and diverse beings would participate in it in different degrees, so that out of the order of diverse beings a certain beauty would arise in things, a beauty which commends the divine wisdom.[92]

St. Thomas spells out some details of this understanding in his commentary on Denys the Areopagite.

> Denys shows what the account of beauty consists in when he says that God gives beauty inasmuch as he is the cause of harmony and splendor (εὐαρμοστίας καὶ ἀγλαΐας) in all things. . . . Everything is called beautiful inasmuch as it has splendor of its kind, spiritual or bodily and inasmuch as it is made in due proportion.
>
> Denys then shows how God is the cause of splendor by adding that with a certain flash God sends into things a gift of his luminous ray, which is the fountain of all light. These gifts of the flashing divine ray should be understood as a share in likeness (with God). . . .
>
> He also explains the other part, namely, that God is the cause of harmony in things. There is a twofold harmony in things, the first according to the order of creatures to God and he touches this harmony when he says that God turns all things to himself as to the end . . . and for this reason the Greek word for beauty, κάλλος is related to the word for calling, ηαλέω.
>
> The second harmony is in things according to their order to each other. He touches this harmony when he says that God gathers all in all to the same. . . . And because all are found in all according to some order it follows that they are ordered to something one.[93]

[92] St. Thomas, *Compendium,* I.102 end.
[93] St. Thomas, *De div. nom.,* IV.5.339–40.

There is much in this text that deserves lingering over. I want to highlight only one point, namely, Denys's pun on κάλλος (beauty) and καλέω (to call). As St. Thomas interprets the pun, one effect of God's beauty is that through His creative act according to the paradigm of beauty, God harmonizes all things with Himself by calling all things toward Himself, by turning them and attuning them in their innermost nature to the end which is He Himself.

St. Thomas frequently turns to a passage from the Wisdom of Solomon according to which God's wisdom " . . . orders all things sweetly *(disponit omnia suaviter)*" (Wisdom 8:1) to the one ultimate end of each being and the whole universe, which is God's glory.

> God provides for natural creatures in such a way that he not only moves them to their natural acts, but also bestows on them certain forms and powers that are the principles of acts, in order that they might incline to such movements of themselves. And in this way the movements to which they are naturally moved by God become connatural and easy, as the Book of Wisdom says, he "orders all things sweetly." Much more, therefore, does he pour into those whom he moves to the attainment of a supernatural eternal good certain supernatural forms and qualities, in accord with which they are moved sweetly and promptly by him to the attainment of the eternal good.[94]

All harmony *among* creatures is gathered up by this call to one single end, which must therefore be an all-encompassing common good. If the wisdom and power of the creator is truly present in his creation, the diverse natures of his creatures must be suited most deeply to this overall harmony. Nature cannot be a principle opposed to the divine order and its all-encompassing common good of manifesting God's glory.

> Even by natural *appetitus* or love every particular being loves its own good because of the common good of the whole universe, which is God. This is why Denys says in his book *On the Divine Names* that God turns all things to the love of himself. Therefore, in the state of nature's wholeness, man referred his love of himself to the love of God as to the end, and likewise his love of all other things. And therefore he loved God more than himself and above all things. But in the state of corrupted nature, man fell short of this (love) with respect to the *appetitus* of his rational will. Due to the corruption of nature, (this *appetitus*) follows the private good unless it is healed by the grace of God.[95]

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[94] St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 110, a. 2 c.
[95] St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 109, a. 3 c.

The absolute primacy of God's infinite goodness, this must be reflected in every natural *appetitus* of every being inasmuch as it is truly *natural*. This primacy must be reflected in *all* natures, because the power and wisdom of the creator is truly present in all the natures he creates. The natural inclination of all natural beings cannot be immanent in the sense of not allowing them to transcend themselves to the good in itself. If nature is the order of the divine art placed within things by which things move to a definite end, then that end can only be the true end, namely, God himself, the glory of God's goodness. This must be the deepest and in this sense most immanent direction of nature. Nature remains most at unity with itself when it inclines in this direction. Nature does not need to be overcome or left behind to incline toward this authentic end.

> The whole universe with its single parts is ordained to God as an end, inasmuch as by a certain imitation the divine goodness is represented in them to the glory of God. Still, rational creatures have God as the final end in a special way above this [imitation] since they can attain him by their operation, by knowing and loving.[96]

Yet even this higher mode of being ordered to God follows the same principle of the subordination of all things to the glory of God.

> The other cause [of predestination] is the final cause which is that we might praise and know the goodness of God. This cause is noted in the words, "In praise of the glory of his grace" (Eph 1,6).[97]

Nature or Fallen Nature?

Hildebrand's understanding of the tendencies of our nature is quite different, at least in the context of his reading of Entelechial Thomism.

> If . . . we analyze the soul of man from the point of view of mere factual tendencies, and of the immanent logic in man's nature, we may indeed reach many valuable results, especially concerning the problems of "mental health," but we could never discover the norm which would enable us to distinguish the morally good from the morally evil. We could never see, for example, that selfishness is *contra naturam*; as a matter of fact, exactly the opposite is revealed by a study of the immanent tendencies in man's nature: there is a natural trend of self-affirmation and of striving for the subjectively satisfying. Why should it be more *secundum naturam* to be generous or just than to be avaricious or unjust? No analysis of merely factual tendencies, as of the immanent entelechial movements of the soul, could ever disclose to us that polygamy or even

[96] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 65, a. 2 c.
[97] St. Thomas, *Ephes.,* 1.1.

> debauchery or promiscuity is immoral, nor could it show us that purity or faithfulness is *secundum naturam*.[98]

In apparent agreement with Hildebrand, the *Imitation of Christ* has this to say about "nature" as opposed to "grace."

> Nature is greedy and receives more willingly than it gives. It loves its own and the private. Grace by contrast is pious and common. It avoids what belongs to the individual, is content with little and judges that giving is more blessed than receiving.[99]

Hildebrand and Thomas a Kempis must be speaking about fallen nature, not integral nature. Neither of them would agree with Luther, who sees nature as entirely corrupt.

> Man is by nature unable to want God to be God. Indeed, he himself wants to be God, and does not want God to be God. To love God above all things by nature is a fictitious term, a chimera . . . No act is done according to nature that is not an act of concupiscence against God.[100]

Luther's understanding of nature seems to turn up again in Kant's understanding of inclinations *(Neigungen)*.

> All inclinations *(Neigungen)* together—they may be brought into a tolerable system in which case their satisfaction is called "one's own happiness"—are self-seeking *(Selbstsucht, solipsismus)*. This self-seeking is either that of self-love, of a benevolence toward oneself that surpasses everything *(philautia)* or that of delight in oneself *(arrogantia)*.[101]
>
> The principle of one's own happiness, which some set up as the highest principle of morality, forms a curious contrast with the commandment (i.e., "Love God above all and your neighbor as yourself"). The commandment would have to be rephrased: Love yourself above all, and God as well as your neighbor for the sake of yourself.[102]

Entelechial Thomism seems to be based on such a Kantian understanding of *appetitus = Neigung = self-referential immanence of self-love*. No *appetitus*, no *Neigung* in this sense can be instilled by the creator's creative art in the

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98 Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 185–86.

99 Thomas a Kempis, *De imitatione Christi,* 3.54.

100 Martin Luther, *Disputation against Scholastic Theology,* theses 17, 18 and 21; in Harold T. Grimm and H. T. Lehmann, eds., *Luther's Works, Vol. 31: Career of the Reformer* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1957) 10.

101 Immanuel *Kant, Kritik der praktischen Vernunft, Akademieausgabe,* 5.73.

102 Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft,* 5.83.

nature of his creatures. It would be contrary to the objective purpose of the whole universe, which is God's glory.

Hildebrand *does* develop an authentic sense in which human nature is ordered to the good.

> Only if we liberate ourselves from a merely immanent conception of man and include in the nature of man his being destined to realize moral values, only then can we rightly say that all, at least all natural, morally good actions are *secundum naturam*. . . .If, therefore, the term *secundum naturam* is meant to include conformity with moral goodness, then it is based on a conception of nature which includes the relation between man and the world of moral values, as well as the fact that man is ordered to these values and their call.[103]

Yet Hildebrand hesitates to root such an ordination in the innermost *nature* of human beings, in the innermost *natural tendencies* of that nature. The possibility that at this core of nature one might get trapped in "immanent trends," like the Drieschian entelechies or Kantian *Neigungen*, is apparently too great a danger.

> Man's sensitivity to values is precisely the capacity to grasp things important in themselves, to be able to be affected by them, and to be motivated by them in his responses. It is precisely the capacity to *transcend* the frame of mere immanent trends. To interpret it as merely immanent because it belongs to man's nature is an error based on the equivocation of the term "rooted in man's nature"; and this leads to a contradiction which could be formulated: the *transcendence* of man is something *immanent* to man's nature.[104]

A contradiction! It depends on what exactly one means by "immanent to human nature." If "immanent trend" means that I use everything outside myself as a mere means for a self-perfection that has the point of reference or principle of goodness in myself alone, then it would be a contradiction to say "the transcendence of man is something immanent to man's nature." If "immanent" means "corresponding to the deepest level within the nature as that toward which the nature inclines from within," then it is not a contradiction to say that the perfection of my nature lies in transcendence. Why should one deny an immanent ordering to a transcendent good merely because the ordering is immanent? Is the deepest center of the nature of things, the presence of the divine art in them, to be cut off from all transcendent good in the manner of Kant's inclinations? "My own

[103] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 186–87.
[104] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 221.

perfection" is that for which I am most profoundly made, namely, that as part of a great whole of all material and spiritual creation God's glory becomes manifest in me, *ad majorem dei gloriam*. This is the common good of the universe and therefore the ultimate reason for every natural inclination. This is what everything seeks in seeking its own perfection. If this were not my own perfection, the creator would have failed to imprint his art in my innermost nature.

Happiness

Does this reading of St. Thomas not overlook one important point, namely, his teaching that happiness is the final end? If happiness is the final end, how can one be truly motivated by any intrinsic good? How, in particular, can the glory of God be the final end? Does not the unavoidably self-referential nature of happiness reduce all the goodness that motivates me to something merely good *for me* in the sense of leading to my happiness? Does one not see here, at least, that St. Thomas fails to understand "good in itself" and locks the human person in an immanent striving? Hildebrand's objections again go back to Kant.

> The principle that we act for the sake of our own happiness is most reprehensible—not only because it is false and because experience contradicts the assumption that well-being *(Wohlbefinden)* is always determined by morally good action *(Wohlverhalten)*, not only because it contributes nothing to the foundations of morality since it is something altogether different to make a happy man and a good man, to make a man who is clever and sharp in pursuing his advantage and to make him virtuous—but because it gives motives *(Triebfedern)* to morality that undermine it and destroy its entire dignity *(Erhabenheit)* by placing the motives for virtue together with the motives for vice in a single category and simply teaches one to calculate the outcome more cleverly, thereby destroying the specific difference between them altogether. Moral feeling, this supposed special sense (though it is shallow to appeal to such a feeling . . .) is closer to morality and its dignity *(Würde)* inasmuch as it gives to virtue the honor of considering her the cause of delight and esteem and inasmuch as it does not tell her to her face that it is not her beauty, but only advantage *(Vortheil)*, that binds us to her.[105]

In the *Breve Cum alias ad apostolatus* (1699) against Archbishop Fénelon, the very first of Fénelon's errors is formulated as follows.

> There is a habitual state of the love of God which is pure charity, without any admixture of motives of one's own interest. . . . God is no

[105] Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten,* 4.442–3.

> longer loved for the sake of merit, nor for the sake of perfection, nor for the sake of the happiness that can be found in loving him.[106]

Despite his Kantian critique of St. Thomas, Hildebrand by no means agrees with Fénelon. He does not exclude the motive of happiness from the love of God. In fact, he gives a powerful argument *for* the absolutely essential role of happiness.

> The love for God is the value response *par excellence*, the most transcendent act of man and the most objective. There is, however, a new dimension of abandonment *(Hingabe)*, there is an even more personal commitment, if God is not only the absolute good in himself, but also the absolute good for us. It would be a grave error to think that the attitude toward God would be less abandoning *(hingebend)*, less value response, if God is also my absolute good, the source of blessedness *(Seligkeit)*. This would only be the case if one did not give first place to the value response to God's infinite holiness, glory and majesty, to total abandonment to God and his holy will, to a burning love for God's honor and glorification *(Verherrlichung)*. The response to God as the absolute objective good for me, which grows out of the response to God's infinite holiness and beauty, is as such an increase in a very definite direction. It is so great an interest in the infinite glory of God, that this glory becomes my blessedness. It is such a profound stirring of the soul by God's glory that it forms my own personal life down to its last root, that it becomes also most profoundly "subjective" due to his objective infinite beauty.[107]

This magnificent text shows that Hildebrand by no means excludes happiness, but develops a deep personalist understanding of subjectivity in connection with happiness as part of the creature's self-abandonment or gift of itself to God. The supreme expression of this self-abandonment is the glorification of God.

Two Senses of Happiness

It would, however, be a mistake to seek a general reconciliation with St. Thomas on the question of happiness in this precise point as Hildebrand formulates it. One cannot turn the happiness Hildebrand is speaking about into a final end, not even when it is clear in the end that such happiness is an essential part of the creature's self-transcendence.

> Again, self-centered happiness alone can be directly intended. Authentic happiness, on the contrary, by its very nature cannot be the end of

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[106] Innocent XII, *Cum alias ad apostolatus,* 1, Denzinger-Schönmetzer, 2351.
[107] Hildebrand, *Wesen der Liebe,* 164.

> our actions, but it is definitely a gift bestowed on us when we abandon ourselves to a good endowed with a genuine value. Ultimate authentic happiness can only be the object of a general longing, but not the primary motive of our actions and desires. It presupposes precisely that we abandon ourselves to a good possessing a genuine value *for its own sake*.[108]

Hildebrand is completely correct here since he understands happiness not as the complete human good but as a particular good, namely, a pervasive state of delight.

> The delight and emotion which we experience in witnessing a noble action or in gazing at the beauty of a star-studded sky essentially presupposes the consciousness that the importance of the object is in no way dependent on the delight it may bestow on us. Indeed, this bliss arises from our confrontation with an object having an intrinsic importance. . . . Thus, this difference between the bliss emanating from the sheer existence of a value and the pleasure accruing from the subjectively satisfying is itself not a difference of degree, but a difference of kind: an essential difference. A life which consisted in a continuous stream of pleasures, as derived from what is merely subjectively satisfying, could never grant us one moment of that blissful happiness engendered by those objects possessing a value. The difference between the self-centered pleasure propounded by Aristippus as the only true good, and the happiness for which Socrates and Plato strived, is therefore not a difference of mere degree but of kind of essence.[109]

In this text, the concepts "happiness" and "bliss" gravitate toward the *bonum delectabile*, or more precisely, toward *delectatio* itself—toward pleasure, joy, and delight—particularly when these permeate one's life as a whole as an enduring affective state. Self-centered happiness consists in subjective satisfaction, such as bodily pleasure and the satisfaction of pride. Genuine happiness consists in a pervasive and encompassing experience of joy and delight effected in us by some value. Happiness could be defined as a spiritual affective state. It is superabundant in the sense of flowing from what is the principal good in question.

St. Thomas is emphatic that this is *precisely not* what he means by happiness. Delight, he argues, *is not* the essence of happiness, but, quite parallel to Hildebrand, something flowing from the good that is the essence of happiness.

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[108] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 309.
[109] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 36.

> Since bodily pleasures are known to many, they have taken over the name delight, as Aristotle says in Ethics VII, even though there are more powerful joys. Nevertheless blessedness does not consist even in these.
>
> For in every thing, what belongs to its essence is distinct from what is some proper accident of it, as in man being a mortal rational animal is something other than being capable of laughter.
>
> One must keep in mind that every delight is a certain proper accident which follows blessedness or some part of blessedness. For someone takes delight when he has some good fitting for him, either in reality or in hope or at least in memory. The fitting good, if it is perfect, is man's blessedness. If it is imperfect, it is a certain participation in blessedness either near or distant or at least apparent. And so it is clear that not even the delight that follows the perfect good is the very essence of blessedness. It is something following the essence as an accident following the essence.[110]

St. Thomas does not assert that happiness in Hildebrand's sense is the final goal of human life. He explicitly asserts the opposite. Crosby's reading is closer to St. Thomas on this point than Hildebrand's. Speaking of "objective good for the person," Crosby writes,

> It seems that this kind of good was recognized in the Aristotelian tradition under the name of *eudaimonia*, or happiness understood as the all-encompassing well-being of the person. It is very close to the *bonum* of St. Thomas.[111]

All-encompassing well-being clearly includes more than simply joy and delight. Yet even Crosby's definition is not an accurate rendering of St. Thomas's meaning. In order to understand what St. Thomas means by "happiness" one must approach it from a different angle altogether, namely, from a general account of "end."

A General Account of End

An important clarification of terms is necessary. When Hildebrand speaks about end, what he has typically in mind is the relation between instrumental means and end, for example, medicine as a means to health.[112] The means are typically efficient causes or imperfect beginnings that do not themselves contain the goodness of the end. Following Aristotle, St. Thomas understands the word "end" much more broadly, quite in general as "that for the sake of which." For example, truth is the end of

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[110] St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 2, a. 6 c.

[111] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 199.

[112] See Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 221, last paragraph.

the activity of the mind. "The good of the intellect is the true, which is its end and perfection."[113] As Hildebrand uses "end," one could not call truth the end of thought in precisely this way. Some means-end relation or development would have to be involved. For example, in the Pythagorean theorem, one moves step-by-step to the conclusion that in a right-angled triangle the square on the side opposite the right angle equals the sum of the squares on the other two sides. The thoughts invested in the many steps are Hildebrandian means. The thought that rests in the conclusion is the end, as Hildebrand uses the term. According to Hildebrand, one could call truth an end only in this sense.

Even that perfect thought of the conclusion has an end in the way St. Thomas uses this term. The truth of the conclusion is the end of the thought that considers the conclusion. The thought whose end lies in this truth is here clearly not a means for an end, nor an earlier stage of development, but an act which attains an end. In fact, the end defines the very nature of the act.

This defining power of the end holds not only in the order of truth just considered, but also in the order of good. Human acts receive their specific nature from the proximate end which the agent intends.[114] When the act involves both an interior act of the will and an exterior act, the specific nature of the human act derives from the end as intended in the inner act of will.[115] To take an example that is one of Hildebrand's favorites, when I justly admire an excellent person, my act is defined as a human act of justice by what I intend, namely, both my voluntary act of admiration itself with its external expression and the justice that results from it as an objective state of affairs.

The Final End of Just Acts

Every particular human act in this present life, whatever good may be contained in it, is a partial good. If I act now for the sake of justice by giving honor to a person I admire, my will cannot be restricted to that particular act and the particular justice it brings about. If I want to do what is just now, *precisely because it is just,* I necessarily have a more universal love for justice that goes beyond this particular act. otherwise I would not love this particular act *precisely because it is just*. I do what is just *now*, because I want to do it both today and tomorrow and in my whole life, whenever the occasion presents itself. Crosby expresses this point clearly when he speaks about "the transcendence that persons achieve by choosing a *life* of

[113] St. Thomas, *Sent.,* III.23.2.3C c, cf. *De veritate,* I.10 ad 4.
[114] See St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 1, a. 6.
[115] See St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 18, a. 6.

value response and turning away from a *life* centered around the merely agreeable."[116] More is at stake in each act than simply this one act. A whole life is at stake and, in fact, even more than a whole life.

Doing what is just now is, therefore, *a means* for doing justice more universally. This is in no way to instrumentalize the particular act of justice for other beneficial purposes. When one compares a particular just act as a means in this sense with the end of a more comprehensive doing of justice, one can see that the means shares in the good of the end. In fact, the means is the very same good, namely, justice, but it is only *one particular participation* in the more universal good. Inasmuch as it is only a particular good, it is related to the greater whole as means to end. (Again, "means" has a wider sense here than it does in Hildebrand.)

In the light of this means-end relation, one can clarify an implication of the truth that a more universal love for justice is a necessary *condition* for loving a particular act of justice. I *must first* love the more encompassing end of justice for my whole life *if* I am to love the individual act of justice. The sense of "first" in this statement is not chronological, but refers to an order between prior and posterior ends. If I stopped loving the more universal end, I would stop loving every particular act as means, and I would stop acting justly in the particular. I must love the particular act precisely *as a means* if I am to love it at all. The particular act is *per se ordered to* a more ultimate end.

When I actually act, the series of more and less universal ends cannot contain only comparatives in which a less universal love simply points to a more universal love, which again points to a more universal love, and so forth indefinitely. The superlative is required: *most* universal, *most* encompassing. Unless I love doing justice in some final and definitive way, I cannot love justice and I am unable to perform any particular just act.

What, exactly, is this most encompassing end? If I say it is doing justice in my whole life, that is not enough, since my whole life from birth to death is a fragment. As a fragment, it is not a total and all-encompassing good, but itself a means. If I restricted my love for justice to the acts of justice I can perform in this life, I would have stopped loving justice. The most universal whole can remain rather indistinct in people's mind. It is nevertheless infallibly implicit when anyone acts justly and does so for the right reason, namely, that it is just.

What I have argued so far applies to all human beings, regardless of their views on whether there is a God. This point is important, if we now take a step with Hildebrand that clarifies the implications of the last end

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[116] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 186, emphasis added.

of justice. Hildebrand himself offers a convincing analysis of the relation between particular acts and the ultimate end of the moral life, although he still rejects the language of "means-end."

> Living for God, willing to conform to Him in every single situation, doing what is pleasing to him: this direction of life (expressed in Augustinian terms) does not at all imply that we consider a concrete moral value in a concrete situation to be related to God as a means to an end. On the contrary, every morally relevant value, in its relation to God (the Source of all goodness, the Infinite Goodness Itself), may be compared to a ray of the sun in its relation to the sun itself; it is a special reflection of God's infinite goodness. In willing what is good by its very nature (i.e., justice, purity, humility, veracity, and charity) we find in these values a reflection of the infinite justice, purity, and charity of God. In responding to their value, we do not consider them as means for attaining God. Rather, we conform to them for their own sake and thereby conform ultimately to God Himself, the Source of these values.[117]

What, exactly, is the means-end relation which Hildebrand considers and rejects in this text? He speaks first of relating a concrete moral act in a concrete situation as means to God as end. He then clarifies what he means when he adds, "In responding to their value, we do not consider them as means *for attaining* God" (emphasis added). This particular understanding of the means-end relation fits with Hildebrand's general tendency in speaking about means and end. When he raises the possibility that moral acts might be means, he conceives them as means inasmuch as they produce something distinct from themselves, namely, attaining God, perhaps in the form of a reward.

Let us leave aside this question of the reward, of eternal beatitude, for the moment, and focus on doing the just act because it is just. Hildebrand implicitly affirms another sort of means-end relation, provided one uses these terms as St. Thomas uses them. When I love a particular act of justice and perform it for the sake of justice, I implicitly love God and intend to live my *whole* life justly *before him*, not only before the particular demand of justice which I encounter in a particular moment. As Hildebrand says, I must conform to the particular demand of justice for its own sake, but in doing so I conform ultimately to God. My conformity to the particular demand of justice here and now is a means by which I tend toward a more encompassing good, namely, conformity to God in my life considered as a totality beyond the fragmentary character of my present life.

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117 Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 305.

To use a just act as a means for this last end is in no way to instrumentalize the act for something outside itself. It does not become a "mere means" because it itself contains the goodness of the end, even if only as a particular fragment. There is no contrast whatsoever between performing the particular act for the sake of justice and performing it for the sake of the last end of living a totality of life as a just life *in conspectu dei*. Quite on the contrary, in every particular act of justice, this last end is present as the true and ultimate reason why I do what I do, even if I do not clearly grasp this last end. Every just act is ordered through itself (per se) to this end.

Improper and Proper Self-Reference

> When we love what is lovable and show respect for what is worthy of respect, we are acting for the sake of the value and not, or at least not in the same way, for the sake of our selfhood. . . . What a value calls for from me is not my self-affirmation performed with reference to the value, but rather the affirmation of the value for its own sake.[118]

Crosby's insistence on excluding inappropriate self-referential interest is entirely correct as far as it goes. More, however, needs to be said. There is a necessary self-referential element in a moral act which need not, and in fact *cannot*, be rejected. My intention in doing what is just cannot remain neutral: "A just action is objectively called for and should be performed." I must will *myself* to act justly. I must consider the just action *my end* and *my good*. This necessary self-referential aspect of every moral act must be understood both in terms of my nature and of myself as an individual person here and now. Justice is not a fitting good for a dog because a dog does not have reason and will. "A just action should be performed" does not address itself to dogs. Justice is specifically a perfection of a rational nature. Yet even this is not enough. I cannot merely say, "A just action is called for and should be performed by a rational being." In the end, if my thought about justice is to be a practical thought and issue into an act, I must see the moral act as fitting *for myself* in particular at a given moment. *Nota bene,* it is the just action itself and its inherent goodness that I must consider my good. In this scenario one cannot draw a contrast between Hildebrand's "value" and "objective good for the person." One cannot say, "If you do this just act because you consider justice *your good*, objectively good *for you*, you are just doing it for yourself. You are merely seeking your self-perfection."

Scheler reasons in this way against those who say moral goodness can be directly intended.

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[118] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 185.

> Whoever does not want to do good to his neighbor in such a way that his concern is the realization of the neighbor's good, but only uses the occasion for himself "being good" or "doing good" in this act—such a person is not good and does not truly do the good, but remains a kind of Pharisee who merely wants to look good in his own eyes.[119]

Scheler's claim is understandable as a way of resisting the opposite claim by Kant.

> The moral and thus categorical imperative . . . must abstract from any object, the object having no influence at all on the will, lest that practical reason be reduced to merely serving an interest foreign to it, in order that it may prove its own imperious dignity *(Ansehen)* as the highest law. For example, I must seek to make others happy not because their happiness is of interest to me (whether on the basis of inclination or some delight that influences me indirectly through my reason), but only because the maxim which excludes this happiness cannot be understood as a universal law within one and the same will.[120]

Kant reduces himself to the absurd in this statement. His formalism compels him to eliminate all motives of morality except the logical form of making one's maxim the universal norm for all wills. It then becomes a matter of indifference whether I am interested in the happiness of my neighbor at all. I do moral good without willing any good.

An example can show, however, that Scheler is not right either. In the climate of antagonism between the Orthodox Church and Greek Catholics in Romania, some Orthodox argue: "When the Communist regime began to persecute the Church, you Uniate priests abandoned your flock. You insisted on remaining loyal to the Pope and so you were put in prison. You were more interested in your own personal moral goodness than in the welfare of your flock. This is why we should keep your churches. The flock is ours." This piece of cynical sophistry protecting private power interests in the name of the common good shows an utter lack of understanding for moral goodness. If I consider a just act *my good*, precisely for the reason that it is just, then I am not ordering the just act to myself, but I am ordering myself to it and its demand.

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[119] Max Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik: Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus,* 7th ed. (Bonn: Bouvier, 2000), 48. English translation: *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism* (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1973), 27.

[120] Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten,* 4.441.

The self-referential quality which Crosby rightly rejects seems to be connected once again with the question of *principium* and *principiatum*. The preposition "for" in the phrase "good *for* me" seems to have two meanings that must be distinguished. "For" can be understood in the sense of ordering something to myself, ordering it to some personal interest which exists in me already before I hear the demand of justice, or which is at least distinct and independent from that demand and then becomes the real reason why I act justly. It is right to reject such motives as the exclusive or principal motives for acting justly. One cannot serve justice merely "for pay." Love for justice cannot be self-referential in this way. Justice must itself be the main reason for acting justly.

The point is similar to the fundamental principle of sexual morality that I must not use another person as a mere means for pleasure, but must recognize and love the dignity and beauty of the other in herself or himself. Hildebrand quotes a text in which St. Augustine defines temperance as, "a love that gives itself whole to the beloved" *("amor integrum se praebens ei quod amatur.")*[121] St. Augustine transfers this demand of a wholeness of gift also to the love of God, which must be chaste in exactly the same way.

> God wants to be worshiped and loved without payment, that is, to be loved chastely, to be loved not because he gives something other than himself, but because he gives himself.[122]
>
> If I said, "God has promised gold!" you would be delighted. He promised himself, and you are sad? If a rich man does not have God, what *does* he have? Don't seek anything from God except God. Love him without payment. Ask him for him himself. Don't be afraid of poverty. Let him give himself to us and let this be enough for us.[123]

The Definition of Happiness as Final End

How is St. Thomas's concept of happiness related to "final end" in the analysis of justice offered above? Is St. Thomas's thesis that happiness is the final end compatible with the insistence that justice must be done for its own sake? At the beginning of his discussion of happiness, Aristotle distinguishes between an aspect of happiness on which there is agreement between people and an aspect on which there is disagreement.

> Let us resume our inquiry and state, in view of the fact that all knowledge and choice aims at some good, what it is that we say political science

[121] St. Augustine, *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae,* I, CCL 261.1322, see Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 459.

[122] St. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos,* Psalm 52, par. 8.

[123] St. Augustine, *Sermo* 331, PL 38, 1461, emphasis added.

> aims at and what is the highest of all goods as far as human acts are concerned. As to the name, most people are in agreement; for both the many and superior people say that it is happiness, and identify living well and acting well with being happy; but with regard to what happiness is they differ, and the many do not give the same account as the wise.[124]

If Aristotle understood the word "happiness" as Hildebrand (following Kant) understands it, namely as a pervasive experienced state of delight and joy, then the question "What is happiness?" would be settled from the outset. The only remaining question would be "What is the source of happiness? What *makes* me happy?"—and that is a very different question. Aristotle is unambiguously clear on this point. The disagreement between people lies in their understanding of "what" happiness is, τί ἐστιν.

What then is the essential content of the word "happiness" on which, Aristotle claims, people agree? This is an extremely important question, because according to Aristotle and St. Thomas, everyone desires happiness in this sense, not in the more determinate sense of happiness that emerges once the question—"What is happiness?"—is answered. In the text just quoted Aristotle formulates the meaning of the common notion happiness first as the answer to "What is the highest of all goods as far as human acts are concerned?" People commonly answer this question, he points out, by saying, εὐδαιμονία. Why do they answer in that way? It is because the common notion of happiness can be defined as "living well and acting well, τὸ εὖ ζῆν καὶ τὸ εὖ πράττειν." What is striking about these two phrases is that they are extremely general. The concept "living" encompasses everything that takes place in a specifically human existence. The verb πράττειν is less clear. It could be translated as "doing" in the sense of acting, or as part of the idiom εὖ πράττειν, which has a close English parallel, namely, "doing well" (in a wider sense than being "well-to-do," which usually refers to financial prosperity). Either way, the import of εὖ πράττειν seems to be close in universality to "living," while focusing more immediately on human acts, which is appropriate for ethics.

Even more important than these two words is the true operative term of the definition, namely, well (εὖ). "Well" is exactly as general as "good" since it is simply the adverbial form of "good." Crosby pinpoints the most general of all senses of "good."

> I follow von Hildebrand in recognizing a certain positivity common to all the kinds of good, common to value, to the merely agreeable, and common to whatever other kinds of good one can distinguish. Von Hildebrand calls by the name of *positive importance* this positivity in

[124] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1095a.17–22.

> virtue of which an object can interest us. Positive importance does not express a kind or category of goodness, but rather a trans-categorial goodness; this is the object of the will, that without which the will cannot be attracted or moved.[125]

"Living well" should not be taken in a specific sense of goodness, such as living morally or eating the right food or enjoying health. Not all people agree on these specific senses of "well." They do by nature agree on some construal of "well," a fact reflected in Hildebrand's thesis that some kind of transcategorial goodness is necessary for the will to be attracted or moved. This is a question of nature, not of choice.

One further important point is implicit in Aristotle's definition "living well and acting well." This definition is to be taken without any further qualification or specification such as living well here or there, living well now or then, living well intellectually as opposed to morally, and so on. It is to be taken in the most unqualified and therefore most universal and encompassing sense. Nothing that is in any way good in a human life can fall outside "living well" in this broad sense. For this reason "living well" has the character of a final end. It cannot be desired for anything else since it is absolutely comprehensive. For this reason, the common notion of happiness can be defined as "final end."

In Question One of the *Prima secundae*, St. Thomas gives a similar account of the common notion of happiness. What characterizes the common notion, he says, is the aspect or *ratio* of *final end*, nothing more and nothing less. Distinct from this common notion are two more specific ways of understanding happiness that emerge when one answers two further questions. In what is the aspect of final end truly found? The second is Aristotle's question, What is happiness? St. Thomas is most emphatically clear that his thesis—"Everyone desires happiness!"—applies to the common notion, not to the more determinate understanding of happiness.

> We can speak about the last end in two ways, in one way according to the *ratio* of final end, in another way according to that in which the *ratio* of final end is found. As far as the *ratio* of last end is concerned, all agree in the *appetitus* for the last end because all desire to fulfill their perfection, which is the account of the last end, as was said above.[126]

Argument for the Natural Desire for Happiness

On this basis, the argument for the natural desire for happiness can proceed. The first premise is the inescapable *nature* of the human will. It is a power

[125] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 182, footnote 9.
[126] St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 1, a. 7 c.

that can direct itself to something *only if* some aspect of good is present: "our positive will necessarily presupposes an object endowed with a positive importance."[127] "Positive importance does not express a kind or category of goodness, but rather a transcategorial goodness; this is the object of the will, that without which the will cannot be attracted or moved."[128]

A second premise is needed, one relating to reason rather than will. It follows from the inescapable nature of our reason that we human beings grasp particular beings by universal notions such as "being" and "good." This is not a mode of knowing we choose, but we receive it together with our nature. We therefore understand that every particular being and every particular good only participates in being and goodness and does not exhaust the notions "being" and "good." "A being" is one being among others, participating in being together with others without in any way exhausting the possibilities of being.

It follows from this natural way of knowing characteristic of the human mind that when we direct ourselves to a particular good by our will, we infallibly grasp that good as merely one particular instance of good. This conclusion follows already from the most universal transcategorial notion of "good" of which Crosby rightly says, "this is the object of the will, that without which the will cannot be attracted or moved."[129] When we direct ourselves toward a particular good precisely *inasmuch as* it is a particular example of good, a more universal love for the good is necessarily at work. Unless we love good more in general, we cannot love the particular good. "For the object (of the will) is the universal good, just as the object of the intellect is the universal being."[130]

One can express the same truth also in terms of "end," taking "end" in the broad sense in which all human actions are directed toward an end. What we saw to be true of willing justice is true of all human willing. Unless I direct myself to a particular good for the sake of a more comprehensive end, I cannot direct myself to that particular good at all. For example, if I direct myself to eating right now because I see eating as good, I can only do so because I love this good as a particular falling under the more general notion of good. The more comprehensive end is what moves the will in a particular case. Only if I regard eating now as a means to a more encompassing end can I love eating now at all, and actually eat now.

This order among ends and means requires an end that is first in intention, since one cannot indefinitely add necessary causes in an infinite

[127] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 306.
[128] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 182, footnote 9.
[129] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 182, footnote 9.
[130] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 105, a. 4 c.

series. Willing could not begin if there were no end that is first in intention (even if last in execution). The most universal and all-encompassing end is the one that corresponds to the most universal and all-encompassing notion of "good," which Crosby calls "positive importance" or "trans-categorial goodness." Since the will can only direct itself when it directs itself by the power of this most universal notion, it can only direct itself to a particular good because it loves a final and all-encompassing end. This is what is meant by happiness. Therefore the will can only direct itself to a particular good if it directs itself to it as a means for happiness.

What must be emphasized at this point is the indeterminacy of the natural and infallible love for happiness. Apart from "all-encompassing" and "final" one cannot say anything determinate about the end, at least as long as one considers only this natural and necessary structure of willing. Apart from "leading in some way to the end" whether as part of it or as an instrumental means, one cannot say anything determinate about the means.

There is a sense of "self-perfection" which corresponds to this indeterminate final end. When St. Thomas claims "all desire to fulfill their perfection, which is the account of the last end," this does not mean that they desire their "true good" or "objective good for the person" or any other determinate good or mode of goodness. Don Giovanni also desires his self-perfection in this broad sense when he desires pleasure, because he has a universal notion of pleasure.

Crosby does not make the distinction between the common notion of happiness and the determinate notion that emerges in answer to "What is happiness?" For this reason he overdetermines the notion of happiness in his interpretation of Aristotle and St. Thomas.

> I refer with this name (i.e., eudaemonism) to the teaching that each human being always aims only at his own happiness and in fact cannot act without making the attainment of his happiness the main point of his acting. . . . Of course, the happiness of the eudaemonist is not just the satisfaction of any urges or wants; the eudaemonist is not a hedonist. The eudaemonistic idea of happiness, as found, for instance, in Aristotle, is based on the real perfection of human nature, and thus the goods for which the eudaemonist lives are goods in the sense of *bonum* and not in the sense of the merely agreeable.[131]

It is not in this determinate way that, according to Aristotle and St. Thomas, everybody inescapably desires happiness. Don Giovanni is not a eudaemonist in Crosby's sense, but a hedonist, and yet, regardless of his

[131] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 179.

moral condition, the thesis that *all* human beings naturally desire happiness and desire every particular good as a means for happiness still applies to him—as it does to the sage and the saint.

> *Leporello:* But we must leave alone the women.
>
> *Don Giovanni:* Leave alone the women? Idiot! For me, I tell you, they are more necessary than the bread I eat, more than the air I breathe.
>
> *Leporello:* And you have the heart to deceive them all?
>
> *Don Giovanni:* It is all love. If you are faithful to one, you are cruel to the others. I sense in myself such an expansive feeling that I love them all. The women cannot understand this and call my good nature deception.
>
> *Leporello:* I have never seen a nature more vast and more well-meaning.[132]

The irony is thick in "good nature" and "well-meaning." Both Don Giovanni and Leporello know that the opposite is the case. Don Giovanni abandons objective standards that would make for an objectively perfected nature or even just plain good sense. It is not in this objective and rational way that he desires happiness.

Nevertheless, the universality of reason is poured out over the whole scene: "It is *all* love." Don Giovanni is truly a *rational* animal. He desires happiness inasmuch as he continues to act by universal notions. He errs about happiness in the choices he makes. That in which the *ratio* of final end is found is, in fact, not the pleasure of erotic encounters. And yet the Don grasps each woman as a case of woman, each pleasure as a case of pleasure, and knows that he will restlessly move on to the next. If he loved only one experience of sexual pleasure in its completely isolated individuality cut off from the universal good, he could and would not love sexual pleasure at all. Only animals can love in this way since only they can grasp particular goods alone, at the total exclusion of the universal good. No human act can take place in this manner.

The natural and infallible love for happiness comes before any moral determination and is retained in all moral determinations, because it is rooted in two inescapable facts of human nature: (1) human knowing involves universal notions, and (2) human willing is by nature directed to the good in the most general sense. The enlightened self-interest of the eudaemonist, which Crosby rightly rejects, is one moral determination. It is one possible answer to the further question, "What is happiness?" Not every human being desires happiness in *this* way. Aristotle is not a eudaemonist in this sense.

[132] Da Ponte/Mozart, *Don Giovanni,* Act II, scene 1.

How is this concept of happiness related to "final end" in the account of justice offered above? Is the thesis that happiness is the final end compatible with the insistence that justice must be loved and done for its own sake? Indeed, it i*s fully compatible*. The thesis that happiness is the final end is simply the more universal form of the thesis that each act of justice, in order to be an act of justice, must involve an ultimate end. Neither the definitive end of doing justice before God nor the more encompassing final end of human life as a whole instrumentalizes moral goodness.

Of course, if one means by "happiness" a spiritual state of pervasive delight and joy, or the comprehensive objective well-being of the person in accord with the human entelechy, then indeed happiness has a self-referential quality that would make it impossible to claim it is the final end.

These more determinate ways of understanding happiness regularly stand behind the alternative that one encounters again and again in discussion with followers of Hildebrand: Either I act justly for the sake of justice, or I act justly for the sake of happiness. If happiness is one particular good among others, as Hildebrand and Crosby take it to be, then the alternative is justified. If happiness is understood as Aristotle and St. Thomas understand that word, then the alternative is mistaken. Doing justice for the sake of justice now and doing justice now for the sake of justice in my whole life are not two diverse things. Doing justice now is through itself (per se) ordered to doing justice more comprehensively. In the same way, seeking justice and happiness are not two diverse things. They are related to each other as seeking a part and seeking a whole. Doing justice is not the whole, but only part of a life lived well. Justice is ordered through itself (per se) to a further goal inasmuch as it is a particular good. Its own goodness as a particular good is what makes of it a means to a further end.

The Choice Between Two Directions of Life

Does this account of happiness as the natural and inevitable final end leave any room for the principal point which Hildebrand's distinction between value and the subjectively satisfying is intended to explain, namely, that we must and do choose between two directions of life in accord with St. Augustine's distinction between two loves? It seems that the choice between the two directions of life is not a choice of mere means to a fixed and established end. It seems to be a choice of a certain kind of end, ultimately God or subjective satisfaction. Human striving, therefore, does not seem to be finalized around one supreme and inescapable end; there seem to be two irreducible, incommensurable ends

and two incommensurable kinds of desire or love. When we choose between them we exercise the most fundamental and far-reaching self-determination that we are capable of.[133]

One can respond that the choice between the two lives is not, on Hildebrand's own terms, a choice between two *ultimate* ends. Hildebrand clearly teaches that there is a general sense of "good" that applies to both lives. This most general sense of good necessarily implies a most encompassing end that is not yet determined by the choice of lives. If one or the other is chosen, it still is *under* the aspect of its being "good" in the most general sense. A natural love of the good is still one of the essential principles of that choice.

More needs to be said, however. There is a truth which Hildebrand expresses by speaking of a choice of final ends. The choice between the two directions of life bears in some way directly on the question of ultimate end. We decide for a particular direction of life when by our concrete choices and actions we answer the two questions, "In what is the *ratio* of final end found?" and "What is happiness?" By his choices and deeds, Don Giovanni *places* the *ratio* of ultimate end in erotic encounters which ultimately answers the question, "*What* is happiness?" by "Subjective satisfaction." "The voluptuous life *places the end in* bodily pleasure (*ponit finem in* delectatione corporali) . . . "[134] "A sinner *places the last end [in something] in* which it is not (*ponit finem ultimum in* quo non est)."[135] "The one who *places his end in* bodily pleasures (qui *ponit finem suum in* voluptatibus corporalibus) considers them best, which is the account of the last end."[136] This "placing" of the end "in" some particular life is not so much a choice of the final end as end. The final end (the common notion of happiness) remains the inevitable object of natural desire. "Placing the end in.." is, rather, a moral determination of the end in the concrete. When I act, I determine concretely *where* "living well" lies for me, and *what* "living well" means for me. Here we are in the sphere of moral good and evil, in which the natural desire for happiness has been turned in a particular direction.

Once this moral determination of the end in the concrete has been made clearly, one can with a certain justification say that the two directions of life have different final ends. Don Giovanni has a different final end (erotic pleasure) than one who honors marriage and loves God. It is not that Don Giovanni has lost his natural desire for happiness, but that

[133] See Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 178–85.
[134] St. Thomas, *ST* II–II, q. 179, a. 2, ad 1.
[135] St. Thomas, I *Sent.,* d. 1, q. 4, a. 1, c.
[136] St. Thomas, *Contra Gentiles,* 4, cap. 92, no. 4.

he has erroneously identified happiness with pleasure, contrary to the truth, due to a voluntary and culpable defect of love. Provided one makes these necessary qualifications and does not identify the natural desire for happiness with any morally determinate ordering of oneself to the final end, one can conclude with Wojtyla.

> An attribute of this [i.e., human nature] is above all the desire for happiness. It is something natural and necessary. Man is unable not to desire happiness. He wills it always and in everything although he does not always name the object of his desires. And precisely for this reason it can seem as if he did not desire happiness, but only strove for the various values with which he is concerned, because he desires happiness in all and through all.
>
> The desire for happiness does not lie on the uppermost surface of willing and even less so on the surface of human acts. It is not difficult, however, to discover it in them and grasp it objectively—nobody will deny that this desire is always alive in the depth of willing.
>
> Ethics can neither reject this fact, not occupy itself with it to the exclusion of all else. According to its nature, Ethics is not the doctrine of happiness, because it is a normative science, while happiness stands outside and above every norm. Happiness is the goal of nature and cannot be an object of choice, while the norm concerns only that which is an object of choice. The object of choice is always a way on which a particular person must walk.
>
> Happiness, by contrast, is not a way, but the goal of all the ways of human beings. It is, therefore, not difficult to agree that in a mediate way Ethics shows human beings the way toward happiness. Aristotle understood the role of happiness in this way, and so does the Gospel.[137]

There is an implicit presence of God in the natural desire for happiness, regardless of the life one chooses to live. Crosby develops this line of thought without explicitly appealing to the concept of happiness.[138] He begins the argument by pointing to "*a restlessness* that we feel in relation to the objects of consciousness, a restlessness typically expressed in the raising of questions about them."[139] One reason for this restlessness lies in the universality of human knowing. When we know particular beings as falling under universal notions like "being" and "good," we grasp that they only participate in being and goodness. The fullness in which they participate is not actually revealed to us in its infinity. Such a revelation would be the

[137] Wojtyla, Karol. "[The Ethical Primer] Die ethische Fibel," in Karol Wojtyla, *Erziehung zur Liebe: Mit einer ethischen Fibel* (Stuttgart-Degerloch: Seewald, 1980) 63–154; here 110–1.

[138] See Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 161–73.

[139] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 161.

vision of God. Nevertheless, we do have a sense of a mysterious fullness from afar. It is only against the background of such infinite fullness that particular beings take on the sharp contours of something understood.

> Indeed, it seems that the things of our experience do not really become *objects* of experience, are not really thrown up in front of us as intentional objects, nor do we really become *subjects* facing them, until we transcend them, reaching beyond them, seeing them against the background of this mysterious infinity.[140]

Crosby's observation can be applied to the natural order of human loving, not only to knowing. A definitive good, mysterious and indeterminate in the fullness of its goodness, always forms the backdrop of our love for particular beings. Without a love that reaches out to this infinity, we could not love any particular beings. This is not to say that a hedonist like Don Giovanni actually orders himself to God. By his choices he excludes God. Although God is ultimately implied in the universal notion "good" he remains profoundly hidden. His existence can be denied both theoretically and practically when one places one's end in something contrary to his goodness. Those who live entirely for the gratification of their bodily cravings and/or of their pride are aiming at goods in a manner that is devoid of any implicit affirmation of God.

In Exodus God says to Moses, "I will make all my goodness pass before you . . . While my glory passes by I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen" (Exod 33:19, 22–23). A similarly veiled presence of the creator is ineradicably inscribed in the natural order of human willing and loving. The natural love for happiness, which is inseparable from having a rational nature and therefore from being a person, is an implicit love of God, who alone is the fullness of goodness. A step takes place when one explicitly understands this natural love as a love of God's goodness and directs oneself deliberately to God. Not everybody takes this step. Some take the opposite step and refuse to affirm God. Not everybody desires happiness in this determinate sense of the word. Nevertheless, the desire for happiness is an implicit love of God. For those who reject God, the implicit presence of God takes the form of a restlessness that drives them beyond any finite good they have achieved. St. Augustine describes this restlessness of his life before his conversion with great clarity in the Confessions. What is ultimately at work in the desire for happiness is the religious sense (Luigi Giussani), at least in the form

[140] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 164.

of restlessness.[141] In the depth of the person, Giussani shows, the religious sense is more a question than an answer. It is the creature's restless openness to the free initiative of God.

In What is the Ratio of Final End Found?

Crosby uses some disturbing superlatives when speaking about moral goodness: "In having moral goodness I . . . gain something that is *supremely good* for me . . ."[142] " . . . that *supreme good* . . . that comes from being morally good."[143] He expresses the point also in the negative, ". . . there is no non-moral evil that harms man as grievously and as ultimately as does moral evil."[144] In the use of such superlatives, Crosby follows Hildebrand.

> The great insight and contribution made by Socrates—foreshadowing those words of our Lord: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his soul?" (Matt. 16:26)—is precisely the insight that moral integrity, because of its value, is a *higher* objective good for the person *than any other good* which bestows pleasure or happiness on us.[145]

Can one say to God in prayer, "My moral integrity is a higher objective good for me than you are?" Most certainly, neither Hildebrand nor Crosby would agree with such a prayer. Granted, there is something uniquely important about moral goodness. Moral integrity is not an optional good. Yet to say it is unconditionally required is still far distant from Hildebrand's superlative. Granted also that Kant is right in some sense when he says, "Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a good will."[146] When one says, "This is a good person," one does not mean, "This is a good runner, or a good thinker, etc." One means, "This person has moral goodness."[147] Only the will can be the subject of virtue without qualification, not the intellect.

> The subject of the permanent disposition that is called virtue without qualification can only be the will, or another power as moved by the

[141] See Luigi Giussani, *The Religious Sense* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University, 1997).
[142] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 233, emphasis added.
[143] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 234, emphasis added.
[144] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 233–4.
[145] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 57, emphasis added.
[146] Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten,* 4.393.
[147] See Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 231.

> will. The reason is that the will moves all other powers that are in some way rational to their acts, as shown above. And for this reason, when a man acts well, this is due to that man having a good will.[148]

Perhaps this is all Hildebrand means when he says, " . . . moral integrity, because of its value, is a *higher* objective good for the person *than any other good* which bestows pleasure or happiness on us." Yet, there remains a disturbing similarity with Kant's idolatrous moralism according to which moral goodness is "the highest good," "the highest and unconditioned good," " . . . its value *(Wert)* surpasses everything."[149] In Kant, God has only a subordinate role as a practical postulate ensuring the coherence of the moral universe. The love of God more than ourselves and above all things as the *summum bonum* in which alone the full *ratio* of final end can be found has faded away in Kant to give way to an idolatrous devotion to moral duty above all things. The thesis that moral integrity, because of its value, is a *higher* objective good for the person *than any other good, including God,* is distinctively the view of Kant, most decidedly not that of Socrates.

> "So these aren't the greatest," he [Adeimantus] said, "but there is something yet greater than justice and the other things we went through?" "There is both something greater," I [Socrates] said, "and also even for these very virtues it won't do to look at a sketch, as we did a while ago, but their most perfect elaboration must not be stinted. . . . (Y)ou have many times heard that the Idea of the Good is the greatest study and that it's by availing oneself of it along with just things and the rest that they become useful and beneficial."[150]

According to Socrates, justice itself only becomes useful and beneficial when it is viewed in relation to the Idea of the Good. Justice becomes useful and beneficial when the surpassing goodness of the Idea of the Good is seen and loved as something infinitely greater than justice. This infinity of goodness is the true end of all action. All love points to this end. Catching a glimpse of it is greater than all else, even justice. In the *Symposium*, Diotima instructs Socrates in the mysteries of love until she finally comes to the vision of the Beautiful itself, αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν.

> At this point of life, dear Socrates, said the stranger from Mantinea, if at any point, it is worth living for a man, when he sees the beautiful itself.[151]

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148 St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 56, a. 3, c.
149 Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten,* 4.402 and 403.
150 Plato, *Republic,* 6, 504d–505a.
151 Plato, *Symposium,* 211d.

The Platonic Socrates is here closer to Aristotle and St. Thomas than to Kant and, apparently, Hildebrand. According to Socrates, *the entire moral order is a means* for reaching the infinite Good itself, the infinite Beautiful itself. Yet, this insistence on the subordinate place of moral goodness is in no way to instrumentalize moral goodness. It remains true that a just act must be performed precisely because it is just. In it, I conform myself implicitly to God. The just act and its implicit love for God must be "chaste." Yet this entire order of goodness in me, my moral goodness, is still a fragment. It is one created good among others. The infinite ocean of divine goodness, which infinitely transcends us, this is the true end of human life.

For St. Augustine and St. Thomas it is of the utmost importance that God, in whom alone the *ratio* of final end is found, be loved as a *common* good. The transcendence of the person with which Hildebrand is rightly concerned is clear, above all, in love for the common good *as common*. This is what most profoundly distinguishes St. Augustine's two loves, love of self to the contempt of God and love of God to the contempt of self.

> These two loves—one of them is holy, the other impure; one is social, the other private; one looks after the common utility for the sake of the society on high, the other because of its arrogant domination carries even the commonwealth back to its own power . . .—have existed already in the angels, one in the good angels, the other in the bad, and have distinguished the two cities founded in the human race. . . .[152]
>
> It is not permissible for us to doubt that the contrasting appetites of the good and bad angels have arisen not from a difference in their nature and origin (for God, the good author and maker of all substances, created them both) but from a differences in their wills and desires. For some remained constantly in that which is the common good of them all: that is, God Himself, and his eternity, truth and love. others, however, delighting in their own power, as if they could be their own good, fell away from that higher and blessed good which was common to all to their private good. . . .[153]

In agreement with St. Augustine, St. Thomas argues that love *(caritas)* is a political virtue, because God is the common good *par excellence*. At the same time he makes clear the self-transcendence of the person in accord with nature.

> The philosopher says in Politics 8 that in order to be a good political person one must love the good of the city. When someone is admitted

[152] St. Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram,* XI.15.
[153] St. Augustine, *De civitate dei,* XII.1.1, PL 41.349.

to participation in the good of some city and becomes a citizen of that city, he must have certain virtues in order to do what a citizen must do and to love the good of the city.

In this way, when a person is admitted by divine grace to participating in blessedness, which consists in the vision and enjoyment of God, he becomes a citizen and member of that blessed society which is called the heavenly Jerusalem, according to Ephesians 2,19: "You are citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." A person who is in this way counted as part of the heavenly city must have certain freely given virtues which are the infused virtues. The right exercise of these virtues requires a love of the common good that belongs to the whole society, which is the divine good as the object of blessedness.

Now one can love the good of a city in two ways: in one way to possess it, in another that it might be preserved. If someone loves the good of a city in order to have and own it, he is not a good political person, because in this way even a tyrant loves the good of a city, in order to dominate it, which is to love oneself more than the city. He wants this good for himself, not for the city.

But to love the good of the city that it might be kept and defended, this is truly to love the city and this makes a person a good political person, so much so that some expose themselves to the danger of death and neglect their private good in order to preserve or increase the good of the city. In the same way, to love the good that is participated by the blessed, to love it so as to have or possess it, does not establish the right relation between a person and blessedness, because even evil people want this good.

But to love that good according to itself, that it may remain and be shared out and that nothing be done against this good, this gives to a person the right relation to that society of the blessed. And this is love *(caritas)* which loves God for his sake and the neighbors, who are capable of blessedness, as oneself.[154]

Let us return to the text quoted at the very beginning of this essay in which Hildebrand draws a contrast between nature and person.

> The capacity to transcend himself is one of man's deepest characteristics. So long as we consider his activities as *the mere unfolding of his entelechy, determined by his nature, or as immanent manifestations of principles proper to his nature,* we fail to grasp the most decisive feature of his character as a person. Man cannot be understood if we interpret all his activities as manifestations of an *automatic striving for self-perfection*. So long as we are confined to this pattern, so long as we see man differing from other beings only by the fact that their objective teleological tendency assumes in him a character of consciousness, we overlook the real nature of *man*

[154] St. Thomas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues,* q. 2, (on charity), a. 2. c.

> *as a person*. It is not an immanent movement, unconscious or conscious, which is man's typical mark. Certainly this also is to be found in man's nature, in the physiological sphere as well as in the psychical. *But the specifically personal character of man as a subject manifests itself in his capacity to transcend himself.* . . . In all immanent trends to unfold our nature, our attitude has the character of self-affirmation; whereas in every value response our attitude has the basic feature of self-donation.[155]

There is in St. Thomas's teaching no human nature trapped in immanent entelechial strivings, though there is a fallen condition of human nature to which that description partly applies. Rational nature, as St. Thomas understands it, reaches its most interior perfection precisely in the radical self-transcendence of the created person for the sake of the common good, which is ultimately identical with God himself. The moral perfection of every created person consists essentially in loving God according to his own superabundant goodness and communicability, which infinitely exceeds all creaturely participation. It consists of utter devotion to the intention that God may remain and be shared out and that nothing be done against his will. Only with such a moral disposition can the creature receive the gift of the vision of God. It is a disposition that does not destroy natural inclinations, but perfects them. There is a complete harmony between nature and person. NV

[155] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 218 and 220, emphasis added.

Book Reviews

Aquinas and His Role in Theology by Marie-Dominique Chenu, OP, trans. Paul Philibert, OP *(Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier/Liturgical Press, 2002)* pp. viii + 149.

IN THE PREFACE to his magisterial study of St. Thomas's life and work, Jean-Pierre Torrell affirms that Marie-Dominique Chenu's work will long remain the primary witness of the renewal in Thomist studies that blossomed in the twentieth century. Torrell contends that Chenu's great achievement was to reinsert Aquinas "into the concrete milieu in which he lived." In his many studies, Chenu not only sketched Aquinas's life within its historical and theological background, he vividly colored his sketch with the spiritual and evangelical principles that animated Aquinas's life and times. Moreover, Chenu inspired a younger generation of scholars to follow his lead. He invited them to fill in the features of the historical portrait he had begun. Torrell, for example, readily admits that his own work "would not even have been thinkable without Chenu."

But the paradox of the inspiring teacher is that the charismatic force of his insights is often the very thing that leads a younger generation to surpass those insights. This fact raises a challenging question for anyone tempted to translate and publish for the first time in English a work written by Chenu in 1959: Why bother? The simple reason is that although his other more technical studies have aged, Chenu's slender volume, *Aquinas and His Role in Theology* remains fresh and valuable. The book is perhaps Chenu's most personal statement of his insights into Aquinas's life and method. With remarkable simplicity, Chenu conveys to the reader the perennial importance of the Thomistic perspective in theology. Perhaps this is why Chenu regarded it as "possibly the best thing I have written."

That forty years passed before anyone ventured an English translation was due to an accident of history to which Chenu himself was so attuned: The book appeared several months before Pope John XXIII surprised everyone by calling an ecumenical council. Chenu rightly

regarded the Council as promoting the very form of theological and spiritual renewal for which he had so long labored. The Spirit who had inspired him and many others to work for renewal during the difficult and often lonely years of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s was bringing their labors to fruition during the heady years of the Second Vatican Council. Yet, paradoxically, the saint who had inspired much of this work of renewal was now regarded by many as outmoded. In the effervescent aftermath of the Council, a younger generation saw Aquinas as hopelessly linked to a passed era. Chenu understood this, but regretted it. He understood it, because he knew that a rigid and deformed version of Thomism had often been taught in the seminaries. Chenu regretted it, however, because he recognized in Aquinas a balanced method whose point of departure was revelation and reason. The book embodies this other form of Thomism, a Thomism that is courageously innovative while retaining a faith-filled attachment to the Magisterium. For Chenu, Aquinas's life and method offer us the ideal model for a theology that both respects reason and remains faithful to revelation.

To convey these insights, Chenu divides his work into eight brief chapters. At the end of each chapter, he appends a well-chosen selection of texts from Aquinas that illustrate the ideas covered in the chapter. The first chapter situates Aquinas in his historical context: At a time of cultural foment, Aquinas chose not to join an established monastic order, but to enter one of the new mendicant orders that were responding innovatively to the changed cultural context of Europe. He became a friar preacher, a Dominican. In chapters two through four, Chenu sketches the theological method that Aquinas both taught and lived. In chapters five and six, Chenu looks more closely at aspects of Aquinas's dogmatic and moral teachings. Chapter seven very briefly outlines the "fate of St. Thomas" and his theology after his death, noting that while his teachings were at first rejected, even being caught in the net of ecclesiastical censure, his theology later received broad support and official Church approval. In his concluding chapter, Chenu describes for the reader the types of Scholastic works Aquinas wrote and the methods that were proper to them.

Chenu emphasizes that Aquinas was a theologian. The focus of his labors was an intellectual reflection on the content of faith as expressed in Scripture and Tradition. It was a reflection animated by the profound confidence that, although the mysteries of faith transcend reason's ability to grasp, they are not inherently irrational. It is here that Chenu notes the ecclesial role of the theologian. In cooperation with the ecclesial Magisterium, "theologians undertake research that is necessary for the spiritual refreshment of believers living in the world" (30). The theologian enjoys an audacious

freedom to express the truths of faith in new ways. Yet, "this is a freedom which is very delicate and which the Church always oversees from its own perspectives of the moment" (ibid.). The theologian, therefore, needs to develop a "religious docility" that is a sure mark of holiness (ibid.).

The issue of holiness leads Chenu to address Aquinas's spirituality. It is a Dominican spirituality, a spirituality rooted in the insight that the intellectual life can be a way to holiness. "At the very heart of the spirituality of Thomas Aquinas rests this conviction: human understanding is a place for holiness, because the Truth is holy" (31). Significantly, Chenu devotes an entire chapter to the role of contemplation in Aquinas's method. Distinguishing contemplation from the public virtue of religion (a virtue Aquinas annexes to justice), Chenu highlights that for St. Thomas contemplation is a loving colloquy with God. To be fruitful, theology must be animated by this divine intimacy. Chenu is careful to note that the theologian's contemplation is oriented toward evangelization. The theologian lovingly converses with the Truth in order to proclaim that Truth.

A refreshing aspect of Chenu's study is his concern to distinguish Aquinas's theology from modern perspectives that claim to be Thomistic. First, Chenu underlines the centrality of the Trinity and Incarnation in Aquinas's teaching. The God of Aquinas is not the rationalist God of the early Enlightenment. Aquinas's God is the God of Scripture who reveals himself in Christ and leads us to himself through the gift of the Spirit who unites us to Christ. "It would be a deadly misunderstanding (particularly in the Second Part of the *Summa*) to concentrate exclusively on the details of the Aristotelian structure of the work in a rigid and systematic way, while forgetting or skipping over the life-giving sap that comes from the Gospels and the Fathers. . . . The Systematic spirit of Thomas's work is made to respect at all cost the strange logic of the kingdom of God" (138). Second, Chenu points to the internal unity of theology: "[T]he modern distinction between dogma and morality finds no support within the spirituality and methodology of the *Summa*. Likewise, the distinction between the ascetical (action) and the mystical (contemplation) breaks down before the unity of the grace of Christ" (45). Thus, in the final analysis, "As a son of Dominic, the *vir evangelicus* ('man of the gospel') Thomas Aquinas is a spiritual master even in laboring scientifically at his theological work" (127).

One last feature of this new edition deserves note. The original French edition appeared at a time when the spirit of Bauhaus architecture seems to have influenced publishing. As a result, instead of being published in conformity with the natural needs of the human mind and eye, the book was set to difficult print in paragraphs that careen through graphics.

While this format was a new and exciting challenge at the time, it soon became old. Happily, while the new edition retains the best of the illustrations, it disentangles them from the text and mercifully places the text in clear roman serif type. In all, the book is a pleasure to read and can easily serve as a Thomistic introduction for students on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. NV

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Erich Przywara, sj: His Theology and His World by Thomas F. O'Meara, OP *(Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002)* 254 pp.

ERICH PRZYWARA (1889–1972) was a German Jesuit philosopher–theologian who published more than fifty books and many hundreds of essays from the early 1920s to the late 1960s. In the German-speaking world he was known and admired by many of the greatest theologians and philosophers of his time. The roster of his acquaintances included Edmund Husserl, Edith Stein, Max Scheler, Martin Heidegger, Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Paul Tillich. Most of these people thought well of his work and his character; and the admiring, occasionally hyperbolically reverential tone used by some of them in their comments on his work or their remembrances of his life has led to Przywara's name and literary corpus being rumored in the English-speaking world as the next big thing, something always on the edge of being discovered.

Discussions of Przywara in the English-speaking world, however, have remained mostly at the level of rumor. This is largely because little of his oeuvre has been translated, and English and American theologians and philosophers are notorious for their unwillingness to read anything but English. The only works under Przywara's name easily available in English are his anthologies of texts by Augustine and Newman, and these give little idea of Przywara's mode of thought (though their arrangement of topics does give some sense of the purposes with which he read figures from the past). But there is a deeper reason behind the lack of translations. Przywara's German is difficult and his thought more so: He writes allusively, in non-linear fashion, and with abundant allusions to (but without explanations of) the thought of myriad now-forgotten German thinkers. Reading him in German, for those (like this reviewer) without a wide and deep knowledge of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German philosophy and theology, is too often like reading a hermetic treatise without an interpretive key.

Przywara's range of knowledge and reference is, however, constantly astonishing. He had read especially deeply in Augustine and Newman, who were his two principal inspirations and guides (he often calls Newman "der Augustinus unserer Neuzeit," which I suppose Newman would have taken as a compliment), and to whom he constantly returns. But he also knew Aquinas and the history of the Thomistic schools well; he wrote books on figures as diverse as Kant, Kierkegaard, and Ignatius Loyola; he was an early enthusiast for and frequent commentator upon Husserl's work; and he wrote large works on topics in philosophical theology, most famously one on the analogia entis (rumors of an imminent English version of this work grow increasingly loud, so perhaps the dearth of translations is about to end). He was part of that flowering of Germanic philosophical and theological letters that occurred at the hands of those born between 1870 and 1900: Przywara's generation includes Wittgenstein, Barth, Heidegger, Stein, Tillich, von Balthasar, and Rahner. This was also the world of thought that produced, not quite a generation later, Karol Wojtyla. Like so many of that time and place, beneficiaries of an education no longer available in Germany (or anywhere else), Przywara's linguistic and textual knowledge was wide and deep in a way now vanishingly rare.

In most of his work, however, Przywara shows little interest in serious historical engagement with the thought of his many interlocutors. He treats them, mostly, as catalysts for his own thought: prompts for flights of speculation rather than occasions for painstaking attempts to understand and restate. Whether this is a criticism depends, I suppose, on what you read him for. He should not be read as a guide to (for example) what Newman thought, and this in spite of the quantity he wrote about Newman. I can see no evidence, for instance, that he understood even approximately what Newman was trying to do in the *Grammar of Assent*. Przywara must be read as a primary rather than a secondary source, and as such he is constantly suggestive, always frustrating, and often almost impossibly difficult to decipher.

What I have just said is approximately in accord with (though rather more blunt than) the way in which Thomas O'Meara presents Przywara in the book under review here. The book breaks new ground principally in that it is the first real attempt in English at a synthetic guide to Przywara's thought and life. O'Meara seems to have read widely in Przywara's work, and (as his own previous work shows) has a thorough knowledge of German theology and philosophy in Przywara's period. He begins with a sketch of Przywara's life and work, depicting his central challenge as that of explaining how Catholic thought would exist in the twentieth century—how, that is, it would respond to and make use of the philosophical

developments of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially those following upon Kant's critical philosophy, those begun by Husserl's phenomenology, and those suggested by the new movements in interpretation of Aquinas in the first half of the twentieth century. O'Meara then turns to an exposition of Przywara's use of and relations to his important contemporaries, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish, and concludes with a sketch of Przywara's understanding of Christian existence, and of his ecclesiology. Those for whom Przywara is only a name will learn much from all this.

However, O'Meara is much less successful at conveying the content of Przywara's thought. He repeatedly mentions the dialectical nature of that thought, its use of images of polar tension and oscillation (between nature and grace, creation and redemption, being and knowing, and so on), and its interest in typology, comparison, and schematizations of various kinds. Przywara is forever comparing such things as the inner meaning of the Kantian dialectic with the essence of the Augustinian *ordo amoris*—without, usually, saying just what these are; he likes to set forth the three main ways of thinking about the order of knowing, the seven trends in contemporary European thought, and so on. And O'Meara is forced to write this way himself in explaining Przywara, with the result that page after page is filled with airy profundities upon which it is difficult to get a grip sufficient for clear restatement.

For example, while discussing Przywara's views on the presence of grace in life (pp. 83–86), O'Meara provides several quotations from Przywara on the topic, and offers his own commentary upon them. Try as I might, however, I cannot extract anything at all from these paragraphs except that nature and grace are not the same, and that no too-sharp distinction between them should be made. This is no doubt true; but, somehow, it fails to excite. There are many such examples. This is not altogether O'Meara's fault, I think: It is at least as much the fault of his source. But O'Meara could, perhaps, have said more by way of explanation. I would have liked him to say that reading Przywara is better understood as a meditatively transformative exercise than an analytically illuminating one.

O'Meara's own theological prejudices do come through clearly. "Sectarian narrowness" (p. 40 & passim) is always bad, and something that Przywara is praised for escaping—it is not, though, altogether clear what it is, other than that von Balthasar seems to have suffered from it; curial interventions in and attempts to constrain Catholic philosophical and theological thought are generally inept and always bad; Przywara is good to the extent that he anticipates and approves O'Meara's interpretation of Vatican II, and the apparent fact that he did not fully do so is attributed to the frail-

ties of age and ill-health; and O'Meara shows himself a deep-dyed American exceptionalist by the fact that almost the only thing he roundly criticizes Przywara for without qualification is being insufficiently alive to the glories of the American experiment. But these are the usual prejudices of O'Meara's generation and location, and they by no means vitiate the book.

O'Meara does throw into relief the intellectual ferment of the Germanic world in the period between the two great wars. It highlights, too, the most intellectually interesting challenge of that period (one that largely remains with us), which was to bring together in mutually illuminating fashion Husserl's phenomenology with the new Thomisms. To this enterprise Edith Stein was of central significance, and behind her, Max Scheler; to it, too, John Paul II has been a contributor. It is at least possible that the retrieval of Przywara's thought will help to move it forward, and O'Meara's book may in turn aid that goal.

If, then, you are curious about and innocent of Erich Przywara's life and thought, this book is the best place to begin. Indeed, it is about the only resource in English. But I doubt that you will come away from it much enlightened about why, or indeed whether, Przywara is important. Perhaps it is still too soon to make a good judgment about that: O'Meara's book may perform its greatest service by encouraging more people to turn to Przywara himself, and thus to further the enterprise of assessing his importance for the future of the Church's thought. NV

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Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation According to Thomas Aquinas by Matthew Levering *(Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002)* viii + 254 pp.*

THE AMBITIONS of this book are vast and varied, and might be listed as theological, historical, exegetical, and broadly ecumenical. Theologically, Levering wants to explain how it is that the actions of Jesus of Nazareth some 2000 years ago can be said to save men and women today. He finds this explanation in St. Thomas, and so, historically, he wants to present the very explanation of Thomas Aquinas as to how Jesus saves. This presentation consists especially in showing that Thomas's explanation is deeply rooted in what Christians know as the Old Testament. Third, he wants to show us the abiding utility of Thomas's reading of Scripture, and he does

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this by a sustained attention to contemporary exegesis relevant to Thomas's reading of the Bible. Some of the contemporary exegesis he uses is Jewish, and this partially fulfills his last aim, which is to bring Jews and Christians to a closer dialogue on the relation of Jesus and the Church to Israel.

Sometimes the prosecution of several goals at one time makes for confusion and ensures that none will be reached in a wholly satisfactory way; sometimes, such a joint prosecution adds strength to strength, and serves to a possession all the more secure of each end. It is the second scenario that is to be found in this book. Levering addresses the last named goal directly at the beginning of each half of his book. He opens with an evocation of the Modern Theology symposium on Michael Wyschogrod's contention that Jewish Christians are obliged on both Jewish and Christian grounds to keep the whole of the Mosaic Law. The second half of the book begins with a brief discussion of Jon Levenson's *Sinai and Zion*. Together, these introductions, one to Thomas on Torah and the other to Thomas on Temple, make a handsome welcome of Jewish readers to the breadth of the Thomist theology of salvation. At the same time, they are part of Levering's orientation of more biblically informed readers to Aquinas's work.

There remains the second goal, bringing forward the substantial breadth of Thomist theology, for the execution of which Levering marshals a remarkable reading of contemporary Thomist scholarship and theology. The expository point of departure of the first half of the book—centered on Torah—is Thomas's threefold division of the Old (Mosaic) Law into precepts moral, ceremonial, and judicial. The key to the first part of the book is a reply to an objection within Thomas's treatise on the Passion, wherein is explained how it is that Christ fulfills all three kinds of precept on the cross. He fulfills the moral precepts by dying out of perfect charity for both God and humankind. He accomplishes the ceremonial precepts by offering himself as a perfect sacrifice. And he discharges the judicial precepts in that his death is satisfaction for sin, a sort of just and more than just compensation for humanity's sin because a death instinct with charity.

All the other material of the first part is ordered to prepare for, expound, and state the consequences of this reply. So, since the Torah is an expression of divine wisdom, it is fitting to consider Christ as Wisdom incarnate. The *convenientia* that St. Thomas perceives in the eternal choice that it be the Word—and not the Father or the Holy Spirit—who takes flesh, is noted. The mysteries of the life of Christ as St. Thomas explores them are presented in their aspect of fulfilling the promises and types of the Law. Especially welcome is the treatment of Christ as Prophet, Priest,

and King—the executor of moral, ceremonial, and judicial precept—which will enable the modern reader to link up with St. Thomas the standard division of the "offices" of Christ, apostle, and bishop so prominent since *Lumen Gentium*.

Levering has a nice sense of just how tightly woven St. Thomas's Christological cloth is—without seam and to be taken whole. For instance, the charity of Christ, something easily admitted, demands his human knowledge in immediate vision of the divine reality, more difficult for many to admit today, for the very cogent reason that perfection of love depends on perfection of knowledge. Again, the prophetic office of Christ leads to the same point, namely, St. Thomas's today largely abandoned if not very well understood views on the knowledge and self-consciousness of Christ. It is not just that Levering expounds this topic well and defends it against some of the more common misunderstandings but, as I say, the point is also that he has a very welcome sense of how tightly integrated this element is in Thomas's theology as a whole.

Levering recognizes that his order of presentation of Thomas's soteriology is not that of Thomas himself. Yet, all the material fits into this different wineskin. The point of so fitting it might be said to consist simply in seeing whether it can be done—for if it can it means that Thomas's soteriology really is more intimately and directly connected than we might realize with the Old (Mosaic) Law, and so with the self-understanding of Israel contained therein. This is one thing with saying that, if it can be done, then Levering's main thesis as to St. Thomas is won. Beyond this question of Thomist scholarship, moreover, the point of doing it is to show, notwithstanding the differences, the real continuity of New Testament Wisdom and Mosaic Torah, of Temple and Church.

The second part of the book centers on the Temple. The holiness of life accomplished in obedience to Torah flowers in the worship of God where He makes Himself present in the Temple. In the new and everlasting covenant, the fulfillment of the written Law of Moses by the interior law of charity written on tablets of hearts by the Holy Spirit is at the same time for Aquinas the fulfillment of the Temple worship of God. Christ, his Mother, the Church, and the individual Christian can each be taken as a renewed Temple, although, evidently, there is a certain ordering to be observed here: The anointing with and indwelling of the Holy Spirit that befits Christ according to his person, and which is granted to Mary before the first exercise of her freedom, follows for us from Christ only after a cleansing. There is, furthermore, a progress to be observed in us unto the true and perfected worship of God. For Aquinas, this is accomplished according as our praise and thanksgiving are enfolded into the Trinitarian

relations: Our love is increasingly empowered by the grace of the Spirit within the course of our sanctification; our words are borrowed from the lips of the Word Incarnate as we are ever more conformed to his image.

The terminus of our passage into God is not accomplished until the last day, and this goal, as it receives attention from Thomas, so it receives a very needed and today little given attention from Levering. This book devotes considerable and very welcome space to the details of Aquinas's eschatology—the resurrection of the body, the vision of God, and the new heavens and new earth.

In relation both to Torah and to Temple, "fulfillment" and not "revocation" are the operative words for describing the Christian dispensation for Thomas, who is no supersessionist. The promises of God are for St. Thomas as for St. Paul irrevocable, and Israel remains in her covenant relation with God an object of his especial predeliction. At the same time, Levering presents a careful explanation of why according to Thomas Christ's fulfillment requires old sacrifices and ceremonies to pass into new sacraments where they find their true reality. Just because Christ's cross so perfectly fulfills the precepts of the Old Law, for that very reason there must be new signs of this perfection. The moral precepts are summed up in the double law of charity; the judicial precepts dividing Jew and gentile are overcome. So also for the cult, it is renewed in the Passover of the temple sacrifices to Eucharist, a better expiation and a fuller communion. The sacraments of the Old Law, protestations of faith in a coming savior, are changed into new sacraments, protestations of faith in a savior who has come, and worked, and so are now efficacious for grace.

Even so, the abiding value of the Old Covenant both for Jews and as having passed into the substance of the New is maintained. The difference between this view and supersessionism might be put as follows. The supersessionist says to the modern people of Israel: We value you because you—more exactly, your ancestors—prepared the way for us. But on St. Thomas's position we can say: We value you now because God's covenant is irrevocable; and just because we think it perfected and come over into the new, we value you because we think you are in us, and we in you.

My one criticism is that I miss the use that might have been made of the late Ben F. Meyer's work on the Temple and theology of the Temple in the New Testament. The book is nicely indexed and has a great bibliography. NV

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La Giustizia Politica in Tommaso d'Aquino. Un'Interpretazione del Bene Comune Politico by Gabriel Chalmeta *(Roma: Armando Editore, 2000)* 155 pp.

SHOULD CONTEMPORARY political theorists show any interest at all in Aquinas's political thought? At a first glance, the most reasonable answer to this question is: "No!" Aquinas's political ideas depend too much on a theological and metaphysical view of the world that people today do not share; this is not a feasible view in our pluralistic societies. Aquinas could not even have imagined our "modern state"; he never saw the revolutions which gave birth to (negative and positive) human rights. Contemporary political philosophy does not have anything to do with Aquinas, but, rather, with utilitarian and (new) social contract theories that cannot be traced back earlier than Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Bentham, or Mill. Yet, Gabriel Chalmeta—who has studied in depth the current debate between utilitarianism and neo-contractualism—tells us that he has recently changed his mind; that he now believes in the "great value of Aquinas's political philosophy" (20), both for approaching the crisis of the welfare state, and for developing sound principles to overcome the defects in contemporary theories.

There are several reasons why Chalmeta's book should be praised. First, it is a welcome exception, as we do not have much to read today on the concept of political justice in Aquinas. Second, it is a *real* book on political philosophy. Let me explain this better. Political philosophy cannot be just "history"; not even history of philosophy. In Aristotle's terminology, it is a "practical" science. We study it in order to solve problems, and make decisions, about the *contingent* and complex structures of our own societies. A political philosopher cannot bury his head in the sand of either history or exegesis. He must face all the difficulties and problems of the world in which he lives. Chalmeta does not want just to be aware of what people of the past believed. He wants to "Rethink the Past in order to Build the Future," as the title of the introduction of the book reads. His starting point is the welfare state and its current crisis; and in the central part of the book (the Second Part), he tries to establish a constructive dialogue between Aquinas, on the one hand, and contemporary utilitarian and contractualist thinkers, on the other.

Every political theory, if it is well done, depends to a great extent on the historical and cultural environment in which it has been conceived. To do justice to a political thinker it is necessary to understand his environment from an internal viewpoint: that is, from his own viewpoint. This leads to a third reason why Chalmeta's book must be praised. Even

if his ultimate goal is the above-mentioned dialogue between Aquinas and contemporary philosophy, he does not neglect to locate historically Aquinas's own thought. The First Part of the book ("Historical and Doctrinal Presuppositions") is meant to be an introduction to the world, life, and sources of the medieval champion of the Catholic Church. It is only in the Third (and the last) part of the book ("The Thomistic Synthesis: Political Common Good") that the author undertakes his own "deductive" interpretation of Aquinas.

But what is Chalmeta's viewpoint? What is he looking at and looking for as a political philosopher? As far as I can tell, there are three things he is really concerned with: freedom, friendship, and subsidiarity. (1) The human good cannot be achieved but *humanly*, that is, freely. A just political society, therefore, must be built up on the freedom of its citizens, and must have a "minimalist" approach to "the role of authority and law" (126–27). (2) The meaning of human freedom is the "intentional identification (sympathetic or, more precisely, friendly) with the good of the others" (133). The human good, therefore, is intrinsically the "common good," and *autonomy* cannot be the only grounding value of political society. (3) Political authority should not suffocate human freedom by passing too many laws and rules, and by taking onto itself ends and achievements that people can attain (even better) at lower levels of human interaction (families, schools, non-profit organizations, etc.): "the State and Law come second" (134). Chalmeta thinks that the main problems of contemporary welfare states are caused by the exaltation of an individualistic concept of freedom, which, ironically, leads governments to multiply laws and constrain ever more individual freedom and initiative. This consideration gives us a secondary, but yet important, interpretative key for reading his book; namely, that he tries always to find, and highlight, energies and forces that act effectively in society, but whose existence does not depend primarily on law and political authority.

The First Part of the book consists of three chapters; respectively, on the culture in which Aquinas lived, on Aquinas's life and political writings, and on the sources of his political philosophy. Chalmeta wants to undermine the commonplaces that those years of the Middle Ages were not culturally and socially rich, that they were characterized by a strong contrast between Aristotelianism and Augustinianism, and that Aquinas, due to his *isolated* religious life (unaware of the facts of the world), could not develop any viable and realistic political philosophy. The first chapter is provocatively titled "The Medieval Renaissance: The Luminosity of Legal and Political Culture in the XII and XIII Centuries." We are still too familiar with the image of the *dark* Middle Ages to focus reasonably

on how vital, rich, and impetuous Aquinas's century had been: The establishment of the cities as cultural and economical centers; the fast development of commerce and industry; the birth of vulgar languages and of the universities; the rebirth of Roman law and legal studies; the clear distinction between research grounded on theology and research grounded on unaided (natural) reason. Many recent historical studies point to that age as to the real ground of our modern culture; in this respect, Chalmeta's approach is certainly correct. And it is also true (see Chapter 2: "Thomas Aquinas: The Public Figure and the Political Writings") that Aquinas lived fully immersed in the European culture of his time, much more so than most of his contemporaries. He traveled all around Europe after he left Naples at the age of about 21, and he personally faced even the most pragmatical political problems of his society.

Aquinas did not write a systematic treatise on political philosophy. His relevant writings, says Chalmeta, are to be found in the third book of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, in the *De regno ad regem Cypri*, the *Commentaries to* Aristotle's *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Secunda pars* of the *Summa theologiae*, and, maybe, even in "the very short Epistula ad Ducissam Brabantiae" (46–48). Aquinas had a very busy life and always had to write in a hurry, sometimes dictating and without even rereading the original. It is essential, in his case, to carefully apply the principle of interpreting every particular text "in the light of the whole" (48).

As for "The Sources of [his] Political Philosophy" (Chapter 3), Chalmeta, quoting the prologue of the *De regno*, divides them by three: the "authority of Holy Writ," the "teachings of the philosophers" (particularly Aristotle and Augustine), and the "practice *[exempla]* of worthy princes." I think this classification is too hasty, and it is certainly wrong to the extent that Chalmeta identifies "the examples of the princes" with Roman law (59–61). Law, according to the (Aristotelian) Aquinas, speaks *in universale*, and this is why it sometimes needs to be corrected through equity in order to be *justly* applied to particular cases. Examples, on the other hand, are an essential source for practical philosophy because they show the *universal* precept as applied by virtuous men to *particular* actions. The practical character of moral knowledge explains the constant use, in the Middle Ages and in Roman law tradition, of *auctoritates* (the opinions of the wise men and the laws of wise legislators) by both philosophers and jurists. To quote the *auctoritates* was not just a habit, or a fashion—as Chalmeta suggests (59)—but the only path to the moral and legal truth known and explained by prudent men. Roman law belongs to the *doctrinal* sources of Aquinas's political philosophy, and (I have to disagree again with Chalmeta) Aquinas had an in-depth knowledge of it, as is evident

in his detailed analysis of issues of right and justice. His canon law background must be seen as the other side of the same legal expertise because, at that time, canon law and Roman law belonged to the same legal system, and developed together by using and applying the same legal principles and sources.

As a kind of rhetorical exaggeration, Chalmeta draws the "Conclusion" that Aquinas's political philosophy originates, at the same time, from Aristotle's utilitarianism and Augustine's contractualism; but he adds immediately that, "strictly speaking," "neither Aristotle's proposal can be taken as utilitarian, nor Augustine's as contractualist" (62). Definitely! There comes to my mind, for instance, the third book of the *Politics*, in which Aristotle explains that the "city-state" is "a community of citizens sharing a constitution" (1276b1), and that "citizen" is, properly, "the one who participates in the offices" (1278a35). These statements remind one very much of the contractualist language used in the grounding documents of America's democracy (especially the Bills of Rights of the first colonies). The truth is that contemporary terminology like "deontology vs. teleology," or "utilitarianism vs. contractualism," cannot do justice to Aristotle or Augustine or Aquinas.

The Second Part of the book ("Dialectical Determination of the Thomistic Concept of Political Justice") consists of two chapters: respectively, the fourth, on "Aquinas and Utilitarianism," and the fifth, on "Aquinas and Contractualism." Here Chalmeta seems to me at his best. The structure of the argument is simple and clear. Chalmeta points to the "good reasons" and to the main "limits" of both utilitarianism and contractualism, and tries to show how Aquinas shares those good reasons and overcomes those limits. It is worth noticing his critique of utilitarianism's "arithmetical approach to political justice" (72–74).

On one point utilitarianism is certainly right: Political society is just if it aims at a sort of maximization of the good of the citizens. Aquinas would agree with this teleology: The end of political community must coincide with the end of each individual, that is, happiness (70). However, utilitarianism, (a) by putting the *common good* prior to the *individual good*, denies the absolute rights of the persons; and (b) by putting the good prior to the just, denies the freedom of the person. A utilitarian government would try to enforce its conception of the "good life" up to the "most insignificant details." Chalmeta recalls Mill's thesis that even marriage can be prohibited if the partners do not have enough economical means for running a family (73). Aquinas, according to Chalmeta, overcomes both defects by affirming (a) the inviolable dignity of the human person, and (b) the "free character" of the human good (man

cannot be forced to be good). Granted! But the second point seems misdirected. Chalmeta does not mention either the liberal tradition, to which utilitarianism belongs, or Mill's "harm-principle," supposedly, the standard of justice for political problems. It is true that for Aquinas nobody can be forced to be virtuous; but every act of justice can be enforced due to the extrinsic character of the right *(ius)*; and it should be enforced precisely in order to impede (or prevent, or correct) *unjust* harm to (the freedom of) other people. This is something on which Aquinas and Mill would not need to disagree.

Contractualism too builds upon a conception (even if "thin") of the good life, namely, "good life as free, or autonomous, life." Aquinas "would have appreciated, not only the teleological structure" of contractualism, but also its emphasis on "freedom, or autonomy." Above all, he would have agreed that "the freedom of others, generally speaking, constitutes a limit to the exercise of freedom by each man" (79–82). However, autonomy alone (neutrality) cannot solve the conflicts between incompatible freedoms. Moreover, contractualism does not give sufficient reasons to respect other people's autonomy when doing so requires a sacrifice of one's own good. In order to enforce the objective (transcendental) requirement of justice, a contractualist government will have an ever stronger recourse to legal coercion. In Aquinas, there is a deep reason to be concerned about the good of the others, namely, that the agent's freedom is fulfilled precisely in doing so. Sometimes, it is true, Aquinas seems to propose an "organic view" of political community (the whole as more important than the part) that anticipates the worse outcomes of utilitarianism. However, says Chalmeta, there are ways to interpret differently his relevant statements (88–90). Chalmeta's explanation of Rawls's contractualism is very well done. However, the key-concept of Chapter 5 is "freedom of others" as both limit (contractualism) and fulfillment (Aquinas) of the agent's freedom, and, as I already mentioned, the idea of "freedom of others as limit" belongs also to the utilitarian tradition. I wonder whether Chalmeta should have better framed both utilitarianism and contractualism in the same (liberal) tradition to which they belong.

The *Third Part* of the book includes two chapters: the sixth, on "The Political Common Good as an Ideal," and the seventh, on "Bringing About" that ideal. Chalmeta explains that the common good, due to the social nature of the human person, cannot be just a means. He draws a parallel between three forms of "friendship, or justice"—political, particular or commutative, and domestic—and three forms of common good—of political relationships, of economical relationships, and of personal relationships (family). Human happiness depends on a specific

and ordered commitment to each type of common good. I think the stress on friendship and the social nature of human good is something for which we should be very grateful to Chalmeta (even though I miss a clear conceptual distinction between friendship and justice). However, Chalmeta ultimately wants to show that the political common good has a subsidiary and secondary importance (105). This thesis resembles the other one—expressed in Chapter 5 (see pp. 87–90)—that Aquinas's idea that the individual is "part" of the political community means just that every individual fulfills himself by means of a free commitment to the common good.

I do not think Aquinas would agree with either of these interpretations. At each level of creation, the "whole" is for Aquinas more important than the "part" because it is more similar to God—whose perfection is better reflected by the multitude of creatures—and because, in the agent's intentionality, the whole is always and necessarily prior to its parts. For Aquinas, there is no contradiction in affirming at the same time the dignity of the human person and its being less important than the whole. *"Pertinet quidem enim ad amorem qui debet esse inter homines quod homo quaerat et conservet bonum etiam uni soli homini, sed multo melius est et divinius quod hoc exhibeatur toti genti et civitatibus. Vel aliter: amabile quidem est quod hoc exhibeatur uni soli civitati, sed multo divinius est quod hoc exhibeatur toti genti, in qua multae civitates continentur. Dicit autem hoc esse divinius, eo quod magis pertinet ad dei similitudinem, qui est universalis causa omnium bonorum"* (*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, I, 2, no. 12. See *De regno*, ch. 9, no. 70; and *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, ch. 45).

Let me raise also a little doubt on Chalmeta's identification between particular justice and commutative justice. For Aquinas, the virtue of justice is a general virtue (legal justice) insofar as it "directs man immediately to the common good," and a particular virtue, insofar as it directs "man immediately to the good of another individual" (*ST*, I–II, q. 58, a. 7). Legal justice is the key concept because it is always what directs man to the common good, either immediately or mediately (through the acts of particular justice), and without direction to the common good there is no justice at all (see *ST*, I–II, q. 58, a. 5). Particular justice, in turn, is commutative when it regulates "the order of one part to another," and distributive when it regulates "the order of the whole toward the parts" (*ST*, I–II, q. 61, a. 1). My point is not just that for Aquinas there are *two* forms of particular justice but, especially, that his analogical talk about the virtue directing man to the common good cannot be predicated of different kinds of communities, or social relationships, as if there were a different virtue of justice for each different community (or common

good). I detect this little ambiguity in Chalmeta's references, not only to the commutative, but also to the legal and the distributive justice (See pp. 71, 101, 105, 107, and 113).

The main element (or ultimate end) of the political common good, explains Chalmeta, is the "good/virtuous life" of the citizens, and the immediate, although instrumental, elements are "peace" and "material goods." Chalmeta sees in Aquinas's talk about "unity of peace" and "good life," the ancestors of our negative and positive rights and a useful guide for political action. So far so good, but who should pursue the *political* common good? Chalmeta puts in charge of the political good, not the political authority, but the "political society," which is formed, primarily, by "families" and "customs" and, secondarily, by the "law" (or other acts passed by the authority). "Society," as opposed to "law," has a primary role in the pursuit of the common good (113–15). And "political society" as a whole does have two "legal instruments" at its disposal: first, "custom" and, second, "law." Chalmeta suggests that in the Middle Ages the legal system used to be spontaneously regulated by custom; and that, in Aquinas's time, the "law" made its appearance as a "new legal tool." It is probably for this reason, he concludes, that Aquinas dwelled so much on the concept of law (118): In order to legitimate the use of it by the authority. Chalmeta also suggests that customs have legal validity independently on any sanction, or ratification, by the authority (117); and that the "first principle of legal justice, according to Aquinas, is the one giving to the same subjects the power [or authority] to pass all the public norms by which public life is (partly) regulated" (124). In the seventh (and last) chapter of the book, Chalmeta's main concerns seem to be (a) to dethrone the law, and (b) to defend both the democratic system and the crucial role of intermediate social agents. I am mostly sympathetic with these concerns, but I think that he is here overstressing the concept of "society" at the expense of the concept of "authority."

It is true that everybody can contribute to the political common good, but nobody can regulate, or order, public life in view of the common good without having the authority to do so. The need for authority (and for the law) comes precisely from the need for a principle of unity (or coordination) in the public action *that is not already in the subjects*, in the multitude, *as such* (if not in the sense that the subjects have to recognize it). This is why, for Aquinas, the concept of law requires somebody who is in charge of the community. The idea of law as a "new legal tool" is something I do not really understand. Rather, "customs" cannot obtain legal validity without becoming *authoritarian* norms, and without an *authority* able to enforce them. The concept of "legal custom" means not

only that people *usually act* this way, but that they *have always to act* this way; in other words, it involves not only "praise" and "blame" but also "constraint" and "punishment." This is why the formation-process of a customary rule requires a subjective belief (by the subjects) that the rule must actually be taken as a *legal* (obligatory and enforceable) rule, and a sort of recognition of it by an established political authority called to enforce it. This doctrine is much older than Aquinas and it still grounds our national and international legal systems.

These criticisms of Chalmeta's excellent book should be taken as reflections stimulated by him, in the same spirit as the beautiful passage from *De perfectione spiritualis vitae* that he quotes at page 67: *"Si quidam vero contra haec rescribere voluerint, mihi acceptissimum erit. Nullo enim modo melius quam contradicentibus resistendo, aperuit veritas et falsitas confutatur."* NV

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The Future of Catholic Biblical Exegesis: A Constructive Conversation by Luke Timothy Johnson and William S. Kurz, SJ *(Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002)* xii + 299 pp.

CATHOLIC biblical exegesis takes one of its prime methodological precedents from the risen Lord's teaching to the disciples on the road to Emmaus: "Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures" (Luke 24:27). While they did not recognize Jesus at the time, the disciples realize afterwards that their hearts were burning while Jesus interpreted the Scriptures. Jesus' teaching on the road to Emmaus thus also indicates the flame that exegesis should ignite in the heart of the believer, conveyed in turn to the community. The patristic and medieval interpreters well understood this twofold character of exegesis, that is, conducted from the perspective of faith and rendered in service to the Church. The road has not always been a smooth one since that time.

Luke Timothy Johnson and William Kurz, SJ, discuss the compelling need to restore the character of Catholic biblical exegesis in their vital study *The Future of Catholic Biblical Exegesis: A Constructive Conversation*. As the title indicates, the work is in the form of a conversation between Johnson and Kurz, a conversation they hope others will join. Their goal is reflected by the format of the work, which consists of two major sections, each comprised of five chapters by one author and followed with a response from the other. The brief final section poses ten ques-

tions, to which each author responds, designed to stimulate an ongoing conversation. Johnson and Kurz make fine dialogue partners, based on their common academic experience (both are New Testament scholars with Ph.D.s from Yale) and their common exegetical vision.

The nature of each author's contribution differs, though. Johnson's chapters introduce the work with a brief history of twentieth-century Catholic exegesis and a critique of the current state of affairs in biblical scholarship, followed by a discussion of two patristic models for emulation, Origen and Augustine, and finally an appeal for scholars to enter into the world of Scripture. Kurz's chapters are largely exegetical theory put into practice, with four chapters devoted to discussions of passages from John's gospel to exemplify specific interpretive principles. His other chapter reflects the aim of both authors to prioritize the needs of the Catholic Church while also remaining attentive to ecumenical concerns, particularly with respect to Protestant biblical interpretation. While each major section differs in form, they are unified in outlook and goals, for both authors want to appreciate what is positive about the present state of exegesis and seek to change what is less so. It should also be noted that about half of the chapters represent revisions of lectures or articles that have appeared elsewhere. Furthermore, as Kurz notes (143), while the topics of the book were agreed upon beforehand, the main portions were written independently. In actuality, then, the element of conversation is restricted to the responses and final chapter, although this restriction does not detract from the work. The combining of previous material, however, occasionally surfaces in slight repetitiveness and awkward transitions, but not to a detrimental degree.

Johnson begins with a rather dense, foundational chapter (which merits its extensive treatment here) titled, "What is Catholic about Catholic Biblical Scholarship?" that defines "Catholic" biblical scholarship and traces the extent to which that identity has been maintained from the early twentieth century to the present. He defines that identity as a predilection for the conjunctive, the inclusive, the "both/and," which manifests itself in the dialectic between Scripture and Tradition. Historically, that dialectic was maintained by Catholic exegetes, but over time Tradition eclipsed Scripture, so that Scripture lost its "otherness," its ability to challenge (7). To demonstrate the response to this loss, Johnson then chronicles the past century of Catholic biblical exegesis divided into three periods: (1) before the 1943 publication of the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, which sanctioned the use of the historical-critical method, (2) the hopeful employment of this method for the next fifty years, and (3) the consequences of the method that have become discernible in the past ten years or so. The

historical-critical method, practiced by Protestant scholars for some two centuries previously, was supposed to provide Catholic scholars with a neutral tool whereby they could recover the "otherness" of Scripture by "using the methods of history to locate the specific circumstances of each biblical voice" (8) through the study of the biblical languages, cultures, literary forms, and so on. In this way, they could retrieve and better appreciate the "literal sense" of Scripture, understood exclusively as the intentional meaning of the human authors apart from how that meaning has been construed by almost 2000 years of interpretation, toward the ultimate goal of restoring the balance between Scripture and Tradition.

Johnson explains that that goal has not been met, however, as he cogently exposes the inherent flaws of the historical-critical method in terms of four realizations that refute its initial claims: (1) rather than a "method," this approach is a model that seeks historical reconstruction, (2) it has led to less rather than more agreement and has made no positive contributions to the faith, (3) it privileges the literal sense and rejects more figurative senses of Scripture, and (4) it is not theologically neutral but rather embodies Protestant suppositions. This last point is particularly relevant, since those presuppositions may be expressed in terms of the disjunctive, the "either/or," which thus leads to the inevitable position of *sola scriptura*. The Catholic scholarly enterprise restoring the balance between Scripture and Tradition in this manner, therefore, was rather precarious, if not doomed, from the start. Nevertheless, Johnson emphatically affirms what can be gained from this approach, including an increased knowledge of the biblical world, but he cautions that the Catholic "both/and" must be maintained, and in fact only by maintaining it can there be true ecumenism between Protestant and Catholic scholars whose work reflects the authentic identities of their respective traditions. To the end of maintaining Catholic identity, Johnson issues two main challenges to the Catholic exegete that should intersect in their work: Affirm loyalty to Tradition and rediscover other forms of criticism than historical (e.g., philosophical, moral, aesthetic). Johnson also offers some practical suggestions for Catholic biblical scholars, articulated mainly as a return to what formerly was presumed by exegetes in the patristic and medieval periods, namely appreciation of the history of interpretation, the literary integrity of Scripture, and the polyvalence of Scripture. Once Catholic scholars embark again on this road, they can more ably turn their work toward the life of the Church and help the laity read Scripture fruitfully and responsibly, as well as articulate the role of Scripture in theology.

Building on this practical suggestion, Johnson's second chapter lays the theoretical groundwork for the third and fourth with his claim that

Catholic scholars can move forward precisely by an engagement with the past. While there is much that is good in the academy, the surge in both doctorates and publications in biblical studies has engendered an increase in specializations in ever-narrowing fields and a disengagement with anything outside of one's narrow field. Furthermore, the shifts from a largely clerical to lay constituency of professors and from the seminary to the university have reoriented the study of the Bible away from the Church toward the secular academy. For these reasons, Johnson speaks of a "crisis" situation in biblical studies today (37), one that has led to an exclusive privileging of what he helpfully terms *scientia* (science, the historical-critical method) over *sapientia* (wisdom, a deeper reading of Scripture), whereas they should be in a mutually beneficial relationship. Johnson sees one resolution to this crisis in a return to premodern (he rightly dismisses the common but pejorative and fallacious term "precritical" exegesis) biblical scholarship with its sound premises about Scripture: divine authorship, harmony in matters of faith and morals, authority as the Word of God, levels of meaning, and hermeneutics of charity. As Johnson points out, every one of these premises is either questioned or rejected in mainstream biblical scholarship today. Johnson thus hearkens back to the *Ressourcement* movement of De Lubac and others to return to the past in order to renew the Church today.

In order to illustrate what we can learn from premodern exegesis, Johnson discusses two of the most influential patristic scholars, Origen and Augustine. Given the typical dichotomy between New Testament and patristic studies, it is refreshing to see a New Testament scholar embrace the early Christian Fathers. (Kurz, by the way, particularly lauds Johnson's work in these chapters.) Origen provides an exemplar of someone who, perhaps more successfully than anyone before or since, synthesized a sophisticated hermeneutics with a zeal for the Church, *fides et ratio*. Origen's prodigious and original exegesis is, contrary to some modern claims, deeply critical, utilizing elements of text criticism, linguistics, social history, literary criticism, and so on; but he always allows Scripture to challenge him, not to challenge Scripture. Johnson also significantly defends Origen's use of allegory as a necessary mode of spiritual interpretation to elicit the polyvalent meanings of a text divinely authored. Through his work, Origen amply demonstrates the ultimate goal of Scripture to transform the mind of the believer. Augustine, whose approach to Scripture was influenced by Ambrose, was always guided by pastoral needs in his exegesis. As a result, Augustine gives us a model of what Johnson terms the hermeneutics of charity, which builds up the truth, love, and moral life of the Church. Finally, as Johnson elaborates in his concluding chapter, we

postmoderns need to regain the imagination of our predecessors to live in the world that Scripture produces rather than, as too often happens, in "the world that produced the Scripture" (119).

Kurz's chapters continue the conversation on Catholic biblical scholarship, but now in the forms of both theory and practical exegesis. While Johnson explains what Catholic scholars should be doing and why, Kurz shows us how. In four of the five chapters, Kurz provides some continuity in his interpretations by selecting passages entirely from the Gospel of John, yet approaching them in diverse ways. Thus, embedded within this study one finds an intriguing mini-commentary on several crucial Johannine passages. Throughout, Kurz well demonstrates the mandate of *Dei Verbum* that he explicitly follows to employ modern methods of interpretation in order "to actualize and apply Scripture to the church's contemporary needs" (159). To this end, the inclusion of the actual exegesis is especially significant as a model that is both critical and in service to the Church.

One of the most notable and worthwhile elements of Kurz's contribution is the sheer variety of ways in which he interprets the biblical text, most of which incorporate forms of literary criticism. In fact, Kurz adds to Johnson's analysis of the historical-critical method a discussion of the contributions of literary criticism to biblical studies, including a return to the integrity of the Bible, an awareness of levels of meaning, and a focus on the role of the reader in interpretation. Since forms of literary criticism originally develop in secular literary studies, though, Kurz emphasizes that such criticism must always be guided by Catholic beliefs. (Origen and other early Christians said the same thing about allegory, since it first developed among the ancient Greeks.) That is to say, literary criticism can help us to appreciate Scripture as the Word of God when conducted from the perspective of faith.

Kurz begins with a close reading of the Prologue of John's gospel based on the presumption that Scripture continues to speak to believers today in a very personal way, a presumption shared by patristic commentators. He includes a quite interesting section that studies the main phrases of the Prologue in relation to the Nicene Creed, with which it shares many terms. In this way, he keenly stresses the eternal relevance of Scripture to the beliefs of the Church. Kurz does something similar in another enticing chapter where he discusses John 20:19–23 and forgiveness of sins in relation to the discussion of the sacrament of reconciliation in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. These two chapters reflect a guiding principle of Kurz's exegesis, intertextuality, as he demonstrates how Scripture and authoritative texts of Tradition can and need to mutu-

ally inform and guide one another. The other two chapters that deal with John both concern elements of Chapter 6, the Bread of Life discourse and the Feeding of the 5000, with a particular focus on the Eucharistic imagery. Kurz makes use of interpretive models and terms of diverse contemporary theorists (Boyarin, Ricoeur, Riffaterrre, and Gadamer among others) as well as another form of intertextuality, this time an exploration of key Old Testament passages that shed light on portions of John 6. It would be helpful for the reader to already have some familiarity with these authors and interpretive techniques, as Kurz moves through them somewhat quickly. Kurz's other chapter takes a different tack as he engages the Protestant scholar Richard Hays on the use of Scripture in the debate on abortion. This informative section illustrates, as Kurz himself remarks, the difference between the Catholic "both/and" and Protestant "either/or" approaches to Scripture, the former of which reads Scripture as an organic unity, the latter as a kind of prooftexting.

Finally, it is worth noting one of Kurz's continually evident exegetical principles, the hermeneutics of understanding. In his last chapter, Kurz provides a key, albeit too brief, discussion of the hermeneutics of suspicion versus the hermeneutics of understanding or consent. Kurz reminds us that biblical scholars, unlike their secular literary critical counterparts, have been delinquent in acknowledging that there is not only no presuppositionless text, but no presuppositionless reader. Those who employ the hermeneutics of suspicion to expose a bias of the biblical text tend to fault the text itself, rather than themselves, for the meaning they claim to discover. While Kurz endorses the legitimate role of the hermeneutics of suspicion in the areas of historical and sociological reconstructions of the world of the biblical authors, he raises the crucial question, how can a believer approach the Word of God with suspicion? Those who do subvert the role of the biblical text to judge us.

One hopes that many Catholic scholars enter into Johnson and Kurz's conversation. While their approaches to the topic differ somewhat (Johnson's more analytic discussion, Kurz's exegetical thrust), and they disagree on certain details, Johnson and Kurz strongly concur on the dire need to strengthen Catholic biblical scholarship in order to serve both the academy and, more importantly, the Church. They are not the first to voice such concerns. Indeed, De Lubac, Balthasar, and, more recently, Cardinal Ratzinger have all pondered how best to use modern critical methods and remain faithful to the Church's Tradition. Still, Johnson and Kurz have made an immense contribution to today's consideration of these issues. While they do not shy away from controversy in their critique of the present state of affairs, as the subtitle comments they seek to be constructive.

Thus, the ten questions they pose together in the final chapter articulate specific questions and call for others to respond. In this way, perhaps they will help Catholic biblical scholars to see the road more clearly. NV

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The Metaphysics of the Incarnation: Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus by Richard Cross *(Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 2002)* 388 pp.

ONE OF THE difficulties presented to those who study medieval theology and philosophy is the sheer number of impressive figures, whose works are often voluminous and technical, which merit serious attention. It is understandable, then, that scholars often deal with this problem by restricting their focus to key figures such as Aquinas, Scotus, or Ockham. Happily, Cross eschews this strategy and while giving due consideration to Aquinas and Scotus, does not hesitate to provide detailed accounts of an impressive array of fascinating, though less familiar, medieval theologians. This inclusive approach makes *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation* an indispensable work for those interested in medieval Christology and metaphysics.

The central problem for medieval Christology was to provide an adequate account of the relation between Christ as an individual substance (a.k.a. hypostasis, person, supposit) and his human nature. Cross provides an introduction that offers a summary of this problem in light of the concerns of contemporary metaphysicians such as C. J. F. Williams and Peter Geach. In the first chapter Cross offers a more detailed and technical account of the historical and philosophical background that provides an analytical account of the different ways of characterizing the human nature; that is, as an accidental property, an accidental whole, a concrete part or as a form. The various principles discussed are conveniently summarized at the beginning of the book, and Cross refers back to them throughout his discussion. Taken together, the introduction and chapter one offer a useful introduction to some important aspects of medieval metaphysics and the approach is rigorous and charitable throughout.

The weakest part of Cross's work, in my view, is his treatment of Aquinas. While Cross accurately emphasizes the uniqueness of Aquinas's attempt to explain the hypostatic union by developing an analogy between Christ's human nature and a concrete part, his interpretation, and as a consequence his evaluation, of Aquinas is mistaken on several points. Although, I cannot provide a full account here, a few problems should be briefly mentioned. (1) Cross seems to attribute a modal version

of essentialism to Aquinas (cf. the discussion of essential and non-essential parts at 53–57), whereas Aquinas clearly adopts Aristotle's definitional essentialism (cf. *Topics*, 101b20; *ST* I, q. 77, a. 1 ad 5; *In III Sent.,* d. 35, q. 2, a. 3 qc. 1c. and many other texts); (2) Cross asserts that Aquinas is inconsistent since he adopts the concrete part model at times and rejects it at others (59), while neglecting to note that this model is used almost entirely in the context of the communication of idioms and limited, not rejected, in the context of arguing that the Word was a composite person after the Incarnation (*ST*, III, q. 2, a. 4 ad 2); (3) Cross claims that Aquinas's view that the human nature enters "into communion with the *esse*" of the Word is unique to the *Summa* and devoid of meaning (58), but the idea, though expressed in different terms, is clearly present throughout his corpus in a developed form from the *Sentences Commentary* onward (for a detailed discussion of this point and references, see my article "Aquinas on the Metaphysics of *Esse* in Christ," *The Thomist* 66 [2002]: 241–48); and (4) Cross argues that Aquinas's comparison of the relation between the divine person and the human nature to the relation between the body and the soul entails a monophysite Christology (57–58, 60, 67–69, and 80–81), while neglecting to note that this idea was not created by Aquinas but was taken from the Athanasian Creed (which is hardly a monophysite text!), and further that Aquinas uses this analogy only with clear qualifications which rule out monophysitism (*Q.D. De Union Verbi*, a.1c.).

Aquinas, however, is only a small part of the story Cross has to tell, and one should not let the shortcomings noted above distract one from the main purpose of the book. In fact, the bulk of this book is devoted to explanations of the remarkably diverse ways in which medieval theologians attempted to: (1) develop a substance-accident model to explain the relation between the Word and the human nature; (2) explain how contradictory predicates could be true of the divine person in virtue of the fact that he has two natures; and (3) explain how Christ, qua man, could be individual through appealing to different theories of subsistence. A wide range of authors are treated with admirable historical scholarship and analytical rigor on each of these problems (e.g., Bonaventure, Matthew of Aquasparta, Peter Olivi, William of Ware, Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent, Godfrey of Fontaines, Duns Scotus, etc.).

Cross does not, however, intend to offer a merely historical study. Rather, he hopes to present a history which can inform current theological discourse. To this end, he concludes his book with a chapter outlining the lessons which medieval Christology has to offer theologians today. Much of the discussion is devoted to the contemporary concern

to explain the claim that Christ is one person in view of the fact that he is traditionally held to have a human and a divine intellect and will. This is a rather unusual theme for Cross to conclude with, since the majority of his book is given over to discussing metaphysical issues related to simplicity, immutability, the communication of idioms, and so on. Of course, most of the medieval theologians Cross discusses had developed sophisticated philosophical and theological explanations of Christ's psychological and volitional duality. However, while I agree with Cross that the medievals have much to say that is of value to contemporary theology in this respect, one wonders why he did not write a history of medieval discussions regarding Christ's intellect and will, if that is the contemporary dispute to which he hopes to contribute. Consequently, I find the connections between Cross's impressive history of the metaphysics of the Incarnation and his contemporary "programme for Christology" somewhat unclear.

Nevertheless, one can only admire the erudition and clarity of argument that *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation* offers. It is by far the most thorough and engaging treatment of the subject to date and will surely remain so for years to come. NV

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On Creation, Conservation & Concurrence: Metaphysical Disputations 20–22 by Francisco Suárez, SJ. Translation and introduction by Alfred J. Freddoso *(South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2002)* 267 pp.

WITH THE present volume, Professor Alfred J. Freddoso of the University of Notre Dame brings to completion an eight-year project. The goal was to supply an English translation of the extensive treatment of efficient causality found in Francisco Suárez's *Disputationes Metaphysicae* (first published in 1597). In 1994, Freddoso produced a much-praised English rendering of *Disputations* 17, 18, and 19 dealing with efficient causality in general. This present work provides translations of *Disputations* 20, 21, and 22 on creation, conservation, and concurrence wherein the divine actions of causality are more specifically considered.

In his 1994 work, Freddoso supplied a brief seven-page introduction touching on the significance of Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) as a metaphysician and the importance of the *Disputationes Metaphysicae*. The present volume provides a much more extensive scholarly commentary to comple-

ment the very fine translations. Freddoso begins with a four-page Preface followed by an introduction of 110 pages. There is also a three-page appendix that outlines the topics covered in all 54 *Metaphysical Disputations*.

Prior to his work on Suárez, Freddoso had already distinguished himself as a translator of William of Ockham and Luis de Molina. These present English renderings display the qualities of a skilled linguist. Freddoso is able to supply the word order in English that most clearly expresses the ideas and arguments of the Latin original. Appropriate use is also made of parentheses, a technique that helps to shorten some otherwise lengthy sentences. In a similar manner, Freddoso often breaks down long paragraphs into several brief ones, a method that allows for easier comprehension in translation.

A question, though, could be raised over Freddoso's decision (in the table of contents for *Disputation* 22, sections 1, 3, and 4) to render *Deum, Dei,* and *Deus* as "god" rather than "God." Since the uppercase is used in the Latin original of the 1856–1861 Vives/Berton *Opera Omnia*, the translation should follow suit. One may likewise wonder why the heading of section 2 which begins, *Utrum concursus causae primae . . .* , is translated as: "whether god's concurrence. . . ." To be sure, God is the first cause, but Suárez could have chosen *Dei* rather than *causae primae* if he wanted God to be understood directly. Apart from these minor issues, Freddoso's translation is a remarkable achievement. The clarity and texture of Suárez's Latin prose is rendered into smooth and accurate philosophical English. Only an outstanding scholar, skilled in Latin as well as metaphysics, could achieve what Freddoso has done.

In addition to his laudable translation work, Freddoso deserves praise for his learned and detailed introduction. Three important purposes are achieved: (1) a clear case is made for the superiority of Scholastic metaphysics in opposition to the "hermeneutic of condescension" that prevails in Anglo-American circles toward classical, medieval, and Baroque philosophies of being; (2) the general scope of Suárez's entire *Disputationes Metaphysicae* is set forth with admirable clarity, with special attention given to the relationship of theology to metaphysics; and, (3) Suárez is presented as "a profound metaphysician" with "breadth of vision and analytic depth" (p. cxxi), especially in regard to efficient causality and divine action.

On the relation of theology to metaphysics, Freddoso takes issue with Jorge Gracia who argues that Suárez parts company with earlier Scholastic philosophers by his more "modern" separation of theology and philosophy. By quoting extensively from the preface to the *Disputationes*, as well as the introduction to the first *Disputation*, Freddoso makes a strong case

for Suárez's "repeated insistence on the intimate connection between metaphysics and theology" (p. xxi). In recognizing the distinction between revealed theology and metaphysics, Suárez was in continuity with the earlier Scholastic tradition. A distinction in method, though, in no way negates the common pursuit of wisdom shared by both theology and metaphysics. Moreover, Suárez makes clear that his "ultimate aim in writing the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* is theological" (p. xviii).

Freddoso, of course, is aware that in writing the *Metaphysical Disputations*, Suárez *did* part company with the earlier commentarial approach used by Scholastic theologians and philosophers. I am less inclined than Freddoso, however, to look upon the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* as Suárez's "own well-ordered, extensive and creative commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*" (xvii). As José Pereira has noted, the *Disputationes* represent "the first modern treatment of metaphysics not written as a commentary on Aristotle. . . . Suárez imposes his own order on the entire work, on the principal and subordinate themes, on their outlines and details" (cf. "John of St. Thomas and Suárez," *Acta Philosophica* 4 [1995]: 118). If Freddoso understands "commentary" in a very broad sense, then his analysis is acceptable—but certainly not in the strict sense.

Freddoso likewise claims that the first twenty-three volumes of Suárez's collected works were meant to be "an extensive and creative commentary on St. Thomas's *Summa theologiae*" (p. xvii). It is true that in his early writings Suárez follows the commentarial method. For example, *De Incarnatione* (1590–1592) is, in fact, a commentary on the third part of the *Summa theologiae.* After writing the *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, however, Suárez abandoned the commentarial method—even in his theological writings. In later and posthumously published works such as *De religione* (1608–1625), *De gratia* (1619), and *De angelis* (1620), Suárez becomes a monographer rather than a commentator, choosing to deal with specific topics in a treatise or monograph form.

Since Aristotle and Aquinas are well-known historical figures for students of philosophy, it is certainly useful to situate Suárez's thought in reference to them. A careful reading of *Disputations* 20–22, however, reveals Suárez to be his own thinker. Only in the most general sense can the great Jesuit be understood as a "commentator" on Aristotle and Aquinas. As Freddoso himself notes, Suárez found the arrangement of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* to be "disorderly" (p.xvii). And although Suárez cites Aquinas with respect, he does not hesitate to depart from the Angelic Doctor on specific points (such as the real distinction between essence and existence; cf. p. liii).

The actual contents of *Disputations* 20–22 deal with some of the most important topics of metaphysics. Efficient causality in creation is the

major theme in number 20. Suárez is not content with examining things only as they are; he also seeks to understand "whether it can be known by natural reason whether any being is possible or even necessary" (pp. 2ff.). Likewise, he inquires as to whether the power to create demands "an infinite power of acting" (pp. 25ff.) and "whether there can be an instrument of creation" (pp. 55ff.). Further investigations are made as to "whether creation is distinct from the creature" (pp. 65ff.) and "whether a newness of being belongs to the nature of creation" (pp. 93ff.).

In *Disputation* 20, Suárez manifests certain themes that will prove to be central to his metaphysics (especially in *Disputations* 29–31), viz., the distinction between created and uncreated being *(ens creatum et increatum)* and the distinction between dependent and independent being *(ens ab alio and ens a se)*.

Disputation 21 investigates the nature of divine concurrence and whether "created beings always depend for their *esse* on the actual influence of the first cause" (pp. 108ff.). The distinction between conservation and creation is also pursued (pp. 121ff.) along with the question "whether things depend for their conservation on God alone""(pp. 130ff.).

Disputation 22 enters into the topic of divine cooperation or concurrence with secondary causes. Section 4 deals with one of the most subtle issues of philosophy and theology, namely, "how does God give His concurrence to secondary causes" (pp. 216ff.). The matter is most crucial with respect to free agents since the questions of divine foreknowledge, free will, and responsibility are all implicated. Freddoso, as a translator of Molina, is cognizant of the historical controversies surrounding these issues, and he judiciously refrains from any judgment as to the coherence of the respective Thomist and Jesuit systems. Nevertheless, he does describe Suárez's proposal in *Disputation* 22.4.13–39 as "ingenious" (p. cxviii). God's concurrence is applied not only to the acts that the free creature chooses but also to other possible acts that are not chosen. The theological inference therefore follows: "God also wills to give sufficient grace to those He foreknows will not make good use of such grace, in order that they might be absolutely capable of making good use of such grace" (DM 22.4.39; p. 237).

With this present volume, a total of 16 of the 54 *Metaphysical Disputations* of Suárez have now been completely published in English translations going back to 1947 (i.e., 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 28, 29, 31, and 54; also part of 23). Freddoso notes that Suárez's "stature among Catholic thinkers was recently enhanced by the explicit and laudatory mention of the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* in Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (1998), number 62. This is true, but Suárez has also been

cited as an authoritative source by previous popes, including Benedict XIV (Denz.–Hün, ⋆2567) and Pius XII (Denz.–Hün. ⋆3914). Moreover, Pope Paul V (r. 1605–1621) bestowed upon Suárez the title of *Doctor Eximius* (the Exceptional or Uncommon Doctor) as a sign of his esteem for the great Jesuit.

A number of factors can be offered to explain the eclipse of Suárez's thought during the latter half of the twentieth century. These need not concern us here. It is more important to highlight the significant contribution made by Professor Freddoso in this present volume, a contribution not only to historical research but also to Catholic philosophy in its most profound expression—the science of being known as metaphysics. NV

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Characters in Search of Their Author: The Gifford Lectures, Glasgow, 1999–2000 by Ralph McInerny *(Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000)* xii + 138 pp.

IN HIS WILL, Adam Lord Gifford of Scotland (d. 1887) provided for the founding of an annual lecture series at Scottish universities treating "the true knowledge of God." The Gifford lectures rapidly became one of the foremost events in the field of natural theology and religion. Ralph McInerny recently joined the esteemed list of Gifford lecturers when, in Glasgow from October 26, 1999 to February 22, 2000, he delivered ten lectures exemplifying Lord Gifford's intention that they be "intelligible to an educated but non-professional audience." Published under the title *Characters in Search of Their Author*, these lectures are a propadeutic to natural theology rather than proofs of God's existence and pure perfections. Customarily, Gifford lecturers produce a more technical volume after the published lectures. McInerny's follow-up tome, *Praeambula Fidei*, will soon be issued by University of Notre Dame Press.

In his lectures McInerny sets out to remove the obstacles currently impeding natural theology. He admits that his is a modest task, but it is one of fundamental importance and superbly executed. He provides a sound response to recent arguments leveled against natural theology—perhaps the most impressive of which issue from the pervasive atheism and nihilistic relativism currently dominating the philosophical scene. Representatives of this camp include Nicholas Everitt, Michael Martin, and Wallace A. Murphee among others. But McInerny also counters arguments against natural theology proposed by believers in God, such as

Kierkegaard, who think it impossible or unseemly to prove God's existence. With these lectures, Dr. McInerny takes pride of place among the other recent defenders of the human capacity to know truth and to prove the existence of God such as Alvin Plantinga and R. Douglas Geivett (author of *Contemporary Perspectives on Religious Epistemology*).

The first five lectures, "Whatever Happened to Natural Theology," address several weighty objections to natural theology. Against those who would invalidate the efforts of believers to prove the existence of God on the grounds that they presuppose the conclusion of their inquiry, McInerny observes that everyone—believer or not—has some antecedent suppositions when approaching the question of God's existence. He shows that convictions of faith in God not only fail to impede natural theology, but give the believer a tremendous advantage over the nonbeliever in philosophical inquiry. Religious belief does indeed influence philosophizing, but the truth known by the light of faith illumines and perfects the natural reasoning of the Christian philosopher since both supernatural and natural truth have the same source in God, the First Truth. This is McInerny's understanding of "Christian philosophy." In any event, all arguments—regardless of the antecedent convictions of their proponents—are able to be assessed by criteria independent of these antecedent attitudes, and McInerny promises to demonstrate this assertion in his forthcoming *Praeambula Fidei*.

McInerny traces the progressive degeneration of philosophy from Descartes to the present. He notes that both Cornelius Fabro and Kierkegaard, for different reasons, perceived a latent atheism in the Cartesian turn. Since the modern epistemological turn, "our mind's contribution becomes increasingly dominant and defining of reality" (20). Things as they are independent of our thinking them are considered, eventually, non-existent. Ultimately no assertion is true or false. "As Fabro has argued . . . something begins with Descartes that has atheism as its logical consequence. That consequence has now been drawn. It should be obvious that theists would be unwise to seek to state their case in terms of philosophies that are essentially atheistic. But theologians, alas, irrepressibly attempt this, as witness their odd fondness for Heidegger" (28). McInerny joins Kierkegaard in refuting modern theology "root and branch."

McInerny responds to the assumptions of the "regnant nihilism" and its attendant relativizing of truth in classical form by reproducing Aristotle's *reductio* against sophists who would deny the principle of noncontradiction. He asserts that our knowledge and language "are of reality" and that language is ordered to knowledge and knowledge to the real. "Whether or no contemporary nihilists accept consistency . . . it is

by reflection on the basis of consistency, the principle of contradiction, that one regains a correct understanding of the relation between words and thought and things in themselves. Once that has been reestablished, natural theology becomes a possibility" (56).

In the last five lectures, "The Recovery of Natural Theology," McInerny both addresses the subjectivity of Kierkegaard and Newman and re-establishes the conditions for natural theology. Kierkegaard rejects purely theoretical knowing and reduces all understanding to practical, subjective, existential knowing. For him, then, the existence of God cannot be proven. One must live as though God exists in order to arrive at a subjective, inward knowledge of his existence. McInerny upholds Kierkegaard's denial that the *mysteria fidei*, such as the Trinity or the Incarnation, are susceptible to proof. But he counters Kierkegaard's denial of the proofs for God's existence and the other *praeambula fidei*. While both are revealed, the *praeambula* are also knowable by unaided reason, whereas the *mysteria* are not.

Newman, in his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, predicates the illative sense of all reasoning, practical or theoretical. He identifies this sense with Aristotelian "phronesis" or prudence: the . . . virtue that guides judgment in matters of conduct. McInerny argues that Newman's universal extension of practical judgment over the whole range of thought fails to account adequately for theoretical truth: the conformity of mind to the real. Only practical reasoning, as the conformity of the mind to rectified appetite, has production as its end.

Though he may initially seem to reprove Kierkegaard and Newman for baldly asserting God's existence, McInerny interprets these great Christian thinkers more benignly, claiming that neither are discussing, strictly speaking, natural theology. Kierkegaard, in fact, denies the very possibility of natural theology and his subsequent reflections occur under a different rubric: the leap of faith. For Kierkegaard, only a subjective assertion of personal faith in God is possible. And Newman, in his *Apologia*, is recounting and defending his conversion from Anglicanism to Catholicism, not the beginning of his belief in God.

In lecture nine, "That God Exists," McInerny laudably sails against the stream of a good deal of neo-Thomist thought on the *prima via*. He contends: "Obviously the proof from motion has to be understood in its own terms and, I suggest, when it is, the proof clearly works" (115). With St. Thomas, McInerny understands the proof of the Prime Mover as the capstone of physics. In this proof, "motion" is to be understood physically instead of metaphysically or existentially. Instead of a detailed exegesis and defense of this proof, this lecture responds to the common objection that Aristotle's physics is obsolete by upholding Aristotle's analysis of

change and his definition of motion.

In his final lecture, "Faith and Reason," McInerny portrays his project as a deliberate response to Pope John Paul II's request in *Fides et Ratio* for Catholic philosophers once again to "verify the human capacity to know the truth, to come to a knowledge which can reach objective truth by means of that *adaequatio rei et intellectus* to which the Scholastic doctors referred." (*Fides et Ratio*, no. 82). In response to the current philosophical malaise, it now ironically falls to believing philosophers to defend reason's ability to know the truth in order to defend the faith. McInerny's survey of the movement of modern and contemporary philosophy away from God and Christian revelation complements that of the Holy Father in *Fides et Ratio*, nos. 45–48: "The Drama of the Separation of Faith and Reason." With the Holy Father, McInerny confronts the pervasive contemporary crisis in philosophy (see *Fides et Ratio*, no. 83). But perhaps unlike the Holy Father, McInerny, following Fabro, sees idealism, rationalism, and nihilism as more or less a direct consequence of Descartes's untoward subjective turn and his undue rejection of his philosophical predecessors—a practice which has since become commonplace.

In his Gifford lectures, McInerny succeeds in removing obstacles impeding natural theology by redressing nihilistic relativism and the modern turn to the subject. This collection is highly recommended for the well educated non-expert as well as for natural and fundamental theologians and their students. The lectures are simple enough to be grasped by the astute undergraduate, yet profound in their penetration of first principles and their implications for thought and reality. NV

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Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary
by Luke Timothy Johnson *(New York: Crossroad, 1997)* xii + 224 pp.

THIS SERIES of literary commentaries, of which Charles Talbert has been general editor, has had a rather long life span compared to other similar efforts. It has provided students of the New Testament with helpful overviews of various New Testament books, guiding them to gain a sense of the narrative flow of a work and its overall scope and character. Luke Johnson's recent contribution to the series is a welcome addition, especially as it draws on the insights he has gained from many years of teaching Romans. But this brief work is not merely Johnson's lecture notes put into a palatable form. It is clear enough that he has done a good deal of

reading and interacting with other scholars on the many dimensions of Romans, a book that has produced more scholarly response than any other work from that period of antiquity.

One of the first things one notices about the book is that Johnson states very forthrightly in the preface that this study will reflect the impact made by both mentors and peers during his years at Yale. It is thus a work indebted at various points to Wayne Meeks, Abraham Malherbe, Nils Dahl, and peers like Richard Hays, Stanley Stowers, and Steven Kraftchick. Among other things this means that Johnson is full cognizant of the recent discussions about the social setting of Paul's letters, about the theology of Paul discussions that went on for many years in a Society of Biblical Literature seminar, and about "the faith of Jesus Christ," a phrase that Johnson takes to mean what Hays has suggested it meant—not faith in Christ, but rather the faithfulness of Christ. Thus one discovers that this reading of Romans by Johnson does indeed produce various fresh insights, eschewing some of the well-trodden paths of Catholic and Protestant exegesis. Johnson, however, admits that his penchant to choose a both/and solution to an exegetical dilemma to a notable crux (e.g., who is the "I" in Romans 7) probably does reflect his own Catholic heritage.

In a review of this scope it is only possible to list a few of Johnson's insights and conclusions. First, Johnson rejects the notion that Romans is some sort of dogmatic treatise or summary of Paul's greatest theological hits. He believes the book to be written for very practical reasons—Paul wants the support of the Roman Christians for his ensuing missionary work in the west and he also wants their prayer support for his current mission which involves taking the collection to the church in Jerusalem. To these ends Paul has sent Phoebe as his agent to Rome with the letter to organize and gather support for the further missionary work in the west. Underlying the letter is a concern that Jew and Gentile be united in Christ, which in the case of Rome means that Paul must address an overwhelmingly Gentile audience and convince them of, among other things, the fact that God has not replaced his Jewish people with a Gentile one, for God still has plans for his Jewish people in the future (see Rom 9–11). The good news is for the Jew first and also for the Gentile, and so Gentile Christian hubris must be curbed.

One of the most refreshing parts of this work is that Johnson brings to his reading of it an awareness that Romans has rhetorical dimensions which shape the way Paul argues throughout, but at the same time Johnson balances his interest in the literary aspects of Romans with a helpful discussion of its theological substance. Like many others, Johnson takes Rom 1:16–17 to be the thesis statement (or *propositio*) of the entire docu-

ment and as such it announces the theme of a salvation that is universal in scope in that it is for all peoples, but particularistic in that it comes to all through both faith in Christ and the the faithfulness of Christ. Johnson takes a both/ and approach to the phrase *dikaiosune tou theou* as well—it refers to the righteous character of God but it also refers to the righteous and just work God intends to do in fulfilling his promises to redeem. Romans does indeed answer the questions. Is God impartial or is he unjust? Has he abandoned those he made promises to in the Old Testament era? Paul's answer is of course that God has not abandoned his first chosen people, but what he has done is that in Christ he has set up a new basis of relating to all—so that salvation for all is on the basis of mercy and grace on God's part and faith in Christ on our part.

Johnson handles well the intertextual dimensions of Romans, with its many echoes and allusions to the Old Testament. This proliferation of allusions in Romans reflects Paul's rhetorical strategy to integrate his Gentile audience into the storied world of God's people and make them recognize their indebtedness to their Jewish heritage.

Johnson clearly distances himself from the older Lutheran and Augustinian approaches to the interpretation of Romans 7. He argues that this material in Rom. 7 is not autobiographical, either about Paul when he was a Jew or about Paul as a Christian. Rather it is the perspective of one who serves God freely in the Spirit, who adopts the persona of one who is struggling with sin and/or the law. Paul's point is that submission to the Law could not be an adequate basis for relating to God. One had to have faith in Christ. Indeed the effect of the Law on a fallen person can be death-dealing rather than life-giving. Paul believes that the Mosaic covenant has had its day and ceased to be. From henceforth, there is a new covenant, and it would be anachronistic to go back and submit to the Law in the eschatological age. In short, as Galatians already suggested, Paul takes a salvation historical view of the Law. It was and is a good thing, but it was intended to superintend God's people until Christ came (see Gal 4).

Johnson's treatment of Rom 9–11 makes clear that he is no Calvinist. He affirms of course that Paul is talking about election, but not, says Johnson the election of individuals to eternal salvation or damnation. There is a sort of corporate election in Christ, as previously there was in Israel, and there is also election language used to discuss God's use of particular individuals like Pharoah in human history for various purposes. It is the latter that Johnson emphasizes: "the fate of these historical individuals is not the point. . . .God's loving Jacob is the election of the people of Israel to play a certain historical role without reference to the salvation or blessedness of Jacob the person" (p. 160).

There are many more worthwhile insights, but we must draw this review to a close. Perhaps the clearest endorsement I can give of this work is that I look forward to using it in my own classes on the exegesis of Romans. It should prove a good guide to this most famous of all Pauline letters for a long time to come. NV

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Your Word is Truth: A Project of Evangelicals and Catholics Together edited by Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus *(Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002)* 168 pp.

ROMAN CATHOLIC theologians who are aware of the trends in the popular Catholic literature and speaking circuits of the past decade might expect a work billed as "A Project of Evangelicals and Catholics Together" to be as uncomfortable as a seat between antagonists at a dinner party. Discovering that "the relationship between Scripture and tradition" is the only item on the menu might increase this discomfort sufficiently to prompt the faint of heart to decline the invitation (vii). For most of the ordinary devout, the new(est) apologetics have solved this issue one-sidedly in favor of the Catholic approach; for some Catholic theologians or students of theology, a personal commitment to that answer makes such a discussion seem irrelevant for any but the most uncritical and/or ecumenically sentimental. One can only imagine that such is the same on the Evangelical side of the fence.

Yet reading only a few pages of *Your Word is Truth* is enough to turn both disdain and discomfort into eager attention, and to stand ordinary theological prejudices on their heads. The depth of insight in the essays collected in this volume is distinguished by an all-too-rare pairing of virtues: theological astuteness and ecumenical charity. In regard to the first, the volume justifies the reputations of the distinguished Evangelical and Catholic theologians who dutifully and diligently entered the discussion. In regard to the second, every individual contribution justifies, from page to page, the frequent assertions of an earnest and common desire for unity *in the truth* which permeate the joint statement that begins it (1–8).

This statement (which shares the name of the volume) is itself an excellent summary of the individual essays which follow it, all of which are devoted to some aspect of the nature or the transmission of divine revelation. Therefore, in considering the individual papers I will follow the advice of the editors and read them in relation to the statement

(vii–viii), using the latter as a guide and an ordering principle for the evaluation of the former.

Regarding the nature of revelation, the statement proclaims a unity of faith in the fundamental nature of God's self-disclosure as being a unity of deeds and words—"a sequence of revelatory and redemptive acts that involved the uttering of verbal messages and the producing of written records" (2). It also professes a unity in belief in the fullness and finality of God's revelation through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit "in these last days" (Heb 1:1) (2). This is borne out in all the essays, which bear not the slightest taint of modern skepticism regarding God's Word. This common reverence seems to be the very medium which allows for the mutual openness demonstrated by the contributors, all of whom seem aware that this is not always to be presupposed in the contemporary scene of biblical scholarship.

The statement begins the list of differences between Catholics and Evangelicals with the distinction between the Evangelical and Catholic conceptions of the Church (2–3). It seems to this reader that this difference is the most pivotal in the essays to follow. In fact, the dilemma of Scripture and tradition discussed in *Your Word is Truth* could be presented as an ecclesiological dilemma: Is the Church a congregation of distinct receptors of the Word of God joined by this reception and the salvation it offers? Or is the Church one mystical receptor whose reception is primarily that of the living presence of Christ the Head in the Church his body?

Notions of the Christian community, both Evangelical and Catholic, are ubiquitous in *Your Word is Truth*. It could be argued that the greatest service the volume offers is to make Catholic notions of Evangelicalism more three-dimensional and vice versa. Interestingly, this is achieved more through the unself-conscious way in which the authors examine and describe the approach of their own communities to God's Word in life and worship than by any argumentation which occurs.

In this regard three papers stand out. The first, "The Bible in Use: Evangelicals Seeking Truth from Holy Scripture" by J. I. Packer, is an adept explanation of the historical development of the Evangelical heritage and its relationship to Scripture. While this paper includes the most vigorous defense of the Evangelical approach to Scripture, Packer does not fail to also include much courageous denominational self-correction, especially of "evangelical isolation from the mainstream Christian heritage of Bible-based theology and wisdom over two millennia" (77). It is in this article that the contrast between Catholicism and Evangelical life and congregational organization most stands out to the

Catholic reader, especially in references to things such as "missional strategies" formed through "the agency of parachurch institutions and networks which, with their international links, correspond more and more to the multinationals of the business world" (61). However daunting, this and other descriptions of Evangelicalism by Packer fit the work nicely, precisely because they help to frame the more doctrinal differences that are being investigated.

John Woodbridge's "The Role of 'Tradition' in the Life and Thought of Twentieth-Century Evangelicals" goes even further toward helping Catholics understand the role of Church (and therefore, in some way, "tradition") in the understanding of God's Word in contemporary Evangelicalism. What Packer offers to a sociological understanding is inflected by Woodbridge's explanation of the differences in how to conceive of the relationship of Scripture and tradition that exist among those various groups broadly identified as "Evangelical," including non-confessional and confessional varieties, as well as Pentecostalism (129–143). He concludes that such differences exhibit that while remaining critical of " 'Tradition' if it is defined as an unwritten revelation of God equal in authority to Holy Scripture," "Evangelicals have been influenced by traditions or have created traditions themselves" (143).

Finally, the masterful concluding paper by Father Francis Martin titled "Reading Scripture in the Catholic Tradition" does for describing the lived experience of a Catholic approach to God's Word what Packer and Woodbridge do for the same in the Evangelical experience. Describing the monastic approach to Scripture in chant and the common prayer of the Psalms almost as an icon of the Catholic understanding of the centrality of Scripture (148–150), Martin offers (it seems, at least, from the outside) a beautiful and compelling resonance with the devotional primacy of the Bible in Evangelicalism. On the basis of this, Martin then proceeds to reveal the philosophical issue that aggravates the separation between Catholics and Evangelicals on the issue—the absence of a "hermeneutics of trust" and "disclosure" characterized by a notion that Scripture read in faith "*makes present* that which it speaks about" (155–156). It seems to this reader that Martin connects the historical crisis of the beginning of Evangelicalism with the contemporary crisis of Catholic scholarly exegesis by showing them to be (a) cut from the same cloth of suspicion, and (b) contrary to the best instincts of *both* traditions.

The implicit ecclesiological dilemma mentioned above can be seen in the most striking section of the statement, which is a mutual admission of the misunderstandings of the relation of Scripture and tradition in the wider Evangelical and Catholic communities (4–5). The first, offered by

the Evangelical signers, is the rejection of the widespread interpretation of *sola scriptura as nuda scriptura*—"literally, Scripture unclothed, that is, denuded of and abstracted from its *churchly context*" (4)—in other words, the rejection of a notion of the Church that is thoroughly extrinsic to revelation. In the case of the Catholic signers, the misunderstanding of some Catholics that the centrality of the Church relativizes revelation is rejected through the rejection of a two-source conception of revelation that would make tradition "a parallel and independent source of authoritative teaching" (5).

This affirmation of the primacy of Scripture and "the coinherence of Scripture and tradition" (5) receives its finest expression in the paper of Father Thomas G. Guarino titled "Catholic Reflections on Discerning the Truth of Sacred Scripture." Through a careful historical analysis, Guarino explains the potentially misleading expression of the Council of Trent in which "unwritten traditions" seem to be placed on a par with "the written books" of the Bible (82–89). In fact, Catholics can (and, it seems, should) interpret passages in Trent and Vatican II by the term *sola scriptura* (93). And yet, as Guarino illustrates in a masterful way by comparing the Church's declaration of the divinity of the Holy Spirit to the papal definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, this does not mean that the primacy of Scripture should be enshrined in a rigidly abstract formulation that does not allow the development of doctrine (96–101).

Guarino's excellent analysis is amply substantiated in the paper offered by Avery Cardinal Dulles titled "Revelation, Scripture and Tradition," in which Cardinal Dulles, in his incomparable style, gives a revealing look at the *status quaestionis* in the light of *Dei Verbum* and in recent theology and ecumenical activity before and since the Council. Indeed, these two papers together could be amplified into an entire course in the development of the Catholic doctrine of revelation.

Yet the most compelling paper in this regard, and indeed the most significant paper in *Your Word is Truth*, is the opening paper by Timothy George, "An Evangelical Reflection on Scripture and Tradition." All of the contributions represent authors willing to thoroughly examine their own respective traditions, yet it is George who looks most searchingly and penetratingly at both notions of Scripture and tradition. Therefore, it is not surprising that his contribution offers the most promising insights for future engagement and authentic ecumenical development.

Of his own tradition, George concludes that Evangelicals can "speak meaningfully of the coinherence of Scripture and Tradition" (16) if they wish to continue to speak with the Reformers, who "saw themselves as

part of the ongoing Catholic tradition" in three particular ways: "their sense of continuity with the Church of the preceding centuries; their embrace of the ecumenical orthodoxy of the early Church; their desire to read the Bible in dialogue with the exegetical tradition of the Church" (16). Using the doctrine of justification by faith alone as his main example, George finds in the efforts of the Reformers to substantiate this belief a truly Catholic engagement of what Melchior Cano would later call the *loci theologici* (17–19). He therefore concludes that by *sola scriptura* Evangelicals should not mean trying to "open the New Testament as if mortal man had never seen it before," which could only result in "raucous cacophony" rather than "exegetical polyphony" (20).

Of the Catholic tradition, George receives with remarkable trust (in a compelling example of what we have already seen Martin referring to as a "hermeneutics of trust") the significant theological developments of the latter half of the twentieth century in the Church's notion of Tradition as its very life and consciousness. Leaning heavily on George Tavard's *Holy Writ or Holy Church*, he approaches *Dei Verbum* in a way strongly appreciative of the "more liberated understanding of Tradition" that it requires (25). He rounds out his consideration by exploring some related issues such as canonicity, inerrancy, proclamation, and doctrinal development, showing both points of contact and divergences with equal candor and balance (25–32). Finally, he exegetes certain passages from *Dei Verbum* that are troublesome to Evangelicals, and concludes that only one constitutes "an insuperable barrier between Catholics and Evangelicals": namely that "both sacred tradition and sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence (*DV* 9)" (34). Given his remarkable openness to searching for points of contact as well as his willingness to criticize malformations of his own tradition, George's reduction of the entire issue to whether or not Scripture and sacred Tradition are coequal and not simply coinherent seems justified in its precision.

Your Word is Truth can only be faulted for lacking total comprehensiveness, which was hardly a necessary scope to impose on its contributors. One might hope for more discussion of individual sources in the Catholic tradition in a discussion that rightly focuses on misinterpretations of Trent. In this regard Thomas Aquinas, with his own *sola scriptura* doctrine (*"sola canonica scriptura est regula fidei"—In Ioannem* 21.6.2656), would seem to be a prime candidate for consideration.

Yet it almost seems trite to make such a remark when referring to *Your Word is Truth*. It is a model of truly fruitful ecumenical discussion. In this regard, perhaps one of the future projects for the contributors to this

volume (who are all part of an ongoing project called "Evangelicals and Catholics Together") would be to compose a joint statement on the method and spirit of dialogue they employ, so that other ecumenical enterprises can benefit from the example of their excellent approach. NV

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