A Tribute to Ralph McInerny

JANET E. SMITH
Sacred Heart Major Seminary
Detroit, Michigan

MANY will write of Ralph's impressive scholarship and diverse interests. I will write some about Ralph's accomplishments but I want to write mostly about Ralph as a person, a friend, and mentor. I am, however, one of the few who thinks she knows how Ralph managed to have such prodigious scholarly and popular output. I am convinced his mind was working full steam on several tracks at the same time; it was churning out puns and witticisms constantly; it was working on the latest novel; it was solving complex philosophical problems, processing profound and sometimes poetic thoughts, and it was fully focused on whomever he was talking with—all at the same time. Now how you do that?! I don't know but I think that was what he was capable of doing. To the question, "is the light on when the refrigerator door is closed?" the answer—if Ralph is the refrigerator—is "Yes—and there are several ice makers doing their job at all times as well."

It was not hard to love Ralph. He was simultaneously suave, sophisticated, urbane, relaxed, welcoming, and down-to-earth. He was tremendously and effortlessly charming. Recently I saw just a few minutes of an old Bing Crosby movie and the resemblances seemed to me to be startling. His romantic interest said to the ever debonair Bing, "You are so charming, sincere, and stable." That is a good list to commence complimenting Ralph. Bing was also always ready to burst into some comforting, mellifluous song that seemed to put the world right and so it was with Ralph; he seemed to have the perfect words for all occasions. Bing and Ralph both had a look of benign mischief in their eyes; you knew that at any minute you could be in for some gentle teasing that would serve somehow to build you up, not tear you down.

Bing captures the grounded but light hearted side of Ralph—the side that was expressed by his joyful sauntering through life. For the intense purpose-driven life that Ralph led, Moses comes to mind as the fitting analogue. Both undertook the mission of leading many to the promised land. Ralph was acutely aware, more than anyone I have known, that he was building on the work of his forefathers, for whose work he expressed pious gratitude, and knew he had an obligation to shape those who were to carry on the work in future generations. In a sense, his life was an unrelenting effort to remind us of eternal truths and our obligation to do what we could to preserve them, understand them deeply, build on them, and pass them onto others. For many summers he ran both a summer workshop for accomplished and for up-and coming Thomists and a workshop on Basic Catholicism for those who couldn't find reliable presentations of fundamental Catholicism anywhere. (Isn't it wonderful that those days are over? In part thanks to Ralph's solace and training of many.) Summer after summer he sat in the front row in rapt attention for talks he had heard countless times or talks he could have given much much better. Always full of compliments to the speakers; always spectacularly accessible to the attendees. And we would find that at the end of the week, he had somehow found time to write another book. That multi-tracked mind!

It would be easy to exhaust one's supply of positive adjectives in describing Ralph. I am confident that all who write tributes to him will mention his kindness since that was perhaps his most salient characteristic—after his manifest intelligence. Much of his kindness was sub tabula. I remember watching Ralph ask a poor young scholar at a conference if she would be at the banquet; she made some lame excuse (which I did not recognize as lame) for an inability to attend. Not long after we parted, I saw a conference organizer approach her with an "extra" ticket for the event. I knew Ralph had purchased one for her. For years he attended to the widowed Jean Oesterle like she was his mother; he helped find scholarly projects that kept her going; gave her an office nearby and doted on her with his daily friendship. I am sure these examples could be multiplied exponentially.

Ralph was marvelous to me during my trials at Notre Dame. He befriended me when I was a raw recruit in the fight for the good and true and never acted like he was the "great man" supporting the clueless newbie; he always treated me as an equal although I knew I was privileged to have him as a mentor and friend. His "mentoring" was of the most subtle kind; in fact, I learned most simply by being in his company and observing him deal with people. It was also most edifying to watch

him hatch new improbable schemes and seemingly make them materialize overnight. I remember his wife Connie and I agreeing that very few people wake up each morning with a new grand idea for saving Western Civilization or for putting an end to dissent in the Church and there are fewer who make most of them happen, but Ralph was that kind of guy.

When I was denied tenure at Notre Dame, Ralph was prepared to spearhead an effort to challenge the decision and even went to consult a lawyer with me. I admit I didn't know whether his foremost motive was to support me or to gather material for some impending novel. And he wasn't nice only to those who occupied the same ecclesial camp as himself; he was notorious for championing anyone who he thought got a raw deal, among them a prominent feminist whom he used to debate about the possibility of women becoming priests. When she was denied tenure, he battled for her.

Ralph never backed away from a fight, yet never was pugnacious or belligerent; he was always the gentleman, always fair, always gracious. Indeed, he was undeniably fairer to his opponents than they were to him, both his opponents in the scholarly world and those in the academy. I doubt that anyone could accuse Ralph of underhanded behavior. Still, he didn't hesitate to use his resources to advance the causes and people he believed in but, again, transparently and fairly. When Notre Dame started becoming friendly to the political maneuvering of the gay/lesbian lobby, he arranged for a series of speakers on campus who defended Church teaching. It infuriated many, but Ralph doggedly reverenced the Church and its authority more than he reverenced the trendy irreverent climbers at Notre Dame.

I remember a wonderful quodlibetal ("ask whatever you like") session at the University of Dallas where Ralph fielded questions with the finesse of Roger Federer returning brilliant volleys. That's when I realized that those who are in the top 1% of intelligent people can easily make those who are in the top 2% look like fools if they want to. Ralph didn't want to but you knew there was phenomenal power behind that charm. Ralph didn't want to flatten anyone. He just wanted to lay out the truth so carefully and clearly that rejecting it would seem simply foolish. Ralph made the world seem a friendlier and more intelligible place by conveying the attitude that a lot of it does make sense if you just use your mind to think about it—and embrace and trust the Catholic faith! His clarity and certainty about truth did not tend toward dogmatic closure on questions. The truth we know is just a stepping stone to further knowledge, knowledge cloaked in beauty and wonder and those privileged to have minds trained to discover it, were obliged to do so and pass that knowledge on

to others, with an equal combination of humility and determination. Ralph's humility and determination inspired others to imitate his approach to the search for understanding.

Connie, refreshingly candid and delightfully feisty in her own right, was the perfect wife for Ralph. At home, they entertained beautifully together; it was a pleasure to be invited to events on Portage Avenue attended by many of the old guard at Notre Dame; the intimate and warm friendships were a comfort to all; the conversations were erudite, hilarious and captivating.

I hope it is not irreverent, but in fact Ralph reminded me a lot of God (after all, we are supposed to be as perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect). God is harder at work than any of us; involved in projects galore, but always ready to interrupt those projects to help us achieve our ends. And God seems to be equal work and play; he not only instructs and helps us constantly, he continually provides us with things to delight us. So, of course, did Ralph. I never knew who the "real" Ralph was, whether he was a philosopher or a mystery writer at heart. But, like God, he seemed to want to give us some very serious food for the mind and then to give us some enchanting frivolity as a complementary palate cleanser.

I count Ralph among those who stood by me and shaped me. I know there are countless others who have been the beneficiaries of his goodness. I know his children must feel infinitely blessed to have had him and Connie as their parents; his colleagues and friends at Notre Dame must feel infinitely blessed to have had him as colleague and friend. We were all immeasurably blessed to have had Ralph in our lives; we pray now that he is enjoying truly infinite blessings in the arms of the Truth he loved and defended so well. NV

Obedient unto Death, Even Death on a Cross: Christ's Obedience in the Soteriology of St. Thomas Aquinas

MARK ARMITAGE
Durham, England

IN *The New Testament and the People of God*, N. T. Wright describes how first-century Jewish theology saw salvation-history in terms of God's sapiential plan for dealing with the sin of Adam by using Abraham and his family to bring God's grace first to Israel (understood as the true Adamic humanity) and thence to the entire cosmos.[1] Wright then shows how, for Paul, Abraham's family has become part of the problem rather than the solution.[2] According to Paul, the solution to the problem is quite simply Jesus Christ, who effectively undoes the sin of Adam, fulfilling in his own person all of the symbols of Israel (Torah, Temple, Land, Messiah),[3] instantiating in himself the true Adamic humanity, inaugurating the new creation, and incorporating those who have faith that God has fulfilled his covenant promises in Jesus into his New Covenant family.[4] Recent Aquinas scholarship suggests that Thomas needs to be read in a similar light. In particular, Matthew Levering writes that "at the heart of Thomas Aquinas's scientific theology of salvation lies the narrative of Scripture—the fulfillment of Israel's Torah and Temple through the

[1] N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge [SPCK], 1992), 262–79.

[2] Ibid., 403–9.

[3] N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK, 1996), 369–442.

[4] N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 18–40; *Paul: Fresh Perspectives* (London: SPCK, 2005), 36–37; (as Tom Wright) *What St Paul Really Said* (Oxford: Lion, 1997), 135–50.

New Covenant of Christ Jesus."[5] For Aquinas, as for Paul, what Jesus does is to deal with the sin of Adam by fulfilling Israel's Torah and Temple and by manifesting in himself that graced, redeemed humanity which he shares sacramentally with the members of his mystical body, who thereby become God's New Covenant family.

In this study I propose to show that one of the many ways of looking at Christ's fulfillment of Torah and Temple is to focus specifically on the question of Christ's obedience. Aquinas's understanding of salvation-history in terms of the history of disobedience and obedience unfolds in four stages: (1) Adam's sin of disobedience, (2) God's sapiential preparation for a solution in terms of Israel's external obedience to him through Torah, (3) God's reversal of Adam's sin in terms of Christ's internal and external obedience, and (4) the New Law, which consists in that internal obedience which is the result of the grace of the Spirit communicated by means of the sacraments in virtue of which the members of Christ's mystical body share in his true Adamic humanity (that is, Adam's state of original justice plus additional sanctifying grace).[6] In what follows I shall be focusing on phase 3 of this narrative—Christ's reversal of the sin of Adam through his meritorious, satisfactory, and sacrificial obedience—and in this regard I propose to discuss passages from Aquinas's commentaries on Philippians, Romans, Hebrews, and John, and also from that part of the *Summa theologiae* where Aquinas addresses the question "whether Christ died out of obedience," in order to trace the lines of the biblical narrative of disobedience and obedience, which culminates in Christ's Torah-fulfilling passion.

Commentary on Philippians: Obedience as Humility

A key text for Aquinas is Philippians 2:8–9: "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross. For this reason God also has exalted him, and has given him a name which is above all names." In his commentary on Philippians Aquinas explores these verses in some detail, and begins by explaining that Paul is commending the humility of Christ as this manifests itself in the mystery of his passion.[7] He quotes

[5] Matthew Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation according to Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 3.

[6] Original justice includes sanctifying grace (*Summa theologiae* I, q. 95, a. 1); "in the state of perfect nature man needs a gratuitous strength superadded to natural strength for one reason, viz. in order to do and wish supernatural good; but for two reasons, in the state of corrupt nature, viz. in order to be healed, and furthermore in order to carry out works of supernatural virtue, which are meritorious" (*ST* I–II, q. 109, a. 1).

[7] Thomas Aquinas, *Super epistolam ad Philippenses lectura*, cap. 2, lect. 2. The idea that Christ's humility reverses the pride which lies at the heart of original sin is key

Sirach 3:20—"The greater you are, the more you should humble yourself in all things, and you shall find grace before God"—and argues that, since Christ is the greatest of all men inasmuch as he is also God, it follows that it is especially appropriate for him to humble himself.[8] At this point Aquinas introduces the idea that "the manner of humility and the sign of humility is obedience."[9] This is the corollary of what is said in the *Summa* about Adam's pride resulting in an inordinateness of will (*inordinatio voluntatis*) which results in disobedience to the divine command.[10] In effect, the sign of humility is obedience, and the sign of pride is disobedience, and, as we shall see, Aquinas equates sin (especially pride) with *inordinatio*, and hence with disobedience, and righteousness (especially humility) with *rectitudo ordinis*, and hence with obedience.

According to Aquinas, the chief characteristic of the proud is that they follow their own will. The proud seek *altitudo*, and it is a characteristic of the one who is "high" that he does not allow himself to be ruled by another, but wishes to rule over others.[11] The antithesis of this *superbia* and *altitudo* is *obedientia*, and the fact that Christ is made obedient (*factus est obediens*) serves to demonstrate the perfect *humilitas* of his passion, which his obedience also renders meritorious, inasmuch as "obedience invests our suffering with merit" (*obedientia dat meritum passionibus nostris*).[12] Joseph P. Wawrykow shows that Aquinas understands merit in terms of the divine *ordinatio*—that is, God's ordering of the life of grace in a "sapiential" fashion which "refers to the wisdom of God that formulates a plan for manifesting the goodness of God in the creation."[13] This divine and sapiential *ordinatio* helps bring about the proper *ordinatio* of the human being both internally (*rectitudo ordinis*) and externally (*ordinatio* towards the goal of eternal life),[14] and merit can be seen as consisting in obedience to the divine commandments inasmuch as the latter denotes both that *rectitudo ordinis*

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to Aquinas's reading of Philippians. See Francesca Aran Murphy, "Thomas' Commentaries on Philemon, 1 and 2 Thessalonians and Philippians," in *Aquinas on Scripture: An Introduction to His Biblical Commentaries*, ed. Thomas G. Weinandy, Daniel A. Keating, and John P. Yocum (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 177–78.

[8] *Super Philip.*, cap. 2, lect. 2.

[9] Ibid.: "Modus humiliationis et signum humilitatis est obedientia."

[10] *ST* II–II, q. 163, a. 1, ad 1.

[11] *Super Philip.*, cap. 2, lect. 2: "quod non reguletur alio, sed ipsa alia regulet."

[12] Ibid.

[13] Joseph P. Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action: "Merit" in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 180–82.

[14] *God's Grace and Human Action*, 170–71.

which derives from humility and that co-operation with the divine *ordinatio* which orders the will both internally and externally.

In the Philippians commentary, Christ is made obedient "not by his divine will, which is the rule, but by his human will, which is ruled in all things according to his Father's will."[15] The idea that Christ allows himself to be ruled by his Father's will anticipates the discussion about Christ's subjection to the Father in the *Summa* where Aquinas speaks of "the subjection of subservience, whereby every creature serves God, being subject to his *ordinatio*,"[16] grounding what he calls this "*subiectio obedientiae*" in Philippians 2:8 ("becoming obedient unto death"). This "subjection of obedience" to the divine *ordinatio* needs to be understood in relation to that proper *ordinatio* (*rectitudo ordinis*) of the lower parts of the soul to reason and of reason to God in which original *iustitia* consists,[17] and represents a configuration with God's sapiential *ordinatio*.[18] By justification, God effectively "re-orders" what has become disordered, bringing about a restoration of this *iustitia* or *rectitudo ordinis*.[19] The obedience in virtue of which Christ is ruled entirely by his Father's will—that is, the perfect subjection of his will to that of his Father—constitutes Christ as truly just and well-ordered, and is the means by which he merits both for himself and for others.[20]

Aquinas observes that it is fitting that Christ's passion is characterized above all by obedience, because Adam's transgression was one of disobe-

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[15] *Super Philip.*, cap. 2, lect. 2: "Non voluntate divina, quia ipsa est regula; sed voluntate humana, quae regulata est in omnibus secundum voluntatem paternam." Aquinas quotes Matthew 26:39: "not as I will, but as you will." On Christ's human will, see Paul Gondreau, "The Humanity of Christ, the Incarnate Word," in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas,* ed. Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 266.

[16] *ST* III, q. 20, a. 1: "subiectio servitutis, secundum quod omnis creatura Deo servit, eius ordinationi subiecta."

[17] *ST* I–II, q. 113, a. 1: "Justice is so-called inasmuch as it implies a certain rectitude of order (*rectitudo ordinis*) in the interior disposition of a human being, in so far as what is highest in humans is subject to God, and the inferior powers of the soul are subject to the superior, i.e. to the reason; and this disposition the Philosopher calls 'justice metaphorically speaking.'"

[18] Cf. Wisdom 16:24 ("the creature serving you, the Creator") cited in *ST* III, q. 20, a. 1.

[19] J. Mark Armitage, "A Certain Rectitude of Order: Jesus and Justification According to Aquinas," *The Thomist* 72 (2008): 45–66. See also Brian Davies, O.P., *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 335–39; Daniel A. Keating, "Justification, Sanctification and Divinization in Thomas Aquinas," in *Aquinas on Doctrine: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Thomas Weinandy, Daniel Keating, and John Yocum (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 139–58.

[20] J. Mark Armitage, "A Certain Rectitude of Order," 57–66.

dience: "For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just" (Rom 5:19).[21] Again, he draws attention to the pattern whereby disobedience leads to sin/injustice and obedience leads to justice. Aquinas perceives that Christ's obedience is comprehensive of both his humility and his *iustitia*. "By obedience," says Aquinas, "we understand every virtue, because a man is just inasmuch as he keeps the commandments of God,"[22] and one might almost say that, for Aquinas in his commentary on Philippians, sin equals pride equals disobedience, while virtue equals humility equals obedience. Accordingly, because Christ's fullness of grace, itself a consequence of the hypostatic union, constitutes him as *iustus* from the outset,[23] it follows that his original justice necessarily manifests itself in humble obedience in such a way that the latter prolongs his justice—his *rectitudo ordinis*—throughout his entire mission, culminating in the meritorious obedience of the Cross.

Aquinas explains that the highest form of obedience is displayed "when someone follows the command of another contrary to the movement of his own will."[24] The *motus* of the human will tends towards two things—life and honour—and, in dying on the Cross, Christ refuses neither death (in the act of dying for our sins) nor ignominy (inasmuch as death on a Cross is *ignominiosissima*). In the *Summa* Aquinas argues that Adam's sin of *superbia* consisted above all in coveting an inordinate likeness with God, and in relying on himself "in rejection of the divine order of rule" (*contempto divinae regulae ordine*).[25] In the Philippians commentary, Christ's acceptance of death and ignominy is, in effect, the precise opposite of Adam's craving *similitudo* with God, for by his humble obedience he accepts the *divinae regulae ordo* and so effects the undoing of Adam's sin of pride and disobedience. Elsewhere Aquinas interprets this re-ordering in terms of the restoration of the *imago Dei*, which was lost

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[21] Cited in *Super Philip.*, cap. 2, lect. 2. In the *Summa* Aquinas contends that "man's first sin consisted in his coveting some spiritual good above his measure; and this pertains to pride," but he adds that "[m]an's disobedience to the divine command was not willed by man for his own sake, for this could not happen unless one presuppose inordinateness in his will. It remains therefore that he willed it for the sake of something else. Now the first thing he coveted inordinately was his own excellence; and consequently his disobedience was the result of his pride" (*ST* II–II, q. 163, a. 1, corpus; ad 1).

[22] *Super Philip.*, cap. 2, lect. 3: "per obedientiam intelligitur omnis virtus: quia ex hoc est homo iustus, quod mandata Dei custodit."

[23] On Christ's fullness of grace, see *ST* III, q. 7, aa. 1 and 9.

[24] *Super Philip.*, cap. 2, lect. 2: "quando sequitur imperium alterius contra motum proprium." Cf *ST* II–II, q. 104, a. 3.

[25] *ST* II–II, q. 163, a. 2.

by Adam's prideful and disobedient quest for *similitudo*,[26] and Romanus Cessario has argued convincingly that (1) original justice can be identified with the perfection of *imago Dei*, (2) sin can be identified with the loss of the divine image,[27] and (3) Christ's work of atonement needs to be understood in terms of the restoration of the divine image.[28]

Having discussed Christ's humility, Aquinas now examines the reward (*praemium*) of this humility, which is *exaltatio et gloria*.[29] He is drawing here on Luke 14:11 and 18:14—"Because everyone that exalts himself, shall be humbled; and everyone that humbles himself, shall be exalted"—and Job 22:29—"For he who has been humbled shall be in glory." From this it follows that, since Christ was exalted in virtue of the fact that he humbled himself, we should know that, if we humble ourselves, we too shall be exalted as long as we humble ourselves in obedience to the divine will.[30] In the *Summa* Aquinas shows how Christ merited his own exaltation by humbling himself.[31] He explains that "when anyone by reason of his unjust will ascribes to himself something beyond his due, it is only just that he be deprived of something else which is his due," and that "likewise, when any man through his just will has stripped himself of what he ought to have, he deserves that something further be granted to him as the reward of his just will." In his passion "Christ humbled [*humiliavit*] himself beneath his dignity," and so by the "lowliness" (*humilitas*) of his passion merited *exaltatio*. What Christ merits for himself he merits also on behalf of the members of his mystical body, so Christ's *humilitas* merits *gloria* not only for himself but for all the faithful (Jn 17:10).[32]

Christ's humble obedience can be understood not only as merit but also as sacrifice. Aquinas quotes 1 Samuel 15:22—"obedience is better

[26] Cf. Joseph P. Wawrykow, *The SCM Press A–Z of Thomas Aquinas* (London: SCM Press, 2005), 101–2. On the *imago Dei* according to Aquinas, see especially D. Juvenal Merriell, C.O., *To the Image of the Trinity: A Study of the Development of Aquinas' Teaching* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990); A. N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 68–72.

[27] The *imago Dei* consists in knowing and loving God in imitation of God's knowing and loving of himself: "[M]an is said to be the image of God by reason of his intellectual nature; he is the most perfectly like God according to that in which he can best imitate God in his intellectual nature. Now the intellectual nature imitates God chiefly in this, that God understands and loves himself" (*ST* I, q. 93, a. 1).

[28] Romanus Cessario, O.P., *The Godly Image: Christ and Salvation in Catholic Theology from Anselm to Aquinas* (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1990), 181–90.

[29] *Super Philip.*, cap. 2, lect. 3.

[30] Ibid.

[31] *ST* III, q. 49, a. 6.

[32] *ST* III, q. 48, a. 1, corpus and sed contra.

than sacrifices: and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams"—and observes that "to make an offering from what is external to oneself is a great thing, but to make an offering out of one's own body is greater, and to make an offering out of one's soul and will, which takes place through obedience, is the greatest thing of all."[33] Aquinas makes a similar point in the Summa where he quotes Gregory the Great to the effect that "obedience is rightly preferred to sacrifices, because by sacrifices another's body is slain whereas by obedience we slay our own will," and concludes

> any other acts of virtue are meritorious before God through being performed out of obedience to God's will. For were one to suffer even martyrdom, or to give all one's goods to the poor, unless one directed these things to the fulfilment of the divine will, which pertains directly to obedience, they could not be meritorious, as neither would they be if they were done without charity, which cannot exist apart from obedience.[34]

Elsewhere in the *Summa* Aquinas presents sacrifice as a sensible and exterior sign of our interior subjection to God: "[I]t is a dictate of natural reason that man should use certain sensibles, by offering them to God in sign of the subjection and honor due to him [*in signum debitae subiectionis et honoris*]."[35] In the commentary on Philippians Aquinas applies these principles in such a way as to portray Christ's sacrifice as a matter of humble obedience (consisting in subjection to God) in virtue of which he reverses Adam's prideful disobedience, establishes in himself the true (that is, obedient, well-ordered, graced) Adamic humanity, and merits exaltation for himself and eternal life for the members of his mystical body.

Commentary on Romans: Obedience as Justice

In his commentary on Romans, Aquinas argues that one way of looking at Christ's death is to see it "as depending on Christ's will to suffer." He explains that "his will . . . was formed unto the taking up of death, since, out of obedience to the Father, 'He became obedient' to the Father 'even unto death' (Phil 2:8), and, out of charity towards men, 'Christ loved us and gave himself up for us' (Eph 5:2)."[36] Viewed in this light, says Aquinas,

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[33] *Super Philip.*, cap. 2, lect. 3: "offerre de rebus exterioribus est magnum, sed maius si de corpore, maximum autem si de anima et voluntate tua, quod fit per obedientiam."

[34] *ST* II–II, q. 104, a. 3.

[35] *ST* II–II, q. 85, a. 1.

[36] *Super epistolam ad Romanos lectura*, cap. 5, lect. 2: "secundum quod processit ex voluntate Christi patientis, quae quidem voluntas informata fuit ad mortem sustinendam, cum ex obedientia ad patrem, Phil. II, 8: factus est obediens patri usque

"the death of Christ was meritorious and provided satisfaction for our sins." Merit and satisfaction are the first two of the five soteriological models discussed in *Summa theologiae* III, question 48, the third being sacrifice, which we have already shown to be bound up with the concept of merit. We have said (quoting Joseph Wawrykow) that Christ's merit "refers to the wisdom of God that formulates a plan for manifesting the goodness of God in the creation,"[37] and exactly the same could be said of his work of satisfaction, which, like merit, has to do with God's sapiential ordination of creation through the loving obedience of Christ. Aquinas explains that "Christ gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offenses of the whole human race . . . because of the exceeding charity from which he suffered."[38] The source of Christ's merit is likewise his charity,[39] and Christ's passion is in fact a single saving action flowing from charity which may be viewed as merit, inasmuch as it is an act of his will, and as satisfaction, inasmuch as it is an act of his flesh.[40]

It is important at this stage to note that Aquinas does not see Christ's sacrifice in penal or substitutionary terms. Christ does not offer satisfaction *in place of us*; rather, through his humility and obedience he offers satisfaction in such a way that, incorporated into his mystical body, we participate in his work of satisfaction and sacrifice and merit. Rik Van Nieuwenhove writes:

> Christ's death, which functions as a sign of his utter humility and obedience, atones (*satisfacit*) because of the charity in which he bore it. This "satisfaction" changes us (and our relationship with God), not God as such. Seeing that sin is a turning away from God, through our incorporation in Christ we begin to share in the divine life through faith and charity.[41]

Christ's merit, satisfaction, and sacrifice, grounded as they are in his humility and his loving obedience, have to do with sapiential re-ordering (Wawrykow), image-restoration (Cessario), and Torah-fulfillment (Levering), and Aquinas's treatment of the *obedientia Christi* in his Romans commentary needs to be understood accordingly.

ad mortem, tum etiam ex charitate ad homines, Eph.V, 2: dilexit nos et tradidit se pro nobis."

[37] Joseph P. Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action*, 57.

[38] *ST* III, q. 48, a. 2.

[39] *ST* III, q. 48, a. 1, obj. 1.

[40] *ST* III, q. 48, a. 6, ad 3.

[41] Rik Van Nieuwenhove, "'Bearing the Marks of Christ's Passion': Aquinas's Soteriology," in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Van Nieuwenhove and Wawrykow, 291.

Key to Aquinas's line of argument is the insight that it was the *inobedientia* of Adam, which was characterized by the *ratio iniustitiae*, which constituted all human beings as *peccatores* and *iniusti*.[42] Original sin is coterminous with disobedience and inordinateness,[43] and, as Rudi te Velde has shown, humans are reduced by Adam's disobedience to a state of disorder and disharmony in the light of which they are unable to realize that freedom which is intrinsic to what it means to be truly human.[44] By the same token, it is the obedience of Christ, which bore the *ratio iustitiae*, that constitutes us (by incorporation into his mystical body) as *iusti*, and it is in this sense that we are to understand the insistence in verse 16 [referring to Rom 5:16] that "grace proceeds forth into all men unto justification."[45] It is axiomatic for Aquinas that that justification which results in a proper *ordinatio* of the lower part of the soul to the higher and of the higher part to God is the effect of grace,[46] and this grace is in turn the grace of Christ, derived from his passion and accessed by faith and through the sacraments,[47] in virtue of which the justified participate in Christ's *iustitia* and *obedientia*.[48]

Aquinas asks whether it really is the case that Adam's sin consisted in disobedience rather than pride, and quotes Sirach 10:13 to the effect that "the beginning of every sin is pride."[49] Aquinas answers that

> the first stage of pride consists in a person's unwillingness to be subject to the divine precepts, and this pertains to disobedience. From this it follows that man's first sin appears to have been disobedience, not according to the exterior action, but according to the interior movement of pride, in virtue of which he wills to go against the divine precept.[50]

Genesis 3:17 describes above all else an act of disobedience, which is put right by the obedience of Christ, which consists in his being obedient to

[42] *Super Rom.*, cap. 5, lect. 5.

[43] Original sin "is an inordinate disposition, arising from the destruction of the harmony which was essential to original justice" (*ST* I–II, q. 81, a. 1).

[44] Rudi A. te Velde, "Evil, Sin, and Death: Thomas Aquinas on Original Sin," in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Van Nieuwenhove and Wawrykow, 157–59.

[45] *Super Rom.*, cap. 5, lect. 5: "quod gratia procedit in omnes homines in iustificationem."

[46] *ST* I–II, q. 113, a. 3.

[47] *ST* III, q. 46, a. 6, ad 2.

[48] *ST* III, q. 62, a. 1: "[I]t is evident that through the sacraments of the New Law man is incorporated with Christ." The faithful share in all that pertains to his merit (*ST* III, q. 48, a. 1) and satisfaction (III, q. 48, a. 2, ad 1) in virtue of their membership of his mystical body.

[49] *Super Rom.*, cap. 5, lect. 5.

[50] Ibid.

his Father's command (*praecepto patris obediens*), and accordingly accepting death for our salvation (Phil 2:8). The obedience of Christ cancels out the disobedience of Adam, and the *ratio iustitiae* of the second Adam, in which the members of his mystical body participate, cancels out the ratio *iniustitiae* of the first.

Aquinas notes that "this does not contradict what is said elsewhere, namely, that Christ died out of charity, as is clear from Ephesians 5:2, because the fact that he obeyed proceeded out of the love which he bore towards his Father and towards us."[51] (Here, doubtless, Aquinas has in mind Mark 12:30–31 and parallels, in which Jesus summarizes the Law as love of God and neighbour.) He goes on to explain that

> by obedience and disobedience [Paul] proves that we were made sinners through one man and were justified through one man, since legal justice, which is the totality of every virtue, is discerned in observance of the precepts of the law, which pertains to the *ratio* of obedience. But legal injustice, which is the totality of every kind of wickedness . . . , is discerned in transgression of the commandments of the law, which pertains to the *ratio* of disobedience.[52]

From this Aquinas concludes that "it is fittingly said that men are constituted as just through obedience, and as sinners through disobedience."[53] Where disobedient Adam introduced the *ratio* of disobedience and constituted men as sinners (that is, "inordinate") in virtue of their legal injustice, Christ, through his obedience to the Father, introduces the *ratio* of obedience and constitutes men as just in virtue of their participation in his legal justice.

Aquinas goes on to quote Romans 6:16—"Do you not know that if of your own will [*propria voluntate*] you offer yourselves to anyone as slaves, you spontaneously [*spontanee*] become slaves of the one whom you obey—either slaves of sin, or else slaves of obedience unto justice?"[54] Significantly, *propria voluntate* and *spontanee* are not present in the Vulgate text. For Aquinas, the gifts of freedom and instinctive spontaneity are connected with the grace of the Spirit, in which the New Law primarily consists.[55]

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.: "Sic ergo convenienter dicitur quod per obedientiam constituuntur homines iusti, et per inobedientiam peccatores."

[54] *Super Rom.*, cap. 6, lect. 3.: *propria voluntate* and *spontanee* are not present in the Latin, and represent Aquinas's own gloss.

[55] *ST* I–II, q. 106, a. 1. Cf. Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas, Volume 2, Spiritual Master*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 201–11.

The *inordinatio* that follows from original sin is characterized by the loss of a spontaneous obedience of the lower part of the soul to the higher (rational) part and of the higher part to God. The Old Law offers not spontaneous obedience proceeding (by grace) *propria voluntate* but compliance with legislation out of fear of punishment. The outpouring of the Spirit makes possible the kind of spontaneous obedience (equivalent to the *obedientia sine mora* of the Rule of St. Benedict)[56] which exceeds the capacity of the Old Law,[57] restoring human beings to the *imago Dei* by enabling them to obey God out of spontaneous love.[58] Accordingly, obedience, *iustitia*, and *rectitudo ordinis* all find their fullest expression in that spontaneity which is the corollary of right order between the human soul and God.[59]

Aquinas goes on to explain that slavery to sin leads to death (that is, to damnation), and that the slavery of obedience—that is, of obedience to the divine precepts—leads to *iustitia*, and adds that "whoever obeys God is made a slave of this obedience, since, through the habit of obeying, the mind is inclined more and more towards obeying and consequently brings *iustitia* to perfection."[60] Aquinas notes that Paul presents sin and obedience as opposites (*satis convenienter obeditionem peccato opponit*), citing Ambrose to the effect that "sin is a transgression of the divine law, and disobedience of the heavenly commandments," which accords with what was said above about sin being "legal injustice."[61] This is not to say that sin equals trangression of the Old Law (which is a determination of Divine Law for a specific place and time), but that it equals a transgression of Divine Law itself—that is to say, of that Eternal Law which is a *ratio* of the divine Wisdom.[62] Where Sirach equates Torah with divine Wisdom, Aquinas equates the Eternal Law in which Torah participates

[56] *Regula Benedicti* 5:1–4.

[57] See Daniel A. Keating, "Justification, Sanctification and Divinization in Thomas Aquinas," 148–51.

[58] See Michael Dauphinais, "Loving the Lord Your God: The *imago Dei* in Saint Thomas Aquinas," *The Thomist* 63 (1999): 241–67.

[59] On "spontaneity" and the New Law, see Pedro Rodríguez, "Spontanéité et caractère légal de la loi nouvelle" in *Lex et Libertas, Studi Tomistici* 30, ed. Leo Elders and K. Hedwig (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1987), 254–64.

[60] *Super Rom.*, cap. 6, lect. 3: "Qui vero obedit Deo, efficitur huius obedientiae servus: quia per assuetudinem obediendi, mens eius magis ac magis ad obediendum inclinatur et ex hoc iustitiam perficit."

[61] Ibid.: "peccatum est transgressio legis divinae et caelestium inobedientia mandatorum."

[62] *ST* I–II, q. 93, a. 1. Jean Porter rightly emphasizes the equation of eternal law with divine Wisdom: "Right Reason and the Love of God: The Parameters of Aquinas' Moral Theology" in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas,* ed. Van Nieuwenhove and Wawrykow, 180–86.

with divine Wisdom.[63] Aquinas also identifies Eternal Law with the person of the Son,[64] so that sin-disorder-disobedience is, in effect, nothing other than a transgression of that Eternal Law which Aquinas identifies with the very person of the Son-Word-Wisdom of God. We might add that, in his divinity, Christ himself is the divine Wisdom to whom human reason (including his own human reason) is properly subordinated, while, in his humanity, the lower parts of his soul are duly ordered to the higher rational parts, and the higher rational parts stand in *subiectio* to the divine Wisdom.[65] Accordingly, Christ in his humanity is subject to himself—to the person of the Son-Word-Wisdom of God (*Christus est servus sui ipsius, et sibi subditus*).[66] As incarnate Wisdom, he is just, well-ordered, and rational—in the sense that his human reason is sapientially subordinated, subjected, and spontaneously obedient to the *ratio* of the divine Wisdom which he himself incarnates.[67]

Fundamental to his reading of this section of Romans is Aquinas's insight that those who have been slaves of sin become obedient to God "by believing, not as though compelled but from the heart."[68] Here he refers to the New Law—to "the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is given

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[63] On Sirach, see Ben Witherington III, *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 85–86.

[64] *ST* I–II, q. 93, a. 1, ad 2.

[65] On the question of Wisdom christology, see Matthew Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation according to Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 31–50; Joseph P. Wawrykow, "Wisdom in the Christology of Thomas Aquinas," in *Christ Among the Medieval Dominicans*, ed. Kent Emery, Jr., and Joseph P. Wawrykow (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 175–96.

[66] *ST* III, q. 20, a. 2, sed contra. At first sight, this appears to contradict the sixth of Cyril of Alexandria's twelve anathematizations against Nestorius: "If anyone shall dare say that the Word of God the Father is the God of Christ or the Lord of Christ, and shall not rather confess him as at the same time both God and Man, since according to the Scriptures, 'The Word was made flesh,' let him be anathema." However, Aquinas is saying not that the divine Word is Lord of the human Christ, but that the humanity of the God-man Christ is perfectly subjected (and ordered) to the person of the Word who has assumed and hypostatically united himself to that humanity and who, while remaining a divine person, truly "is" a human being. Discussing the "incarnational 'is,'" Thomas Weinandy writes that "Jesus is the Son of God existing as man" ("Aquinas: God IS Man: The Marvel of the Incarnation," *Aquinas on Doctrine*, 83).

[67] Cf. *ST* III, q. 46. a. 9: "Christ's passion was subject to his will. But his will was ruled by the divine wisdom which 'orders all things' conveniently and 'sweetly' (Wis 8:1)."

[68] *Super Rom.*, cap. 6, lect. 3: "scilicet credendo . . . et hoc non coacti, sed ex corde."

through faith in Christ" and which is written on hearts,[69] which comes through faith in Christ,[70] which leads to justification,[71] which is obeyed out of love rather than out of fear,[72] and which is the law of charity (*lex caritatis*) that leads men to perfection by bringing about their *subiectio* to God.[73] Aquinas juxtaposes texts from Romans 1:5 ("obedience to the faith, in all nations") and 10:10 ("with the heart we believe unto justice") to make the point that obedience to God which proceeds *ex corde* is what leads to *iustitia*. (This obedience, we must reiterate, proceeds from grace, is coterminous with *iustitia*, and results in ordinateness, merit, and subjection to God.) The "effect" of *iustitia* is *sanctificatio*, which manifests itself in good works (*bona opera*),[74] and leads to the end of eternal life (*vita aeterna*) "which is the end of all the just, who do everything that they do for the sake of possessing eternal life."[75] Aquinas adds that "it is also the end of the works themselves which, since they are performed out of obedience to God and in imitation of God, merit eternal life."[76] As in the Philippians commentary, so also in the commentary on Romans Aquinas presents us with a just, rightly-ordered, obedient Christ who instantiates the true, grace-filled Adamic humanity in which all the members of God's New Covenant family (that is, Christ's mystical body) can participate.

Commentary on Hebrews: Obedience as Learning

In his commentary on Hebrews, Aquinas focuses on the idea of Christ's obedience as experiential. Aquinas begins by taking Hebrews 5:8—"And whereas indeed he was the Son of God, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered."[77] Because Christ is God he possesses fulness of knowledge from the moment of his human conception, and so cannot be said to learn in the ordinary sense as he is ignorant of nothing.[78] However, Aquinas contrasts *scientia . . . simplicis notitiae* (which denotes learning in the sense of moving from ignorance to knowledge) with the *scientia experientiae*.[79] According to the latter, Christ may be said to have

[69] *ST* I–II, q. 106, a. 1.
[70] *ST* I–II, q. 106, a. 1, ad 3.
[71] *ST* I–II, q. 106, a. 2.
[72] *ST* I–II, q. 107, a. 1, ad 2. The Old Law is the *lex timoris*.
[73] *ST* I–II, q. 107, a. 1 (corpus).
[74] *Super Rom.*, cap. 6, lect. 4.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.: "Et etiam ipsorum operum, quae cum ex obedientia Dei fiant et ad Dei imitationem, vitam aeternam merentur."
[77] Aquinas, *Super epistolam ad Hebraeos lectura*, cap. 5, lect. 2.
[78] Cf. *ST* III, q. 9, aa. 1–3.
[79] Cf. *ST* III, q. 9, a. 4.

learned obedience out of what he suffered (*passus*) and experienced (*expertus*).[80] This is a "voluntary" kind of learning, and, in accepting our weakness voluntarily, he "learned obedience" inasmuch as he learned "how burdensome it is to obey, because he obeyed even in the most burdensome and difficult matters, even unto death on the cross."[81] Aquinas explains that Paul

> shows how difficult the good of obedience is, because those who have not experienced obedience and have not learned it in difficult matters, believe that obedience is very straightforward. But in order to know what obedience is, it is necessary to learn to obey in difficult matters, and whoever has not learned to subject himself by obeying does not know how to rule others well. Therefore, although Christ knew by simple recognition what obedience is, he nevertheless learned obedience by experiment from those difficult things which he suffered, namely, through his sufferings and death: by suffering and dying: "By the obedience of one many shall be made just" (Rom 5:19).[82]

In speaking of a voluntary and learned obedience, Aquinas brings together the twin themes of Christ's human will and human experiential knowledge to emphasize the freedom of Christ's obedience, and, one might say, the stark reality of his bodily and psychological suffering.[83] Christ learns the true nature of suffering and obedience from genuine and bitter experience, and it is because he gives full recognition to the magnitude and ultimacy of Christ's passion that Aquinas is able to portray Christ's learned obedience to the Father as a true, free, human, meritorious, sacrificial *subiectio*.

Aquinas now moves on to Hebrews 5:9—"And being consummated, he became, to all that obey him, the cause of eternal salvation."[84] He begins by arguing that, in Christ's own case, the fruit of his passion is glorification.[85] He was perfect from the moment of his conception, and the consummation of this perfection is the glorification which he wins in virtue of his passion. Because Christ was perfect, he was able to perfect others, for "it is the nature of a perfect thing to be able to engender its like."[86] As Aquinas explains in the *Summa*,

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[80] On Christ's human knowledge, see the excellent survey in Matthew Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple*, 31–33; 161–63.

[81] *Super Heb.*, cap. 5, lect. 2.

[82] *Super Heb.*, cap. 5, lect. 2.

[83] Cf. *ST* III, q. 46, aa. 4–8.

[84] Ibid.

[85] As in the commentary on Philippians, this notion looks forward to *ST* III, q. 49, a. 6.

[86] *Super Heb.*, cap. 5, lect. 2.

> grace was received by the soul of Christ in the highest way; and therefore from this pre-eminence of grace which he received, it is from him that this grace is bestowed on others—and this belongs to the nature of head. Hence the personal grace, whereby the soul of Christ is justified, is essentially the same as his grace, as he is the head of the Church, and justifies others.[87]

Christ arrived at that consummation of his perfection which consists in glorification "by the merit of obedience" (*per meritum obedientiae*), and in this regard Aquinas quotes one of his favourite texts on the subject of Christ's obedience from Proverbs 21:28: "[A]n obedient man shall speak of victory" (*vir obediens loquitur victorias*).[88] In virtue of his learned (and victorious) obedience, which is itself the consequence of his own personal fullness of grace, Christ embodies the true, obedient, justified Adamic humanity, meriting his own perfection, exaltation, and glorification, and communicating this perfection to others by meriting salvation for the members of his mystical body and sharing with them his justifying grace.[89]

Commentary on John: Obedience as Love

The idea of Christ's loving obedience which Aquinas explores in his Romans commentary receives even more in-depth treatment in the commentary on John. Commenting on John 14:31 ("But that the world may know, that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I") he writes: "[I]n the first place the Lord shows that it was not sin that was the cause of his death, and in the second place he shows that the cause was the virtue of obedience and of charity."[90] He adds that "two factors moved Christ to accepting death, namely love of God and love of neighbour" (*amor Dei et dilectio proximi*). The fact that Christ obeys the Father's commandments is a sign (*indicium*) that he loves him. He has already said, "If you love me you will keep my commandments," and now he declares that he himself is going to his death precisely in order that the world may know that he loves the Father, adding that

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87 *ST* III, q. 8, a. 5.

88 *Super Heb.*, cap. 5, lect. 2.

89 Daniel A. Keating, "Justification, Sanctification and Divinization in Thomas Aquinas," 144, writes: "Aquinas understands justification in rather broad terms as encompassing various aspects of the New Testament's depiction of our incorporation into Christ."

90 Aquinas, *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, cap. 14, lect. 8: "primo ostendit dominus quod peccatum non fuit causa suae mortis; secundo quod eius causa fuit virtus obedientiae et caritatis."

he is performing the commandment which his Father gave him. Aquinas explains that "the Father moved him to accept death specifically by obedience, which is caused by love."[91]

Christ's obedience is presented here as both a consequence and a demonstration of his love for the Father. The Father gave this commandment to Christ not in so far as he is Son of God but in so far as he is Son of Man, and, in order that the world might know that he obeys the Father out of love, Christ bids the disciples rise and go with him "to the place where I am to be handed over, so that you may see that it is not out of necessity but out of charity and obedience [*sed ex caritate et obedientia*] that I die."[92] Clearly this is not the obedience characteristic of the Old Law which proceeds from fear, but the obedience of the New Law, the *lex caritatis*, which is written on hearts by the Holy Spirit and which is the fruit of that grace which Christ in his human nature possesses fully and maximally. Romanus Cessario writes:

> Christ the priest of the new alliance offers to God the perfect worship of praise. Even so, it is not the sacrifice of his body on the altar of the cross in which this perfect worship mainly consists, but his personal offering of obedience and love. Since the divine will to which Christ is obedient remains identical with the salvific will of God for man's salvation, Christ's satisfactory offering opens the way up to salvation. The charity of Christ, "obedient because of his love for the Father," inaugurates the new covenant of love.[93]

Analyzing John 15:10 ("If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; as I also have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love"), Aquinas explains that to remain in the Father's love is nothing other than to keep his commandments.[94] He goes on to say that Christ demonstrates this by his own *exemplum*, and that the disciples can remain in *his* love by keeping his precepts. (These "precepts" could denote the New Law itself—the grace of the Holy Spirit inscribed on hearts—or else those written aspects of the New Law "that dispose us to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit, and pertain to the use of that grace.")[95] He adds that "the keeping of the commandments is an effect of the divine love, not only of the love by which we love, but also of the love by which

[91] *Super Io.*, cap. 14, lect. 8: "pater movit eum ad mortem suscipiendam, scilicet obedientia, quae ex amore causatur."
[92] *Super Io.*, cap. 14, lect. 8.
[93] Romanus Cessario, *The Godly Image*, 157.
[94] *Super Io.*, cap. 15, lect. 2.
[95] *ST* I–II, q. 106, a. 1.

he loves us."[96] Because God loves us, "he moves us and helps us to fulfill his commandments, which cannot be fulfilled except through grace."[97]

In regard to this last point Aquinas cites 1 John 4:10 to the effect that "charity consists not in our having loved God, but in his having first loved us." He develops this idea further when he says that "just as the *dilectio* by which the Father loves Christ is the *exemplum* of the *dilectio* by which Christ himself loves us, so also Christ wishes that his own obedience should be an example of ours."[98] Christ emphasizes that "he has remained in the love of the Father because, through all things, he kept his commandments," even to the point of accepting death on a Cross (at this point Aquinas quotes Philippians 2:8). Here Aquinas develops the idea that Christ's obedience is nothing other than the logical expression of his love for the Father. He presents remaining in the Father's love through obedience as the goal of Christ's passion. Christ dies on the Cross out of obedience to the Father specifically in order to remain in his love. Merit proceeds out of charity (most especially, out of love for God inasmuch as he is our last end),[99] and tends towards a progressive growth in grace and charity whose term is eternal life.[100] Christ's loving obedience is (as we have seen) meritorious, and merits (and exemplifies) on behalf of the members of his mystical body that justifying grace which will enable them, too, to grow in grace and charity and so merit for themselves the reward of eternal life.

Aquinas suggests that John 17:1 ("These things Jesus spoke, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said 'Father, the hour is come: glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you' ") is about Christ meriting that his petitions should be heard.[101] "Glorify me, Father," refers to the *praemium*—the reward due to merit.[102] The merit itself is twofold. Firstly, it is the merit of *doctrina*, with regard to which Christ reminds the Father that "I have glorified you," making the Father known among men and manifesting him by his teaching."[103] Secondly, it is the merit of obedience, in regard to which Christ declares "I have finished the work which you gave

[96] *Super Io.*, cap. 15, lect. 2: "Observatio enim mandatorum est effectus divinae dilectionis, non solum eius qua nos diligimus, sed eius qua ipse diligit nos."

[97] Ibid: "movet nos et adiuvat ad implendum mandata eius, quae impleri non possunt nisi per gratiam."

[98] Ibid: "Sicut enim dilectio, qua pater diligit eum, est exemplum dilectionis qua ipse diligit nos; ita voluit quod obedientia sua sit exemplum obedientiae nostrae."

[99] *ST* I–II, q. 114, a. 4.

[100] *ST* I–II, q. 114, a. 8.

[101] *Super Io.*, cap. 17, lect. 1.

[102] Cf. *ST* I–II, q. 114, a. 1.

[103] On Christ's *doctrina* (*ST* III, q. 42), see J. Mark Armitage, "Why Didn't Jesus Write a Book? Aquinas on the Teaching of Christ," *New Blackfriars* 89 (2008): 337–53.

me to do" (17:4). Aquinas notes that Christ says "that you gave me" (*quod dedisti mihi*) rather than "that you ordered" (*quod iussisti*), and explains that "it is not enough for Christ and for ourselves to be commanded divinely, for whatever Christ has inasmuch as he is human and whatever we ourselves can do is by a gift of God" (*ex dono Dei*).

The point being made here is that Christ himself, who, in virtue of God's sapiential *ordinatio*, possesses the perfection of grace and *iustitia* and *rectitudo ordinis*, obeys the Eternal Law by grace. Of course, the Eternal Law (as has been said) is itself identified with divine Wisdom—that is, with God the Son—and hence with Christ's own divine hypostasis,[104] so Christ's loving obedience represents not only the obedience of *subiectio* to his Father (which we have seen has a sapiential reference), but also the *iustitia* and *ordinatio* of his human will being in perfect alignment and harmony with his divine will (also a sapiential notion).[105] God exalts Christ because he has glorified him in his *doctrina* and because he has lovingly and freely and spontaneously made himself obedient unto death. Christ's merit consists in his obedience and in his doctrine, and the reward is (1) the glorification for which he asks in John 17:1 (the glorification of his true Adamic humanity), and (2) the justifying grace which he shares sacramentally with the members of the mystical body (God's New Covenant family) so that they also may merit eternal life through loving and spontaneous obedience in virtue of the new Law—the grace of the Spirit and the *lex caritatis*—which has been inscribed on their hearts.

ST III, q. 47, a. 2: Obedience as Fulfilment of Torah

In his discussion of "the efficient cause of Christ's passion," Aquinas asks, "Whether Christ died out of obedience?" He begins his answer to this question by invoking the argument from "fittingness," stating that it was very fitting (*convenientissimum*) that Christ should suffer out of obedience (*ex obedientia*).[106] For Aquinas, the concept of *conveniens*, like that of *ordinatio*, has a sapiential reference, and, as Joseph P. Wawrykow has shown, "aims at making manifest the meaning and wisdom of the Christian

The idea of Christ's *doctrina* as meritorious is not a feature of the discussion in the *Summa*.

104 *ST* III, q. 3, a. 8: "the Word is a concept of the eternal Wisdom, from whom all man's wisdom is derived. And hence man is perfected in wisdom (which is his proper perfection, as he is rational) by participating the Word of God, as the disciple is instructed by receiving the word of his master. . . . And hence for the consummate perfection of man it was fitting that the very Word of God should be personally united to human nature."

105 *ST* III, q. 18, aa. 5–6.

106 *ST* III, q. 47, a. 2.

dispensation."[107] In using the term "fitting" (*conveniens*), accordingly, Aquinas understands that the events and circumstances of Christ's life reflect the wisdom of the divine *ordinatio* in dealing with the sin of Adam, and render credible and comprehensible the truth about who he is (the second Adam) and what he does (by his obedience instantiating the true Adamic humanity and inaugurating the new creation).[108] In the first place, he says, it was fitting for human justification (*conveniebat iustificationi humanae*) that Christ should die out of obedience, and in this regard he quotes the key text from Romans 5:19—"as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just." In the second place, it was fitting for reconciling God with human beings (*fuit conveniens reconciliationi Dei ad homines*).[109] Here Aquinas juxtaposes three texts: "we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom 5:10); "Christ . . . has delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness" (Eph 5:2); and "obedience is better than sacrifices" (1 Sam 15:22). On the basis of these texts Aquinas argues (1) that "the death of Christ was a most acceptable sacrifice to God"; (2) that "obedience is preferred to all sacrifices"; and (3) that it was therefore fitting (*conveniens*) "that the sacrifice of Christ's Passion and death should proceed from obedience." Finally, he draws on Proverbs 21:28 ("An obedient man shall speak of victory") to argue that Christ's dying out of obedience "was fitting (*conveniens*) to his victory whereby he triumphed over death and its author; because a soldier cannot conquer unless he obey his captain." (The reference here is to Christ defeating the devil and redeeming humanity from demonic captivity.[110]) Aquinas concludes, "[S]o the Man-Christ secured the victory through being obedient to God."

The first of the objections reads: "[O]bedience is referred to a command. But we do not read that Christ was commanded to suffer. Therefore he did not suffer out of obedience."[111] Aquinas replies that "Christ received a command from the Father to suffer," and cites John 10:18 ("I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of my Father") in support of the fact that the Father has given him a command "of laying down his

[107] Joseph P. Wawrykow, *The SCM Press A–Z of Thomas Aquinas*, 57.

[108] Cf. Paul Gondreau, "The Humanity of Christ, the Incarnate Word," 258–60.

[109] Aquinas speaks of *reconciliatio* in *ST* III, q. 49, a. 4, but employs the language of merit, satisfaction, and sacrifice much more frequently when speaking of the work of atonement.

[110] Cf. *ST* III, q. 48, a. 4; q. 49, a. 2.

[111] *ST* III, q. 47, a. 2, obj. 1.

life and of resuming it again" (*ponendi animam et sumendi*).[112] Aquinas explains that "because the Old Law was ended by Christ's death, according to his dying words, 'It is consummated' (Jn 19:30), it may be understood that by his suffering he fulfilled all the precepts of the Old Law." Matthew Levering writes:

> Aquinas understands Christ to mean that the Old Law has finally been consummated in him. Aquinas then shows how Christ's perfect act of obedience, flowing from the supernatural grace that infused Christ's soul at the moment of the hypostatic union, simultaneously fulfills all three aspects of the Old Law.[113]

Firstly, "he fulfilled those of the moral order which are founded on the precepts of charity, inasmuch as he suffered both out of love of the Father . . . and out of love of his neighbor." Secondly, by his passion he "fulfilled the ceremonial precepts of the Law, which are chiefly ordained for sacrifices and oblations, in so far as all the ancient sacrifices were figures of that true sacrifice which the dying Christ offered for us." Finally, he "fulfilled the judicial precepts of the Law, which are chiefly ordained towards making satisfaction (*ad satisfaciendum*) to those who have suffered injury, since . . . he paid that which he took not away (Psalm 68:5), suffering himself to be fastened to a tree on account of the apple which man had plucked from the tree against God's command."[114] In dying out of obedience to the Father, then, Christ fulfills the moral precepts by obeying God out of charity, fulfills the ceremonial precepts by offering a sacrifice (as we have seen in the corpus, obedience is the highest form of sacrifice), and fulfills the judicial precepts by making *satisfactio* to God for Adam's disobedience in acting against God's commandment—thereby, as Matthew Levering demonstrates, enacting his threefold office of prophet, priest, and king.[115] In this he brings to perfection the precepts of the Old Law, which brought about a certain outward subjection to God, but which was unable to effect that inward subjection out of charity which is the consequence of justifying grace.[116]

The second objection reads as follows: "[A] man is said to do from obedience what he does from necessity of precept. But Christ did not suffer necessarily, but voluntarily [*non ex necessitate, sed voluntarie passus fuit*]. Therefore he did not suffer out of obedience."[117] Aquinas answers,

[112] *ST* III, q. 47, a. 2, ad 1.
[113] Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple*, 53.
[114] *ST* III, q. 47, a. 2, ad 1.
[115] Ibid., 66–79.
[116] Cf. *ST* I–II, q. 98, a. 1.
[117] *ST* III, q. 47, a. 2, obj. 2.

"Although obedience implies necessity with regard to the thing commanded, nevertheless it implies free-will with regard to the fulfilling of the precept."[118] In other words, in order for Christ to obey the Father it is necessary for him to do what the Father has commanded, but the fact that he chooses to obey comes not from necessity but from free choice.[119] Aquinas continues: "[A]lthough his passion and death, considered in themselves, were repugnant to the natural will, yet Christ resolved to fulfill God's will with respect to the same." In this regard he quotes Psalm 39:9 ("I have desired that I should do your will, O my God") and Matthew 26:42 ("If this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, your will be done").[120]

The third objection states that "charity is a more excellent virtue than obedience," but Ephesians 5:2 ("Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and delivered himself up for us") shows that Christ suffered out of charity (*ex caritate passus*), from which it is clear that Christ's passion ought to be ascribed rather to charity than to obedience.[121] Aquinas replies, "For the same reason Christ suffered out of charity and out of obedience; because he fulfilled even the precepts of charity out of obedience only; and was obedient, out of love, to the Father's command."[122] Here Aquinas picks up on what he has previously said in the commentaries on Romans and on John. Christ's charity is the source of his obedience to the Father, and also its expression, to the extent that his charity and obedience are, in effect, two aspects of the same act of loving *subiectio* and "ordinateness." Christ's *caritas* is nothing other than an act of willing obedience towards his Father, and his obedience towards his Father is a corollary of his *caritas*. Each represents the fulfillment and perfection of the Old Law in the *lex caritatis*. Each fulfills the moral, ceremonial, and judicial precepts of the Old Law. Each flows from Christ's plenitude of grace. Each is a determination of his *iustitia* and of his *ordinatio* conceived in sapiential terms both as internal "ordinateness" (*rectitudo ordinis*) and as external "order" towards his final end. Finally, each functions as merit (meriting glorification for Christ himself and eternal life for the members of his mystical body, God's New Covenant family), as satisfaction (by his own obedience undoing the

118 *ST* III, q. 47, a. 2, ad 2.

119 Cf. *ST* III, q. 18, a. 6.

120 Matthew is quoting Psalm 39:9. The full verse reads: "I have desired that I should do your will, O my God, *and your law should be in the midst of my heart*." Christ possesses the New Law inscribed on his heart by the grace of the Spirit.

121 *ST* III, q. 47, a. 2, obj. 3.

122 *ST* III, q. 47, a. 2, ad 3: "eadem ratione Christus passus est ex caritate, et obedientia, quia etiam praecepta caritatis nonnisi ex obedientia implevit; et obediens fuit ex dilectione ad patrem praecipientem."

effects of Adam's disobedience), and as sacrifice (a sensible sign of Christ's subjection to God whereby he instantiates the true Adamic humanity).

Christ's Salvific Obedience

Aquinas presents Christ's work of atonement as consisting in a freely willed and spontaneous obedience to the will of the Father, which, proceeding out of his fullness of grace, is nothing other than an expression of perfect love (reflecting *lex caritatis* as opposed to *lex timoris*). Grounded in *humilitas*, Christ merits glorification for himself and eternal life for the members of his mystical body, makes satisfaction for sin, and offers a sacrifice by which he acknowledges his *subiectio*—his *servitium sanctum*—to the Father. Christ's obedience undoes the effects of the disobedience of Adam, reintroducing that *ordinatio* or *rectitudo ordinis* by which is understood both the proper subordination of the lower parts of the soul to reason and of reason to God (that is, the *imago Dei*; the true, rightly-ordered, grace-filled Adamic humanity), and the ordering of human beings to their last end in line with God's sapiential *ordinatio* of the universe (that is, the re-ordering of a cosmos disordered by Adam's sin by means of a new creation). Finally, his free, spontaneous, and loving obedience to the Father represents the final fulfillment of the Old Law—which is itself a determination of the Eternal Law, which Aquinas identifies with divine Wisdom. In obeying his Father "even unto death," Christ fulfills Torah, incarnates divine Wisdom, and undoes the inordinatio introduced by Adam's disobedience, thus bringing to perfection God's sapiential plan for the restoration of the *imago Dei* and the redemption of the cosmos. NV

Faith and Reason: The Synthesis of St. Thomas Aquinas*

LEO J. ELDERS, S.V.D.
Rolduc Seminary
Kerkrade, The Netherlands

IN a lecture delivered at the Sorbonne on November 27, 1999, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger argued that the victory of Christianity over the pagan religions in the Roman Empire was made possible by its recourse to reason, by its reasonableness as well as by its moral doctrine; Christianity, indeed, does not rely on imagination or unverifiable events, but places itself at the junction of faith and reason. By its choice in favor of the primacy of reason in human life it continues to present a rational vision of the world and to encourage scientific research. In his encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (1998) John Paul II, dealing more *in extenso* with this theme, examines the relationship between faith and reason, the influence they have exercised on each other, and assesses the current situation of the relation between philosophy and theology. As the pope explains, our reason is not imprisoned in the sensible world but, to a certain extent, it is able to go beyond it. Reason is universal and extends also beyond what is proper to particular cultures. On the other hand the rise and fall of often dangerous and frightening secular ideologies have shown the limits of reason, which can no longer pretend to master nature, science, and progress by itself alone.[1] The encyclical sketches some of the main events of the long history of the coexistence and collaboration of faith and reason in order to highlight the support and benefits each of them

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[1] Cf. St. Thomas, *In Colossianos* 2, lectio 2, where he explains that secular philosophy may lead into error for two reasons: the mistaken views it defends and its faulty reasoning.

derived from it. In section 43 it describes the particular place St. Thomas Aquinas occupies in this history, not only because of the high value of his theology and philosophy, but also because of the dialogue he conducted with medieval Arab and Jewish thought.

St. Thomas Aquinas on Faith and Reason

If we try to analyze the position of Aquinas, we must recall that Thomas was the first theologian to distinguish with great clarity between theology and philosophy. Their difference, he writes, derives from their different sources, from the way they proceed, and from their respective subject matters.[2] Indeed, differences in the source of knowledge and the way of knowing entail a diversity of disciplines.[3] Sacred doctrine receives its principles from divine revelation, namely, the fundamental truths of the faith as expressed in the articles of the creed. Philosophy, on the other hand, acquires its fundamental principles through evident insight into the structure of reality. It proceeds by gathering knowledge through experience—by analyzing and drawing conclusions from what is based on evidence. Sacred doctrine, on the other hand, proceeds in the twilight of the faith, without possessing evident knowledge about the truths it considers. While accepting the creed on divine authority, theologians use concepts, principles, and insights of everyday life and sound philosophy to penetrate further into the meaning of what has been revealed.

In addition to the source and basis of their respective sciences being distinct, the subject matter of sacred theology and that of philosophy also differ: philosophical disciplines study nature, man, and his actions in the light of his end, as well as being *qua* being, whereas sacred theology considers God insofar as he revealed himself and his design concerning man's supernatural salvation. Whatever God has revealed is the subject matter of sacred doctrine.[4] However, much of what has been revealed lies beyond the reach of natural reason, since it concerns infinite and tran-

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[2] See *Summa contra Gentiles* I, chaps. 7–9.

[3] *ST* I, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2: "Diversa ratio cognoscibilis diversitatem scientiarum inducit . . . Unde nihil prohibet de eisden rebus, de quibus philosophicae disciplinae tractant secundum quod sunt cognoscibilia lumine naturalis rationis, et aliam scientiam tractare secundum quod cognoscuntur lumine divinae revelationis."

[4] Thomas writes "whatever may be an object of divine revelation" (*omnia quae sunt divinitus revelabilia*) instead of "what has been revealed," probably meaning whatever is somehow contained in what has been revealed, although not explicitly stated, as for instance the *convenientia* of many facts of the history of salvation, such as the time of the Incarnation of Christ. Reflections on the *convenientia* make up a considerable part of the themes treated in the third part of the *Summa theologiae*.

scendent divine being, wisdom, and love,[5] and God's free decision, but God may also reveal certain basic truths which as such are accessible to reason, in order to make it easier for all to come to know them. As an example one may point to the revelation of the main precepts of the natural law in the Ten Commandments.[6]

But St. Thomas does not stop short at the distinction between sacred doctrine and natural knowledge. He also insists on their harmony. There can be no contradiction between true natural knowledge and the doctrine of the faith, because both have their origin in God who, as the creator of the world and of man, places the principles of our knowledge in our minds, but has also given us revealed knowledge.[7]

Because of the patent incompatibility of certain positions of Averroistic Aristotelianism with the Christian faith (such as the theory of the eternity of the world), some masters of the faculty of arts in thirteenth-century Paris developed the theory of double truth: what is established in sacred theology sometimes contradicts what is true in philosophy, so that a Christian philosopher must accept simultaneously two conflicting theses. However, Aquinas strongly opposes this view. Since all truth comes from God, in whom there is no contradiction, such a position is impossible.[8] Apparent contradictions originate from erroneous reasoning or from false deductions from the doctrine of the faith.

Grace Builds on Nature and Fulfills It

Instead of opposition and conflict, Aquinas speaks of a harmonious collaboration where the supernatural order presupposes the natural order and fulfills it. In a considerable number of texts Aquinas confirms this position: "The order in which divine providence proceeds does not take away from things what is natural for them, but God takes care of each thing according to its nature."[9] The order of grace is not even possible

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[5] *ST* I, q. 1, a. 5: "Ista scientia est principaliter de his quae sua altitudine rationem transcendunt, aliae vero scientiae considerant ea tantum quae rationi subduntur." In this connection Thomas lists as lying beyond the range of reason the dogmas about the divine Trinity, the Incarnation, grace, the sacramental order, the resurrection, glorification, and eternal beatitude (*ScG* IV, chap. 1).

[6] Cf. *ST* I, q. 12, a. 12; q. 32, a. 1; *ScG* III, chap. 47.

[7] Cf. *In Boetii De Trinitate* q. 2, a. 3: "Impossibile est quod ea quae sunt philosophiae, sint contraria his quae sunt fidei."

[8] *ScG* I, chap. 7: "Impossibile est illis principiis quae ratio naturaliter cognoscit, praedictam veritatem fidei contrariam esse . . . Quaecumque argumenta contra fidei documenta ponantur, haec ex principiis primis natura inditis per se notis non recte procedere . . . sed vel sunt rationes probabiles vel sophisticae."

[9] *ScG* III, chap. 85.

without nature, since grace is a state or quality added to it. Thus the divine law presupposes natural law,[10] as faith presupposes man's natural knowledge.[11] Indeed, grace is not meant to do away with human nature, but to raise and perfect it.[12] Grace renders nature more perfect. It does so in agreement with nature's basic characteristics. For this reason angels received their beatitude immediately after their initial choice of God, without having to go through the often long period of waiting in faith and hope which makes up the life of Christians on earth.[13] Likewise grace does not take away imperfections which are inherent to human nature itself, such as the fact that man is a creature.[14] Since nature proceeds from what is imperfect to greater fullness, grace was given first in an imperfect way but later in abundance.[15]

Thomas also indicates the manner in which grace perfects nature, namely, by assisting reason in controlling the intellect and the will as well as those lower faculties of the soul which can be controlled by reason.[16] "Since grace does not do away with nature but perfects it, natural reason must be subservient to faith as the natural inclination of the will follows charity."[17] This is so obvious for Aquinas that he even builds an argument on it: from the fact that by his natural inclination man loves God more than himself, it follows that supernatural charity also makes man love God above himself.[18] Sin, on the other hand, causes damage insofar as it obstructs the help of grace and the government of natural reason over man's faculties.[19]

What makes it possible for supernatural grace to bring about this effect is the presence in man of a certain potency toward a fulfillment and higher perfection, called the *potentia obedientialis* or *potentia obedientiae*. This potency, as Thomas understands it, is man's very nature insofar as it lies open to God, who can bring about in it whatever he has decided.[20] One might describe this potency as a creature's nature being at the

[10] *ST* I–II, q. 99, a. 2, ad 1.
[11] *ST* I, q. 2, a. 2, ad 1.
[12] *ST* II–II, q. 10, a. 10: "Ius autem divinum, quod est ex gratia, non tollit ius humanum, quod est ex naturali ratione."
[13] *ST* I, q. 62, a. 5.
[14] *In Sent.* IV, d. 49.23 ad 3m.
[15] *In Sent.* IV, d. 2.1.4B.
[16] *De malo*, q. 2, a. 11: "Gratia naturam perficit et quantum ad intellectum et quantum ad voluntatem et quantum ad inferiores animae partes obaudibiles rationi."
[17] *ST* I, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2.
[18] *In Sent.* III, d. 29.1.3.
[19] *ST* II–II, q. 164, a. 4.
[20] *In Sent.* IV, d. 8.2.3 ad 4m: "Creaturae inest obedientiae potentia, ut in ea fiat quidquid creator disposuerit."

disposal of divine omnipotence.[21] Thomas states it even more explicitly: "In all created things there is a certain *potentia obedientialis* insofar as all created things obey God receiving whatever God has decided to give them."[22] The concept of *potentia obedientialis* is used in the first place to explain the occurrence of miracles. A miracle, such as the transformation of water into wine at the wedding in Cana, is not in conflict with the supreme law of physical nature according to which material things are subservient to spiritual realities. This subordination of created things to God's power is called their *potentia obedientiae*. In a sense one might even say with Augustine that the nature of things is precisely the use God makes of them.[23] The potency to receive grace is different insofar as grace enhances nature and corresponds to man's most profound desires, whereas a miracle usually happens in discontinuity with the ordinary inclinations of natural things:[24] for example, a dangerous tumor normally keeps growing and damages the organism and a blind person does not suddenly recover his vision. St. Thomas has given a most remarkable illustration of how grace completes nature and is meant by God to fulfill our every desire. He attaches much importance to this point: his use of convincing arguments illustrates how reason can be an aid to theology and how the Christian faith is in agreement with human nature.

The Supernatural Order as the Fulfillment of our Deepest Natural Desires

Assuming that the core of man's nature is reason, Aquinas argues in a number of texts that our natural desire to know the causes of things and events, and to reach ultimate explanations, can only be fulfilled by the vision of God himself. Since a natural desire cannot be in vain, man must have a certain capacity to be brought by God to this vision, as the Christian faith teaches.[25] Man's thirst to know the truth will be quenched when he is admitted into God's company.

Together with this desire, man seeks to exist forever and to avoid the destruction of his bodily being. What the Christian religion promises is precisely eternal life with God. To this may be added the following reflection: our soul exists by its nature in a body. It is against the soul's nature

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[21] *De potentia*, q. 6, a. 1, ad 18: "potentia obedientiae secundum quod quaelibet creatura Creatori obedit."

[22] *De virtutibus*, q. 1, a. 10, ad 3.

[23] Cf. *ST* III, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3: "divinae potentiae cui omnis creatura obedit ad nutum."

[24] This point was stressed by L. B. Gillon, "Aux origines de la puissance obédientielle," *Revue thomiste* 47 (1947): 304ff.

[25] Cf. *ST* I, q. 12, a. 1; *ScG* II, chap. 55.

to be without a body. But nothing which is against nature can last forever. For this reason the soul must be united again to the body.[26]

A further natural desire disposes us to whatever we need to live rightly and to fulfill our tasks. This is actually a desire that our life be directed by right reason. In order to attain this goal one must possess the different virtues. A life according to the virtues will find its fulfillment in eternity, when right reason will direct our faculties.

Man desires to be understood by others and to have his merits acknowledged. As to this point St. Thomas observes that the blessed entering the glory of God will find complete satisfaction: their virtuous lives will lie open to others.

Connected to this is the desire to possess and to find delight in things. Now when we are united with God, we shall possess everything. Moreover, our joy will be pre-dominantly spiritual and therefore much more intense than bodily pleasures. In this way grace fulfills our fundamental longings.[27]

In this connection one may also mention the desire to live together with other human beings. As Aquinas explains, the blessed in heaven constitute one community, which will be filled with delight, because everyone will have all goods together with all the blessed.[28] One will love others as oneself and therefore rejoice in the good of others as in that of oneself. For this reason the delight and joy of each will increase to become as great as the joy of all.[29]

St. Thomas's Confidence in Nature and in Reason

Aquinas has great confidence in the rectitude of nature as it has come from the hands of the Creator. Indeed, nature tends to what is fitting for each thing. We see that man seeks by nature the sort of pleasure which agrees with him. Since man is rational, the pleasure which is becoming for him, is that which is in agreement with reason. Thomas uses this principle to argue that the virtue of temperance is not contrary to the inclination of our nature, but is only opposed to lower tendencies which do not obey reason.[30] When an act is performed according to a natural incli-

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[26] *ScG* IV, chap.79.

[27] For this list of basic human desires see *ScG* III, chap. 63.

[28] *In Symbolum Apostolorum*, art. 12: In the fourth place the communion of the saints "consistit in omnium beatorum iucunda societate, quae societas erit maxime delectabilis: quia quilibet habebit omnia bona cum omnibus beatis."

[29] Ibid.: "Diliget alium sicut seipsum; et ideo gaudebit de bono alterius sicut de suo. Quo fit ut tantum augeatur laetitia et gaudium unius quantum est gaudium omnium."

[30] *ST* II–II, q. 141, a. 1, ad 1.

nation and is directed to our end, it is morally right.[31] Repeatedly Thomas asserts that man must execute the acts to which his nature moves him, but in conformity with right reason.[32]

This confidence in reason and the basic goodness of human nature gave rise to the humanism of Aquinas.[33] Man must live in accordance with what is highest in him and integrate the various inclinations, so that they are ordained to his true end. The different virtues bring about this harmony with nature and make human behavior wise, humane, just, and kind to others. Reason helps to establish rules for our conduct, in particular-where faith does not go into details about our duties.[34] Basing himself on the need for relaxation, Thomas argues that one can set aside some of one's time for playing.[35] It is even allowed, he writes, to devote oneself professionally to entertainment—within the limits of right reason—because of the relaxation one procures for others.[36] Reason has a positive role in theology and is essential for determining our moral duties.

The Use of Reason in Theology

When we speak of the use of reason in theology we do not mean so much the use of the concepts of natural knowledge—which is obvious and necessary—as recourse to analysis, reasoning, deduction, and arrangement of the content of the doctrine of the faith. Our Christian faith is based on the authority of God who revealed himself to the prophets and, in the New Testament, revealed himself in Jesus Christ and then to the apostles and their collaborators in the redaction of the writings of the New Testament. We accept and believe the Christian message because of their testimony

However, since this testimony is given to us by men, we must be convinced of their reliability. As Aquinas explains, the miracles wrought by Jesus and the apostles, as they surpass whatever nature can bring about, guarantee the supernatural origin of the message.[37] The greatest miracle of all (*maximum miraculum*) is that simple men were able to speak with so much wisdom and force and that people were converted to believe in

[31] *ST* I–II, q. 21, a. 1: "tunc servatur rectitudo in actu."

[32] *ST* II–II, q. 69, a. 4, ad 1.

[33] See Leo Elders, "El humanismo cristiano de Santo Tomas de Aquino," in *Santo Tomas de Aquino, Humanista cristiano* (Buenos Aires: Sociedad Tomista Argentina, 1998), 9–22.

[34] Cf. Leo Elders, "Bonum humanae animae est secundum rationem esse," *Rivista Teologica di Lugano* 4 (1999): 75–90.

[35] *ST* II–II, q. 168, a. 2.

[36] *ST* II–II, q. 168, a. 2: "ordinatur ad solatium hominibus exhibendum."

[37] *ScG* I, chap.6: "quae totius naturae superant facultatem."

what goes beyond human reason—disregarding temporal goods to gain the eternal.

He adds that there are also arguments tending to make the mysteries of the faith acceptable. But this kind of reasoning is weak and serves to comfort the faithful and to keep their minds fixed on the dogmas rather than to convince nonbelievers.

With regard to the use of philosophy in the elaboration of the science of theology, such Christian authors of the second century as Justin, Tatian, and Clement of Alexandria, who had received philosophical training, resorted to philosophy to defend the Christian faith and Christians against accusations such as atheism. But they knew that philosophers had often mixed truth with falsehoods. Tertullian even called philosophy the cradle of heresies and useless questions. He exclaimed: "Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? Quid academiae et ecclesiae?"[38] During the first centuries, the Christian authors used above all elements of Stoic thought, but always insisted on the distance which separated revealed doctrine from human wisdom. In the following centuries, Platonism exercised a strong influence. Plato's philosophy in its original form and as elaborated in middle and neo-Platonism constitutes a reservoir of philosophical theories which has accompanied Christian thought up to the Renaissance and beyond. Platonism taught that things originate from a common, transcendent source and constitute a well-organized ensemble. The perfection of the First Principle is distributed in the universe according to a certain hierarchy. Furthermore, Platonism insisted on the immateriality of the human soul and its kinship with God. The soul's real home is with God, and human life must be an effort to imitate God and to prepare for a new existence. Christians, however, corrected Platonism on certain points, such as the pronounced dualism of its doctrine of man, the theory of the pre-existence of the human soul, and an overly pessimistic view of the material world.

For various reasons, recourse to Aristotle was much more limited at first.[39] However, in the second half of the twelfth and in the thirteenth century Aristotle's writings attracted many theologians. This created some difficulties at first because they contained erroneous theories of man, the origin of the world, and moral life. At the University of Paris the use of the *libri naturales* of Aristotle was forbidden for awhile, but later permitted, though with some restrictions at first. The chancellor Eudes of

[38] *De praescriptione haereticorum*, VII.

[39] See Leo Elders, "The Greek Christian Authors and Aristotle," in *Aristotle in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lawrence P. Schenk (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 111–42.

Chateauroux complained that certain theologians had sold themselves to the sons of the Greeks and Robert Grosseteste admonished the masters of the faculty of theology in Oxford to remain faithful to the traditional way of teaching theology.[40] As a matter of fact, some theologians attempted to give theology a more scientific character and to arrange the various themes in a systematic order.[41] St. Thomas Aquinas was one of the first masters to present a rigorous organization of sacred theology as a science.[42] He sets out from the Aristotelian position according to which science is knowledge of what is necessary. In theology the different themes and their causal connections must be considered from the point of view of God's knowledge. Thus creation as well as the Incarnation and Redemption are studied as God knows them, rather than as willed by God, for God's will concerns the individual and contingent.[43]

The biblical commentaries of St. Thomas contain some interesting remarks on the use of philosophy in the elaboration of theology. Philosophers distinguish themselves by their knowledge of the truth, even if the minds of some of them are obscured occasionally.[44] They have reached a certain knowledge of the truth, although not all are of the same opinion.[45] In an argument, based on social and juridical custom, used by St. Paul to show that the New Law has not done away with the Promise, Thomas sees proof that in matters of the faith one may use any truth from any science.[46] Thomas also refers to St. Jerome who, in a letter to the grand speaker of the city of Rome observed that all Christian doctors wrote *in ornatu philosophiae* and enriched their works with the doctrine and wisdom of the philosophers, so that one did not know what to admire more in them, their profane knowledge or their acquaintance with the Scriptures.[47] In his systematic works and in several of the *Quaestiones disputatae* Aquinas defends energetically the right of a theologian to make use of philosophy

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[40] See M.-D. Chenu, *La théologie comme science au XIIe siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 1969), 28ff.

[41] On these attempts see L. Sileo, *Teoria della scienza teologica: "Quaestio de scientia theologica" di Odo Rigaldi ed altri testi inediti (1230–1250)* (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Aritonianium, 1984).

[42] R. Heinzmann, "Der Plan der *Summa theologiae* des Thomas von Aquin in der Tradition der frühscholastischen Systembildung," in *Thomas von Aquino: Interpretation und Rezeption*, ed. W. P. Eckert (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald, 1974), 455–69.

[43] *De veritate*, q. 14, a. 8.

[44] *In Job*, chap. 12.

[45] *In I Timotheum* 3, lectio 3.

[46] *In epistolam ad Galatas 3*, lectio 6: "Ex quo quidem habemus argumentum quod ad conferendum de his quae sunt fidei possumus uti quacumque veritate cuiuscumque scientiae."

[47] *In I Corinthos* 1, lectio 3.

in the elaboration of sacred doctrine, even if resorting to philosophy is not without danger. The study of philosophy is legitimate and even praiseworthy because of the truth the philosophers have found, due to what God has made them understand, but because some philosophers misused their knowledge to attack the faith, the Apostle warns us: "Make sure that no one traps you and deprives you of your freedom by some second-hand, empty, rational philosophy, based on the principles of this world instead of on Christ."[48] If in the writings of the philosophers one encounters statements contrary to the faith, these are no longer philosophy but an abuse of philosophy.[49] Elsewhere Thomas speaks of the *vera philosophiae principia quae consideravit Aristoteles*.[50]

The Contribution of Philosophy

The subject matter of philosophy coincides partially with the themes studied in theology. The faith presupposes and reason demonstrates that there is one God who is the origin and cause of all things.[51] Several rules of conduct which ethics formulates also fall under theology as, for instance, that fornication is a mortal sin. On the other hand, a good number of questions belonging to faith are of the domain of the philosophy of nature (for example, the fact that the world is not eternal), or of first philosophy (such as the doctrine that divine providence is concerned with what people do).[52] Aquinas is convinced that almost all of philosophy is ordained to the knowledge of divine things.[53] It follows that certain theories can be refuted both by theological arguments and by philosophical demonstration. For this reason, Aquinas writes repeatedly that certain opinions which contradict the faith also contradict philosophy.[54] However, this does not mean that the mysteries of the faith are subordinated to philosophical reasoning. It would be a sign of great recklessness

[48] *ST* II–II, q. 167, a. 1, ad 3. The quotation is from Colossians 2:8. At *In Colossenses* 2, lectio 2, Thomas explains that the wisdom of this world may deceive us in two ways: by incorrect philosophical theories and by sophistic arguments.

[49] *Expositio in Boetii De Trinitate*, q. 2, a. 3: "hoc non est philosophiae, sed magis philosophiae abusus ex defectu rationis. Et ideo possibile est ex principiis philosophiae huiusmodi errorem refellere."

[50] *De spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 3.

[51] *In Sent*. I, d. 2, q. 1, a.1.

[52] *In Sent*. III, d. 23, q. 2, a. 4, qc. 2, arg. 3.

[53] *In Sent*. III, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 1: "cum fere tota philosophia ad cognitionem divinorum ordinetur."

[54] See *De malo*, q. 6, a.1: "non solum contrariatur fidei, sed subvertit omnia principia philosophiae"; *In Sent*. II, d. 27, q. 1, a. 1: "a dictis sanctorum discordat et philosophiae non convenit"; ibid., d. 28, q. 1, a. 2: "nec fidei nec philosophiae consonant"; *In Sent*. IV, d. 47, q. 2, a. 2, qc. 2: "repugnat enim et philosophiae";

if one would undertake to discuss these mysteries at the level of philosophy.[55] Since grace perfects our faculties and presupposes nature, the Christian faith presupposes basic natural knowledge.[56]

In his *Expositio in Boetii De Trinitate*, St. Thomas develops his doctrine of the role of philosophy in theology. First he shows that in theology one may use arguments, that is, resort to the resources of reason. Next he deals with the question of whether an authentic science about God and revealed truth, based on revelation, is impossible. Finally, he raises the question of whether in the doctrine of the faith which considers God, one is allowed to use philosophical arguments and refer to authors of acknowledged authority.[57]

With regard to the first point, some texts of the Church Fathers appear to reject the use of philosophy in theology: "Do away with arguments, when you want the faith"[58]; "Faith has no merit, if one lets reason make its object known."[59] Aquinas answers that we must seek God with all our powers and live according to what is best in us. Our mind must try to learn more and more about God in conformity with its own way of proceeding.[60] In the elaboration of theology reason does not provide strict demonstrations of the object of faith; but only presents some probable arguments.

In the second article of this question St. Thomas argues that the knowledge of God which we have received in faith can become a science. Although its starting point is not evident (contrary to the first principles in philosophy), its scientific character is warranted insofar as strict conclusions are drawn from what has been revealed. The difficulty of non-evident first principles is resolved by the subalternation of theology to divine science: the articles of the faith function as do first principles in philosophy. Having shown the scientific character of theology, Aquinas explains the role of

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Quodlibet III, q. 5, a. 3: "contra rationem doctrinae evangelicae et contra rationem philosophiae."

[55] *De unitate intellectus*, chap. 5.

[56] *In Sent.* III, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 1: "Fidei substernitur naturalis cognitio, quam fides praesupponit, et ratio probare potest."

[57] *Expositio in Boetii De Trinitate*, q. 2, a.1–3. The text dates to the beginning of St. Thomas's lecturing as a master in sacred theology in Paris. He may have chosen the first chapters of Boethius's otherwise not very important treatise, to have the possibility to develop an epistemology of theoretical sciences of unequaled depth. For more details see Leo Elders, *Faith and Science: An Introduction to St. Thomas' Expositio in Boethii De Trinitate* (Rome: Herder, 1974).

[58] St. Ambrose, *De fide* I, chap.13, 84 (PL 16:570D).

[59] St. Gregory the Great, *Homilia* 26.1 (PL 76:1197C): "Fides non habet meritum cui humana ratio praebet experimentum."

[60] *Expositio in Boetii De Trinitate*, q. 2, a. 1, ad 7.

philosophy in theology. The third article begins by quoting some statements against the use of philosophy. St. Paul reminds us that Christ did not send him to preach according to "the wisdom of language" or "in the terms of philosophy," in which the Cross of Christ cannot be expressed.[61] St. Ambrose comments: "The mysteries of the faith are free from philosophical arguments."[62] This denial of a role for philosophy finds support in the well-known text of *Letter XXII* of St. Jerome. In a dream Jerome is reprimanded by God for the fact that he has been an avid reader of Cicero, whose works he promises never to touch again. St. Augustine in his turn observes that if one finds errors in a publication, it loses its authority. The writings of the philosophers are full of errors and must be discarded.[63] One could also say that a science must proceed from its own principles and that, for this reason, theology has nothing to do with philosophy. On the other side, Aquinas quotes a number of texts of St. Paul, Jerome, and Augustine which seem to favor the use of philosophy in theology. In his solution to the question, he argues that the gifts of grace do not destroy the light of natural reason which God has given us. Therefore it is impossible that the truth which is communicated to us by God in the faith contradicts our natural knowledge. It is true that the light of reason is imperfect, but even in what is imperfect there is a certain imitation of what is perfect. In what reason proposes there is some similarity with the knowledge given to us by faith. If philosophy tells us something contrary to the faith, it is no longer true philosophy, but error, and the result of defective reasoning. Thus it is possible to refute such errors on the basis of philosophical principles.

When one uses philosophy in theology there are two ways in which mistakes occur: (a) when one resorts to theories contrary to the faith; and (b) when one measures theological doctrines with the yardstick of philosophy. Rather, philosophy should be measured by the criteria of the faith. It is obvious that the role of philosophy in theology is only a secondary one. Divine Providence arranged things in such a way that at the beginning of the Church, preaching was done in great simplicity, but that later the wisdom of the world rallied to the cause of Christ. Those who use philosophical statements in theology do not add water to the wine, but transform the water of philosophy into wine.[64] Thus theology can avail itself of the different philosophical disciplines. It does not use

[61] 1 Cor 1:17.

[62] In reality the text is Peter Lombard's, but a similar statement is found in Ambrose's *De fide* I, chap.13, 84 (PL 16:570D).

[63] *Epistola 28 ad Hieronymum*, chap. 3, 5 (PL 33:413).

[64] *Expositio in Boetii De Trinitate*, q. 2, a. 3 ad 5. Philosophical terms and insights used in theology are transposed to the level of *doctrina sacra* and integrated into it.

them because of the authority of the philosophers whose words are quoted, but only because of the intrinsic merits of what they said.

The Triple Function of Philosophy in Theology

As Aquinas argues in the article we have just summarized, the things studied in philosophy bear a certain likeness to the realities which are the object of the faith and are sometimes a certain *praeambulum* to them, as nature is to grace.[65] Consequently the function of philosophy in theology is as follows:

a. To demonstrate the *praeambula* to the faith which every Christian must know. Thomas means such truths as the existence of God, but also theses on the nature of man, free will, divine providence, and natural law. Judging according to what he does in the first books of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, Thomas has a rather broad view of what belongs to these preambles.

b. To provide a deeper knowledge of the dogmas of the faith by means of certain analogies (*similitudines*). This term includes such concepts as being, person, nature, essence, goodness, truth, unity, father, son, spirit, beatitude, virtue, love, law, etc. Philosophical reflection may also provide certain comparisons concerning the Trinity, grace, the Church, and the sacraments. In order to throw some light on many doctrines one must necessarily refer to the natural order.[66]

   In many questions recourse to a principle drawn from philosophy helps to understand the solution. To show how proper the Incarnation is, St. Thomas uses the following principle of the natural order: "What is proper to something agrees with its nature. Since God's nature is goodness itself, it is proper that he communicate himself."[67] Sanctifying grace and the infused virtues are explained by analogies with the order of nature. To illustrate somewhat the eternal generation of the Son of God; Aquinas resorts to the following principle: "The nobler a nature is, the more united to it is what proceeds from it."[68] "With regard to the truth of the faith, which can only be known by those who see the divine substance, human reason is in

[65] *Expositio in Boetii De Trinitate*, q. 2, a. 3: "Continent tamen [ea quae sunt philosophiae] quasdam eorum [sc. quae sunt fidei] similitudines, et quaedam ad ea praeambula, sicut natura praeambula est ad gratiam."

[66] *ST* I, q. 99, a. 1: "Unde in omnibus asserendis sequi debemus naturam rerum, praeter ea quae auctoritate divina traduntur quae sunt supra naturam."

[67] *ST* III, q. 1, a. 1.

[68] *ScG* IV, chap.11.

such a position that it can approach it with the help of analogies. But these are not sufficient to allow the intellect to understand the truth of the faith by means of demonstration or directly by itself." [69]

c. To refute arguments and criticisms brought forward against the faith. The *Summa contra Gentiles* is an admirable example of this task of philosophy at the service of the theologian. In this work St. Thomas wants to bring his readers to accept the presuppositions of the faith and to present the supernatural mysteries so as to make them plausible. He also refutes countless errors.

A theologian who resorts to philosophy can err in two ways: by using theories contrary to the faith or by subjecting the dogmas of the faith to the limits and criteria of reason.[70] Thomas vindicates the autonomy of philosophy while in theology he uses without any hesitation many philosophical concepts, definitions, principles, and analyses, which he recognizes as true. His certitude concerning their truth is based on their intrinsic evidence and on their astonishing harmony with the doctrine of faith. Thus he continues what such Fathers of the Church as Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil, and others had done before him. The great difference, however, is that Aquinas made use of a complete and coherent philosophy.

St. Thomas and Aristotle

This takes us to our final question. To what extent did Aquinas use Aristotelian philosophy when elaborating the doctrine of faith? Could one use a different philosophy in the study of theology?

Thomas's attitude with regard to Aristotle is complex. Quite often he follows him, but on several occasions he goes beyond what Aristotle says or even corrects and refutes him. Until about the middle of the twentieth century most authors considered the identification of Aquinas's thought with Aristotle's as evident. Certainly, Thomists acknowledged that in certain fields Thomas had gone beyond Aristotle,[71] but they were convinced that he followed the tracks of Aristotle. Augustino Nifo (d. ca. 1538) even wrote: "Expositor Thomas raro aut numquam dissentit a doctrina peripatetica; fuit enim totus peripateticus et omni studio peripateticus et numquam voluit nisi quod peripatetici." (Thomas as a

[69] *ScG* I, chap. 8.

[70] *Expositio in Boetii De Trinitate*, q. 2, a. 3.

[71] One may recall the ancient saying *Aristotele aristotelior*. In the following I make use of my article "Saint Thomas d'Aquin et Aristote," *Revue thomiste* 88 (1988): 255–76. For an extensive treatment of this topic, see now my "The Aristotelian Commentaries of St. Thomas Aquinas," *The Review of Metaphysics* 63 (2009): 29–53.

commentator seldom or never disagrees with the doctrine of the Peripatetics, since he was in every way a Peripatetic, studied their thought with great zeal and never wanted to teach differently from the Peripatetics.)[72] However, in about the middle of the past century certain Thomists began to draw attention to what they called Platonic elements in Aquinas's philosophy. In particular H.-A. Montagne, E. Gilson, and Cornelio Fabro stressed that the doctrines of being and of participation are alien to the theories of Aristotle.[73] Carried along by his "discovery" of Thomas's theory of the act of being, Gilson even went so far as to write that he felt inclined to think that the main obstacle for the diffusion of Thomism was the influence of Aristotle.[74] Gilson's disciple Joseph Owens believes that even the Aristotelian commentaries of Aquinas are influenced by his own theory of being and "a theological concern" which affects the interpretation of a good deal of Aristotle's texts.[75]

When one considers this debate more closely, it appears that Aquinas accepted a great number of basic positions of Aristotle, among which one may cite the following: the object of the sciences is the universal and the necessary, which is abstracted from concrete reality; real things and not *a priori* objects of the mind are the basis of knowledge. In addition to this realism, Aristotle proposed a division of the sciences and assigned the first place to the speculative sciences. His epistemology helped Aquinas to determine the nature of theology, while his logic provided the tools for scientific work. Aristotle's philosophy gives priority to knowledge rather than to desire or feelings. Man's happiness consists essentially in knowledge. The Stagirite is optimistic with regard to man's capacity to acquire real knowledge of things: there is finality in nature and things are, at least to a certain extent, intelligible. The main task of philosophy is the study of the causes of becoming. In this connection Aristotle developed his doctrine of the four genera of causality. The gradual discovery of the

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[72] Quoted from Cornelio Fabro, *Enciclopedia Cattolica* 12:266. The quotation is from the 13th dispute on Metaphysics VII.

[73] Some early voices in this choir were C. Huit, "Les elements platoniciens de la doctrine de saint Thomas," *Revue thomiste* 19 (1911): 724–66, and P. Rousselot, *L'intellectualisme de saint Thomas* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1924), with regard to the doctrine of the angels. See also, more recently, R. J. Henle, *Saint Thomas and Platonism: A Study of Plato and Platonic Texts in the Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1956).

[74] Etienne Gilson, "Cajetan et l'existence," *Tijdschrift voor Philosophie* 15 (1953): 267–86, 284.

[75] Joseph Owens, "Aquinas as an Aristotelian Commentator," in *St. Thomas Aquinas on the Existence of God: Collected Papers of Joseph Owens, CSs.R.*, ed. J. R. Catan (Albany: SUNY Press, 1980), 16.

different causes by his predecessors provided him with a principle for the organization of the history of philosophy. Furthermore, the Aristotelian doctrine of act and potency became the key for deciphering the universe,

The Stagirite also developed the theory of first principles although he failed to apply it to the moral order. Opposing Plato and the Academy he taught the primacy of being with regard to the Good and the One and defined first philosophy as the study of being *qua* being. In this way he laid the groundwork for a theory of the transcendentals which, however, he did not elaborate. While Plato attempted to reduce all of reality to two contrary principles (the One and the Indeterminate Dyad), Aristotle worked out the theory of the categories of being as so many modes of being, irreducible to each other. This, in its turn, prepared the way for the theory of the different senses of being and of analogy.

Substance is the core of reality. The other predicaments as determinations of substance are beings in being or of being. Instead of seeking real being in a world of Platonic ideas, Aristotle asserts that substances, and not the world of the ideas, are the focal points of reality. In the field of the philosophy of nature, Aristotle combated atomism and monism. His definition of nature, the discovery of first matter, the doctrine of hylomorphism, the analysis of movement, place, and time, and his theory of generation and corruption are some of the highlights of his accomplishments. To this one may add the first steps on the road to a scientific cosmology, the study of living beings and of the soul, his theory of sense cognition and intellectual knowledge, and his biological work. Aristotle also made a tentative start in the study of metaphysics and reached the insight that all processes must be reduced to the First Unmoved Mover. The originality and the lasting contributions of the Stagirite to ethics, political philosophy, and aesthetics are no less important.

We need not dwell on the introduction of Aristotle's complete writings into the Latin West during the second part of the twelfth century. Thanks to the efforts of such translators as James of Venice, Roland of Cremona, and Michael Scot, Western academies were presented with an overwhelming mass of knowledge.[76] A reaction set in against certain positions of the Stagirite not in accordance with the doctrine of the faith.[77] But his writings offered so much insight and provoked such an admiration that

[76] Roger Bacon writes: "Tempore Michael Scoti . . . magnificata est Aristotelis philosophia apud Latinos." *Opus maius*, 2.13, ed. J. H. Bridges (Oxford: 1897), vol.1:55.

[77] A council in Paris (1210) decreed: "Nee libri Aristotelis de naturali philosophia nee commenta legantur Parisiis publice vel secrete." In 1215 a legate of the Pope, Robert de Courcon, extended this prohibition to the *Metaphysics*.

they began to be used again with the somewhat restrictive approval of the Holy See. After 1260 new problems arose due to the spreading of Averroism. St. Bonaventure, who, when commenting on the *Sententiae*, had been quite sympathetic towards Aristotle, despite his erroneous view of the eternity of the world,[78] bitterly attacked this and similar errors in his *Collationes*, addressed to the students in Paris between 1267 and 1273.[79] In his *Hexaemeron*, Robert Grosseteste warned against recourse to the Stagirite: "Non igitur se decipiant et frustra desudent, . . . ne mutuiter tempus suum et vires ingenii sui consumant ut Aristotelem catholicum faciendo, seipsos haereticos faciant." (They should not deceive themselves and drudge in vain, nor waste their time and use up their wits; when trying to make a Catholic of Aristotle they turn themselves into heretics.)

Aquinas was well acquainted with these difficulties and saw the two roads of philosophical speculation lying open before him, the way of Plato[80] and that of Aristotle, and he chose the latter. The main reason for his choice is his certitude that Aristotle's theories are basically correct and his method valid. According to Thomas, Platonism consists essentially in the theory of ideas, which places their essences outside things, and in the second place in the doctrine of participation. Insofar as the Platonists reduced individual things to a bundle of participated forms, their position is erroneous, but understood as expressing the dependence of all beings upon God, it is true, as Aquinas stresses in several places.[81] Even in metaphysics, Aristotle followed a better road than Plato, one that allows us to reach certitude with regard to the existence of immaterial beings.[82] But Aquinas admits that despite the correct structure his philosophy Aristotle's theories show a good number of defects.

The Platonists are mistaken because their reasoning starts from concepts (*ex rationibus intelligibilibus*) and considers man's attributes as

[78] See Leo Elders, "Les citations d'Aristote dans le *Commentaire sur les Sentences* de saint Bonaventure," in *San Bonaventura, maestro di vita francescana e di sapienza cristiana* (Rome: Pontificia facolta teologica san Bonaventura, 1976), 831–42.

[79] On whether one can speak of a critical attitude toward Aristotelianism, see J. F. Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure's Philosophy* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1973), 854–78.

[80] See "Saint Thomas d'Aquin et le platonisme," in Leo Elders, *Au coeur de la philosophie de Saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Parole et Silence, 2009), 7–32.

[81] See the preface of the *Expositio in librum beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus* and *ST* I, q. 6, a. 4: "Et quamvis haec opinio irrationabilis videatur quantum ad hoc quod ponebat species rerum naturalium separatas per se subsistentes . . . tamen hoc absolute verum est quod aliquid est primum, quod per suam essentiam est ens et bonum, quod dicimus Deum." Cf. *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 4: "Quidditates et formae rerum insunt ipsis rebus particularibus."

[82] *De substantiis separatis*, art. 2.

many distinct realities. Aristotle, on the other hand, argues from sensible things and this position is correct.[83] In anthropology St. Thomas sees an irreducible opposition between Aristotle's doctrine and Platonic dualism. In metaphysics, however, he finds a broad convergence between the Plato and Aristotle, even if he has to elaborate their views in order to show this harmony. Both philosophers agree on the existence of a supreme principle upon which immaterial and material things depend; spiritual things are devoid of matter but are composed of act and potency. He even writes that both philosophers accept divine providence.[84]

Aquinas placed himself within Aristotelianism, but he did so entirely freely. He penetrated Aristotle's doctrine to its core and, using the Stagirite's basic principles, frequently went beyond the conclusions reached by Aristotle himself to establish a greater coherence between the different doctrines, especially in anthropology, ethics, and metaphysics. The thousands of quotations from the *corpus aristotelicum*, in particular from the *Organon*, the *Physics*, the *De anima*, the *Metaphysics*, and the *Nicomachean Ethics*, are proof of the importance he attached to the doctrine of Aristotle, as are his commentaries on twelve of Aristotle's major works. The purpose of these commentaries is to present and to explain the doctrine of Aristotle, to analyze the arguments he uses, to discard interpretations which disagree with the letter of the text or the intention of the Stagirite, to draw attention to certain disagreements with the doctrine of the faith and, finally, to construct a true philosophy of nature, metaphysics, and ethics, fit to be used in the various institutions of learning.

Thomas places the text to be explained in the light of the principles and the entire philosophy of Aristotle. We encounter quite often the expression *secundum intentionem Aristotelis*, which signifies: the meaning of a text as it appears to the attentive reader; but it can also denote a deeper sense which one discovers by reflection and comparison.[85] It can also mean that Thomas assigns a sense to a text which is not found in it, but

[83] *De spiritualibus creaturis*, chap. 3: "Harum autem duarum opinionum diversitas ex hoc procedit quod quidam ad inquirendam veritatem de natura rerum, processerunt ex rebus intelligibilibus, et hoc fuit proprium Platonicorum; quidam vero ex rebus sensibilibus, et hoc fuit proprium philosophiae Aristotelis . . . Consideraverunt Platonici . . . quod quidquid est abstractum in intellectu, sit abstractum in re." Cf. *In Sent.* II, d. 17, q. 1, a.1: reality does not consist in a bundle of logical concepts.

[84] *De substantiis separatis*, chap. 3: "In quo conveniant positiones Platonis et Aristotelis." As he does elsewhere, Aquinas bases his assertion regarding Aristotle on some scattered texts of the latter.

[85] Cf. *De substantiis separatis*, chap. 14: "Patet igitur praedicta verba philosophi diligenter consideranti quod non est intentio eius."

which he takes from what Aristotle says elsewhere.[86] Thomas discusses those passages which seem to contradict the faith. Sometimes he shows that when one reads them attentively, the opposition disappears, but in other cases a particular tenet may be irreconcilable with the Christian doctrine. Quite often Aquinas corrects or completes what the text says by means of observations introduced by *sciendum est autem*, *advertendum est autem*, or *considerandum est autem*.[87] The trend of these commentaries is to replace a neo-Platonic interpretation of Aristotle by a rigorous exegesis based on the principles of Aristotle himself. On the other hand, Thomas also rejects repeatedly the interpretations of Averroes in order to show that the *Commentator* is not always trustworthy.[88] Aristotle's philosophy is potentially open to what God has revealed.

Aquinas was keenly aware of the opposition of a good number of theologians and ecclesiastics to certain doctrines of Aristotle and a more or less pronounced distrust of him. To refute these interpretations and preconceived opinions, he mentions real or supposed disagreements and provides explanations. An example: In *De caelo* I Aristotle "demonstrates" the eternity of the world. Having explained the arguments of Aristotle, Aquinas concludes with the following remark: Aristotle does not show that the world does not have a beginning; but he establishes only that the world did not begin to exist in the way other philosophers had described. He does show that the world did not begin by a process of generation and that it is not destined to disappear.[89] This is a benign interpretation, for the proof based on the circular movement of the celestial bodies aims at excluding any beginning. Thomas apparently felt that a simple rejection of these arguments would also have lost some valuable reasoning and might have brought with it the loss of valuable philosophical views and shaken confidence in Aristotle.

Aquinas discards the theory of the divine nature of the first heavens. He writes that in this respect Aristotle expresses himself in the manner Plato did, who used the term "god" for several things,[90] as if Aquinas

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[86] For example, in *Metaphysics* 12.9, Aristotle denies that the world is an object of divine knowledge since it would make God dependent on what is outside him. Thomas observes that this is not the case when God knows things in himself, which is the case if he is their creator. Aristotle himself acknowledges this, for he writes elsewhere that heaven and earth are dependent in their being on the First Mover.

[87] Cf. *In VI Metaphysicam*, lectio 1, where Thomas contradicts the text by stating that the subject matter of metaphysics comprises also material beings.

[88] See Leo Elders, "St. Thomas Aquinas's Commentary on the Physics of Aristotle," in *Autour de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Fac-éditions, 1983), 1: 28–35; idem, "Averroes et saint Thomas d'Aquin," in *Doctor communis* 45 (1992): 46–56.

[89] *In I De caelo et mundo*, lectio 6, §61–64.

[90] Ibid., lectio 7, §75.

wanted to say: one might as well stay with Aristotle despite this error, for Plato too was mistaken. In other texts as well, he associates Aristotle with Plato in order to protect him against unilateral criticisms. For instance, he writes that "Plato, Aristotle, and those who followed them arrived at the consideration of the universal cause of all things, as Augustine says in the *City of God* (VIII, 4)."[91] Thomas makes Augustine guarantee the fact that the principles of Aristotle's philosophy lead us to accept the creation of the world by God. When evaluating Thomas's statements about the Stagirite one must always keep in mind the addressees of a given treatise: in order to defend Aristotelianism in the universities Thomas may go to great lengths to justify a certain text or reconcile it with the faith.

On the first page of the *Physics* Aristotle writes that we must always seek the first cause. Thomas uses this affirmation to note that we must indeed continue our analysis until we reach the highest cause. This "adaptation" of Aristotelian doctrine to a Christian philosophy is very remarkable in the commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*. According to the Stagirite, man himself is the cause of his happiness, a doctrine which will be condemned by the bishop of Paris in 1277. Thomas notes that Aristotle is speaking of the imperfect happiness of this life and adds that even according to him happiness is a gift of the gods.[92] In fact, one can read this remark at 1099b12, but Aristotle is perhaps making a concession to a popular way of speaking. However, Aquinas quotes the sentence and, assuming that there must be a perfect coherence between the various parts of Aristotle's philosophy, uses it to justify an interpretation which goes against the grain of some other texts. One finds several "corrections" of this type in the commentaries on the *Ethics* and the *Metaphysics*. Thomas attempted to remove as far as possible any appearance of opposition to the Christian faith. To give another example, Aristotle wonders if there is a plurality of first movers. Both in his preface and throughout his commentary Thomas maintains the plural form (*primas causas rerum*) and leaves the question of the unity of the First Principle open, apparently for methodological reasons. Only in his commentary on *Metaphysics* XII, chapter 8, does he observe that a series of several movers is not necessary to explain the movements of the celestial bodies.[93] He avoids any hasty corrections and respects the need for a patient analysis, what has been called *reverenter exponere*.

In many places Aquinas goes beyond the text in order to reach a higher synthesis. One example is in his preface to the commentary on

[91] *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 5.

[92] *In I Ethica*, lectio 14, §165–76.

[93] See Leo Elders, "St. Thomas Aquinas' Commentary on the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle," in *Autour de saint Thomas d'Aquin*, 1:134–38.

the *Metaphysics*, when he brings Aristotle's differing descriptions of the nature of first philosophy into a higher unity: its subject is being *qua* being, but it also studies the cause of being so that it extends its investigation to the first cause, God. Philosophical theology is part of metaphysics. Likewise Aquinas completes Aristotle's sketch of analogy in *Metaphysics* IV, chapter 2, and weakens the Stagirite's stern condemnation of the Platonic theory of participation. He elaborates the doctrine of the real distinction between the act of being and the essence. He goes further than Aristotle had done in pointing out that the original and first sense of the verb "to be" is to be real in an absolute way.[94]

This "going beyond" Aristotle's doctrine is very much noticeable in anthropology: the soul of man, his substantial form, is immaterial, although it constitutes the body. It is *non totaliter immersa corpori* and it is *aliquid subsistens*. He also explains why the soul is united to the body and defends the doctrine of afterlife, about which Aristotle voiced some doubts.[95] With regard to ethics, Aquinas stresses more than Aristotle the scientific character of moral philosophy. Ethics is directed not only to action but also to knowledge. The science of morals is not a form of prudence but has its seat in the theoretical intellect (as it was for Aristotle). Moreover, he transposes the theory of the criteria of morality to make them depend on the first principles of the practical intellect. But like Aristotle's ethics, Aquinas's moral philosophy is aiming at man's last end, happiness or beatitude, and at the virtues required to reach and secure this end.

A further question is whether these commentaries present Aristotle's philosophy faithfully or whether they express the thought of Aquinas himself. A first observation is that for Thomas himself these commentaries were philosophical works: to the best of my knowledge there is not a single passage where revelation provides *directly* an interpretation or evaluation of what Aristotle wrote. There is nowhere any confusion between philosophy and *doctrina sacra*. This does not mean that while writing them Thomas was not guided by revelation. What is decisive for our purpose is that his arguments remain at the level of natural reason. The theological viewpoint remains present in the background and leads Thomas to interpret certain statements of Aristotle in such a way as to discover a certain openness toward the doctrine of the faith.

With the exception of a handful of short passages, the commentaries are a faithful, learned, and excellent interpretation of what Aristotle wrote.

[94] *In Peri Hermeneias* 1, lectio 5.

[95] Cf. E. von Ivanka, "Aristotelische und thomistische Seelenlehre," in *Aristote et saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Publications universitaires de Louvain, 1957), 221–28.

Even Joseph Owens must recognize this fact.[96] One could say that, from a *doctrinal* point of view, they are the best commentaries extant on *the* text of Aristotle. Aquinas succeeds as no one else in introducing us to the thought of Aristotle. Although he did not have the instruments of contemporary philology, his knowledge of the *Corpus aristotelicum* is without equal.

Thomas sometimes goes beyond the immediate context of a passage to base his interpretation on other texts or to argue with the help of principles that Aristotle acknowledged. For instance, he places the agent intellect within the individual soul of each person; he assumes that Aristotle accepts the immortality of the individual soul; he draws a far-reaching inference from such a statement as "the universe is suspended from the First Principle." While Aristotle himself is not always consistent and scholars such as Sir David Ross and Ingemar During speak of slightly diverging lines of thought in Aristotle, Thomas wants to establish total consistency.

In fact, Thomas reads the texts of Aristotle in the light of his own philosophy of nature, metaphysics, and ethics. In many cases the influence of this situation is minimal, because his philosophy is identical to that of the Stagirite. This is especially the case with regard to the *Physics*, and the *De caelo*. In anthropology, metaphysics; and ethics the influence of Thomas's own thought is more pervasive. Joseph Owens draws attention to Thomas's own view of being which determined certain passages of his commentaries. Harry V. Jaffa mentions some principles which influenced the commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[97] Must we conclude that Thomas transformed Aristotle? The central question is whether the framework in which Aquinas interprets Aristotle is an *alien framework*, foreign to the thought of Aristotle, as Owens claims.[98] Is there a question of non-Aristotelian principles, as Jaffa says? Our answer is a categorical "no." Thomistic anthropology, metaphysics of being, and ethics based on the natural inclinations of man are not developments which adulterate Aristotle's thought. These doctrines are derived from principles posited by Aristotle himself. Aquinas indicates this with regard to the metaphysics of being: those who followed Plato and Aristotle understood the dependence of all beings on God and the real composition of the act of being and the essence in created things.[99]

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[96] Owens, "Aquinas as an Aristotelian Commentator," 16.

[97] H. V. Jaffa, *Thomism and Aristotelianism: A Study of the Commentary by Thomas Aquinas on the Nicomachean Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 101. Jaffa means principles such as "perfect happiness is impossible in this life," "man is immortal," etc.

[98] Owens, "Aquinas as an Aristotelian Commentator," 10.

[99] *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 5: "Plato, Aristoteles et eorum sequaces pervenerunt ad considerationem ipsius esse universalis et ideo ipsi soli posuerunt aliquam universalem

St. Thomas does not restrict his comments to the interpretation of the *prout iacet*, but he delves deeper into its very roots and so connects it to the principles of Aristotle and the *veritas rerum*. The truth contained in a passage appears in its full meaning through being brought into relationship with a more encompassing ensemble.[100]

Aristotle's writings are intended to be a faithful reflection of our experience of reality and to avoid, as much as possible, subjective points of view. Consequently they possess a high degree of truth and that is why they lend themselves to the in-depth study which Aquinas carries out. Aquinas has no equal in penetrating the meaning of the text and all its implications. He accepts Aristotle's conclusions insofar as they are based on an exact analysis of reality. But he delves deeper into the intelligibility of things and uncovers structures which Aristotle has not discerned. So he is able to present a more coherent doctrinal ensemble. The truth present in the text is saved, but the doctrine is developed with the help of Aristotle's own principles.

Aristotle's philosophy shows a surprising capacity for this kind of systematization because of its basic conformity to reality. As John Henry Newman wrote, "While the world lasts, will Aristotle's doctrine on these matters last, for he is the oracle of nature and truth. While we are men, we cannot help, to a great extent, being Aristotelians, for the great Master does but analyze the thoughts, feelings, views and opinions of humankind. He has told us the meaning of our own words and ideas, before we were born. In many subject matters, to think correctly, is to think like Aristotle; and we are his disciples, whether we will or not, though we may not know it."[101]

Is the doctrine of the commentaries still that of Aristotle? In the vast majority of those more than five thousand pages of comments, yes, we do find Aristotle's historical doctrine. In some passages, Thomas presents a doctrine *secundum intentionem Philosophi*, an expression which may mean

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causam rerum, a qua omnia alia in esse prodirent." In the *Summa theologiae* he restricts this breakthrough to a few later philosophers, excluding Plato and Aristotle (I, q. 44, a. 2): "Et ulterius aliqui erexerunt se ad considerandum ens inquantum est ens: et consideraverunt causam rerum, non solum secundum quod sunt *haec* [Aristotle] vel *talia* [Plato], sed secundum quod sunt *entia*."

[100] Cf. W. Kluxen, *Philosophische Ethik bei Thomas von Aquin* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1980), 104, states this as follows: "Es kann nur wiederholt werden, dass Thomas den Aristoteles nicht historisch, sondern in der wahrheitsgebenden Offenheit des Verstehenshorizontes orten will, in dem erst die eigentliche Wahrheit seiner Aussage hervortritt."

[101] John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1947), 97.

that we are dealing with conclusions drawn from Aristotle's principles, more or less removed from what is expressed in a particular text.

Can the commentaries be used as a source of St. Thomas's own philosophy? The answer to this question is also affirmative, because Thomas professes the same philosophy based on the *veritas rerum*. This applies above all to those texts where the exposé is attributed to the *Philosophus*. An analysis of a great number of texts where this title is used shows that according to Aquinas, we are dealing with a philosophical truth which is above individual opinion. On the other hand, when he writes *secundum opinionem Aristotelis* or *hic Aristoteles supponit*, etc., he intimates that we are dealing with a particular opinion one may disagree with. By the same token, the numerous passages beginning with *considerandum est autem, sciendum est autem* or *advertendum est autem* contain critical remarks which correct or complement the exposé of Aristotle himself. Finally, to find out whether Aquinas subscribes to a certain point of doctrine, one must read the entire commentary. For instance, to know what he thinks of a plurality of first movers, one has to consult the last part of the commentary on the *Metaphysics*. This is not surprising, for one cannot consider a difficulty raised at the beginning of an article of the *Summa theologiae* the definite doctrine of Thomas himself. If one keeps these methodological principles in mind, the Aristotelian commentaries become an inexhaustible deposit of wisdom containing the treasures of Thomas's own philosophy.

But what should we think of the mass of mistaken theories about natural phenomena, in particular in physics and cosmology, which mar the works of Aristotle and which Aquinas seems to accept without hesitation? Because of the presence of these theories, Aquinas's philosophy of nature has been depicted as totally antiquated and useless, with the exception of a number of conceptual analyses, such as those of place and time. As is known, in Aristotle's treatises on nature, elements of what for us is natural science go together with philosophical considerations and are almost inextricably combined with them. However, a careful study of the commentaries of Aquinas shows, at least in a number of cases, that Thomas was well aware of a distinction between both and considered the cosmological system of Aristotle a hypothesis which may be replaced by a new one which explains the observed phenomena differently: "Although the phenomena are accounted for with the help of these hypotheses, one should not say that these assumptions are true, for one can perhaps explain what is observed in the celestial bodies in a different way which has not yet been conceived by man."[102] Aquinas writes that one may use

[102] *In II De caelo*, lectio 17, §451. See also *ST* 1.32.1 ad 2m; *In I De caelo*, lectio 3, §28.

these hypotheses as long as they do not run into difficulties.[103] He even felt the theory of the *four* elements to be an assumption, whereas the fact that there must be elements is definitely true. The philosophy of nature, however, aims at indubitable knowledge. The task ahead of us is to search the commentaries for indications of this distinction between assumptions based on insufficient observation and ascertained conclusions and of the hypothetical character of certain theories.

Can One Use Just Any Philosophy in Elaborating Theology?

The explanations given above show that, contrary to an opinion fairly widely held after the Second Vatican Council and advocated by Karl Rahner, one cannot use just any philosophy in the study of theology. If a main part of the task of a theologian consists in finding analogous structures in the natural order to explain and illustrate the mysteries of the faith, it is obvious that the theologian should have a correct grasp of reality. By means of created things, as they come forth from God, he must try to explain revealed truth, which has also been given to us by God. The more subjective, time-bound, and partial philosophical thought becomes, the less fit it is to function in theology. The history of theology shows how time and again orthodox interpretations were abandoned because theologians resorted to mistaken philosophical theories.[104] This applies also to the task of demonstrating the preambles of the faith and refuting false interpretations of Christian doctrine. In his apostolic letter *Lumen Ecclesiae*, Paul VI rejects the frequently proposed view according to which theologians should incorporate contemporary philosophical trends into theology, as Aquinas had done with Aristotle. Paul VI writes that this is impossible because we are dealing with ways of thinking which cannot be compared at all.[105] In a remarkable discourse at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, on November 17, 1979, John Paul II reminded his audience that many dissenting views in theology are caused by a crisis of philosophical thought. He insisted that one cannot resort to just any philosophy: some philosophies are so limited and closed that they exclude the translation of revelation into human language.[106]

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[103] *In I Meteor.*, lectio 11, §68.

[104] See Leo Elders, "Le rôle de la philosophie en théologie: Aide nécessaire et abus. L'influence de catégories philosophiques sur l'expression de la foi," in *Nova et Vetera* (1997): 34–68.

[105] *Lumen Ecclesiae* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria editrice vaticana, 1974), §29.

[106] *Insegnamendi Giovanni Paolo II* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria editrice vaticana, 1979), IV 2, 1418ff.

In conclusion we can say that the respect St. Thomas had for reality, the absence of personal views and preconceived ideas, and his concern to grasp reality as it is make his philosophy the best and safest instrument to develop and to construct the science of theology. NV

The Natural Law Ordering of Human Sexuality to (Heterosexual) Marriage: Towards a Thomistic Philosophy of the Body[1]

PAUL GONDREAU
Providence College
Providence, Rhode Island

"Caught in a Net of Warring Duties"

NEAR the climax of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, one reads of the treason committed by a certain Beregond, guard of the Citadel of the great City of Minas Tirith.[2] The deed consists in Beregond's abandoning his post without leave of Denethor, the Lord of the City, which is forbidden by law, in order to save Faramir, captain of the White Tower and son of Denethor. Having lost his mind to despair and under the mistaken impression that Faramir is dead, Lord Denethor has given orders to have Faramir and himself burned on a pyre. Thus Beregond finds himself "caught in a net of warring duties," to quote the text, as he must "choose between orders and the life of Faramir." What is more, in order to save Faramir, Beregond must not only disobey the law of the City and the Lord Denethor's direct orders, but he must slay, in the very Hallows of the Citadel, two men of the Guard who stand steadfast in their obedience to the Lord Denethor. Since it is forbidden to spill blood in the Hallows, some among the Guard curse Beregond for this fell deed, "calling him outlaw and traitor," and the Lord Denethor denounces him as "renegade." Confronted by Gandalf the Wizard, who joins Beregond's

[1] I wish to express my gratitude to Russell Hittinger, whose remarks on an earlier draft of this essay have helped to improve its quality.

[2] This is recounted in the third part of *The Lord of the Rings* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1954), namely, *The Return of the King*, bk. 5, ch. 4, "The Siege of Gondor," and ch. 7, "The Pyre of Denethor."

side, Denethor steadfastly invokes his right "to command (his) own servants" according to his own will. Gandalf replies that the Lord of the City's will may be contested when it has "turned to madness and evil." He notes that the Lord of the City does not enjoy the authority to "murder (his) own kin [in order] to ease (his) own death."

Few readers of *The Lord of the Rings* sympathize with the charge that Beregond is an outlaw and traitor to the City of Minas Tirith. With Gandalf, the reader knows that, "but for the treason of Beregond," the innocent Faramir would have burned on the pyre. And this leads us to ask, what is the status of Beregond's "treason" and of the "net of warring duties" in which he finds himself? In this case of "warring duties," which duty is higher, his duty to obey the law of the City and the orders of his Lord, or his duty to preserve the life of the innocent Captain of the White Tower? Who is to decide which duty is higher, and on what grounds does one determine which duty holds precedence over the other? Is the law of the City so absolute that it requires obedience in all cases, no matter the circumstances, and does Denethor's right to "command his own servants" demand similar absolutist compliance? Does the Lord of the City's own will determine the law as such, or is there a higher law to which his and the City's laws must conform? Can Beregond claim he is obeying this "higher law" in his very act of breaking the law of the City?

It is impossible to answer these questions adequately, much less make proper sense of this episode from *The Lord of the Rings*, without appeal to what the Catholic moral tradition (to which Tolkien was deeply committed) terms the natural law.[3] Beregond experiences "warring duties": the one to the law of his City and to his Lord, the other to another law he knows in his conscience, namely, the law forbidding murder, or the law requiring one to take reasonable measures to help others when their lives are in danger (or as Leviticus 19:16 puts it, that "you shall not stand by idly when your neighbor's life is at stake"). And in his conscience he knows, however intuitively, that this latter law takes precedence, since he knows all people know it in their consciences as well. That is, he knows, again however intuitively, that the law forbidding murder issues from a

[3] Tolkien's express commitment to the natural law is on open display in his poem *Mythopoeia*, which constitutes his defense of mythology against those "who said that myths were lies and therefore worthless" (from the dedication), in as much as myth (or sub-creation, as he calls it) imitates the natural law: "Dis-graced he [man] may be, yet is not dethroned, / and keeps the rags of lordship once he owned , / his world-dominion by creative act: / . . . The right [to sub-create] has not decayed. / *We make still by the law in which we're made*." J. R. R. Tolkien, *Tree and Leaf including the poem* Mythopoeia, 2nd ed. (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 97–101, at 98–99; emphasis added.

moral precept implanted in his mind because it is inscribed in the very fabric of his being. It issues from a norm of moral action inscribed in the nature he holds in common with all other men, and to which all men are thereby bound and measured. Hence the name "natural law": the measure, the rule, of human nature.

The Push to Redefine Marriage

This norm, this rule or measure of human nature, and the questions that give rise to it, bear direct pertinence to the current cultural debate swirling about the definition of marriage. We live at a time, of course, where "nature," often perceived as the tyrannical enemy of sexual expression, has become irrelevant in this debate. Seeking in fact to empty the notion of nature of all real meaning, our modern culture dares us, in a manner akin to Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth, to "unsex" ourselves in wholly unnatural ways through wholly unnatural acts.[4] To this end, there is nothing more or less natural, we are told, about the union of a man and a woman, just as there is nothing more or less natural about the sexual union of two men or two women (except, of course, for the homosexual persons themselves, for whom, biology notwithstanding, it is supposedly "natural" to feel sexually inclined to persons of the same sex, and thus perfectly appropriate for said individuals to engage in what remain objectively unnatural acts). With this in the backdrop, it is not uncommon to hear it asserted, for instance, that defenders of traditional marriage simply "hold fast to outworn arguments and old attitudes," as no less an authority than the President of the United States, in the person of Barack Obama (himself a lawyer), recently alleged when addressing a gay-activist organization.[5]

Evermore citizens of this good land, like Beregond of *The Lord of the Rings*, find themselves caught in their own "net of warring duties," as they must choose between honoring what the state decrees, usually arrived at through some judicial redefinition of marriage, or honoring common sense and their own consciences, wherein they know same-sex unions are, at bottom, unnatural. And if the recent referenda on marriage in California and Maine (and in twenty-eight other states, as of this writing) are

[4] Who can forget Lady Macbeth's memorable prayer in Act 1 to the "spirits that tend on mortal thoughts" that they "unsex" her and that "no compunctious visitings of nature shake [her] fell purpose"?

[5] "Remarks by the President at Human Rights Campaign Dinner," Oct. 10, 2009 (posted on whitehouse.gov; Oct. 11, 2009). President Obama then followed this with the charge that those who defend traditional marriage seek to "enshrine discrimination into our Constitution."

any indication, there are more than a few Beregond-like citizens among us who will not abandon their consciences and who remain convinced that the effort to spread the mantle of marriage to cover same-sex unions is to grant legal sanction to pure "madness and evil."

Lest one consider this last statement hyperbole, we need only bear in mind the kind of untold "madness and evil" that the push to redefine marriage has invited. Take, for instance, the polyamory movement, which advocates the right to group marriage (marriage with multiple partners), and which touts itself as the next generation of civil rights for sexual preferences.[6] There are more egregious examples, such as that found in the field of artificial intelligence, where some researchers think western society will one day legalize marriage between humans and robots.[7] Put simply, we must not be naïve—and many are not—to the plain reality that if the authority of marriage is grounded not in nature but in human opinion, then the principle is in place for human opinion, however it can be swayed, to sanction a whole gamut of unions and call them all "marriage." Clearly we must appeal to an authority higher than that of human judgment if we are to prevent such "madness and evil" from taking western society over the cliff.

Yet in a land where tolerance is considered the highest virtue, where "consent" (grounded in an autonomous view of freedom) and the principle that one often hears loosely formulated as "so long as no one gets harmed" are looked upon as placing the only limits on sexual conduct, where pleasure is seen as the greatest good that our sexuality targets, and where it is assumed that one opposes gay marriage merely on grounds of religious faith, the appeal to the higher authority of nature becomes an extremely hard sell. Indeed, these cultural presuppositions, in addition to the justice issue (namely, that denying legal recognition to same-sex unions as equivalent to marriage constitutes an injustice), often intimidate defenders of traditional marriage into near total silence.

In the interests, then, of recovering a proper notion of "nature" in the current debate on marriage, and building upon my previous essay in this same journal on the procreative-unitive meaning of human sexuality, I

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[6] As reported by abcnews.com, June 18, 2009.

[7] "My forecast is that around 2050," says the artificial-intelligence researcher David Levy of the University of Maastricht, the Netherlands, "the state of Massachusetts will be the first jurisdiction to legalize marriage with robots" (as reported by Fox News LiveScience [foxnews.com, October 15, 2007]). Levy continues: "once you have a story like, 'I had sex with a robot, and it was great!' appear someplace like Cosmo magazine, I'd expect many people to jump on the bandwagon. . . . Love and sex with robots are inevitable."

would like, in this essay, to give brief reconsideration to the way the natural law orders our sexuality to heterosexual marriage.[8] No matter the strength of the aforementioned cultural presuppositions, which this essay will keep squarely in view, the simple fact remains that the ordering of our sexuality to heterosexual marriage belongs to the natural law. It follows that the authority which the intended order of nature, issuing from the Maker of our nature, holds over our sexuality trumps the authority of autonomous freedom and consent. Nature, not consent, acts as the ultimate arbiter of appropriate sexual conduct. Certainly, cultural mores, if corrupt, can deeply impact our moral sensibilities, to the point even of making us tone deaf to the natural law. But the aforesaid referenda have shown us that, when it concerns the commonly accepted understanding of what type of sexual union constitutes marriage, this has not happened to the majority of Americans—at least not yet—despite the deafening clamor bellowing forth from the gay marriage camp.

"To All Men of Good Will"

Because inscribed in the common nature we all hold and because accessible to reason as such, the natural law has the benefit of addressing itself to "all men of good will"—to quote the opening address of Pope Paul VI's encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae*—and not simply to those who profess the Christian faith. Natural law boasts a powerful allure for the believer and unbeliever alike, as it offers more substance to persons of faith by providing a philosophical foundation for what believers otherwise know through God's revealed word, at the same time that it culls a larger audience regardless of religious adherence. If it is true, in other words, that the ordering of our sexuality to heterosexual marriage belongs to the natural law, then we can insist that "all men of good will" are bound by it. We can insist, for instance, that such a vision of sex is normative for those in the secular professions for whom matters of human sexuality are of direct concern, such as clinical psychologists, bioethical scientific researchers, counselors, social workers, teachers, and reproductive health care professionals, as well as lawyers, judges, and legislators.

So while much current discussion in Catholic circles on the meaning and purpose of human sexuality centers on Pope John Paul II's theology of the body, this school of thought remains for all its deserved accolades just that: a *theology* of the body. Its insights are drawn from the Gospels and from the Genesis creation narrative, and thus from the light of faith.

[8] See my "The 'Inseparable Connection' between Procreation and Unitive Love (*Humanae Vitae*, §12) and Thomistic Hylemorphic Anthropology," *Nova et Vetera* (English Edition) 6 (2008): 731–64.

Such are the merits of the natural law, however, that we find in it a broader *philosophy* of the body, knowable by human reason alone.

To be sure, the same Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical letter *Veritatis Splendor*, issued the rather arresting directive that natural law should hold a prominent place in the renewal of moral theology (§§35–53), and, more particularly, that "one must consider carefully . . . *the place of the human body in questions of natural law*" (§48, emphasis his). Later in his encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio*, John Paul II echoed this same view with his more general assertion that a "sound philosophical vision of human nature" must underpin any moral theology worthy of its name (§68).

Pope Benedict XVI, for his part, has taken up his predecessor's charge and has been tireless in his endeavor to remind western thought of its ancient and venerable tradition of natural law, and of human reason's ability to grasp the intended order (law) of nature. Making the natural law an unmistakable focal point of his early pontificate, Pope Benedict has singled out the recovery of natural law as the antidote to the false understanding of human sexuality which abounds in western society today.[9] In honoring the fortieth anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Benedict appealed to the foundational role of the natural law in this encyclical's teaching on contraception, asserting that "[t]he transmission of life is inscribed in nature, and its laws stand as an unwritten norm to which everyone must defer."[10] Beyond human sexuality proper, Pope Benedict

[9] This occurred, for instance, in his address to the Roman Rota on the integrity of marriage on January 26, 2007, and in his annual address to the Vatican diplomatic corps a year later on January 7, 2008. In the latter, Pope Benedict appealed to the natural law as the proper ground for the defense not only of human rights, but also of "the integrity of the family, founded on the marriage of a man and a woman" (as reported in "Pope's 'State of the World' Address: Natural Law Is Main Theme," *Catholic World Report* 18 [March, 2008], 5). Then in his weekly Wednesday audience on December 16, 2009, the Holy Father noted that there exists "an objective and immutable truth, the origin of which is in God, a truth accessible to human reason and which concerns practical and social activities. This is a natural law from which human legislation, and political and religious authorities, must draw inspiration in order to promote the common good." He went on to single out "laws that respect the dignity of marriage between a man and a woman" as an example of truly "equitable" laws, that is, laws that respect "the relationship between natural law and positive law" (as reported on the Vatican website, www.vatican.va, December 16, 2009).

[10] This came in Pope Benedict's address on May 10, 2008, to a conference held by the Pontifical Lateran University honoring the fortieth anniversary of *Humanae Vitae* (as reported on cwnews.com, May 12, 2008). Benedict reiterated this at a conference honoring the same on October 3, 2008, as reported on cwnews.com, October 5, 2008.

has made crucial appeals to the natural law, such as in his remarks at the White House South Lawn inaugurating his apostolic visit to the United States in April, 2008, and in his address to the United Nations General Assembly during the same visit.[11] And in a private audience with members of the International Theological Commission, who recently issued a document on the natural law in the effort at advancing its retrieval, Pope Benedict reiterated the view that the natural law signifies a norm of human conduct that "has its basis in human nature itself."[12] He gave particular emphasis to the same in his audience with members of the Pontifical Academy for Life in February, 2010.[13]

St. Thomas as Guide

To serve as our guide in considering the natural law's ordering of our sexuality to heterosexual marriage, this essay shall turn to that Catholic thinker whose natural law doctrine has become part and parcel of the Church's "own teaching on morality," to quote *Veritatis Splendor* (§44), namely, St.

[11] At the White House South Lawn, Pope Benedict cited the Declaration of Independence in his mentioning of "the laws of nature and of nature's God" as providing the foundation for the "moral order based on the dominion of God the creator" (pulled from the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, www.nccbuscc.org). And in his UN address, Pope Benedict maintained that only by firmly establishing human rights on "the natural law inscribed on human hearts and present in different cultures and civilizations" can we hope to escape the moral relativism that has otherwise usurped discourse on human rights. This latter appeal to the natural law, while embedded in a complexly developed argument, was so key that the Catholic World News website (cwnews.com) opened its lead article on April 18, 2008, with the headline, "Pope Affirms Natural Law in UN Address."

[12] The Pope delivered these remarks on October 5, 2007, as reported by Catholic World News (cwnews.com; Oct. 5, 2007). Published in 2009, the International Theological Commission's "The Search for Universal Ethics: A New Look at Natural Law," as of this writing, has been issued only in French and Italian. Joseph Bolin, however, has posted an unofficial English translation of the text on pathsoflove.com.

[13] In this audience on February 13, 2010, Pope Benedict insisted that "human dignity as an inalienable right has its first foundation in (the natural moral) law," with the result that "conjugating bioethics and natural moral law is the best way to ensure the dignity that human life possesses from its first instant to its natural end" (posted on Vatican Information Service; Feb. 13, 2010). Further, in his message for the World Day of Peace, issued on December 8, 2009, Pope Benedict observed that "man's relationship with the natural environment" demands respect for "the natural moral law," as well as "close contact with the beauty and harmony of nature" (§§2,12–13).

Thomas Aquinas.[14] If the Church has so appropriated this element of Aquinas's thought, it is because, this author believes, his natural law doctrine is a living one that yields not merely a penetrating account, but a true account of "the place of the human body in questions of natural law," to cite again *Veritatis Splendor* (§48).[15] Further, while Aquinas's natural law doctrine provides us with a philosophy of the body, this doctrine at the same time points toward the theological, and thus toward a proper theology of the body. We see this amply confirmed in Thomas's decision to place his comprehensive treatise on natural law not only alongside his treatise on the divinely revealed (Mosaic and Evangelical) law (*Summa theologiae* I–II, qq. 94–114), but within a *summa* of theology, that is, within a comprehensive treatment of Christian theology as a whole.

We should note that Aquinas's natural law doctrine, because imbedded in a scholastic system of thought that is not always accessible to a contemporary audience, presents challenges to the current discussion on the meaning and purpose of human sexuality, especially since the language of Christian "personalism" dominates this discussion. To this end, this essay shall draw upon the principles of Aquinas's natural law thought, making adaptations where necessary, so as to forge a vision of the nuptial meaning of our sexuality that can aptly engage this discussion.

Indeed, if we keep in mind Aquinas's notion of law as teacher, that is, that the principal purpose of law, *any* law, is to instruct us of our proper

[14] In his *The First Grace: Rediscovering the Natural Law in a Post-Christian World* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2003), Russell Hittinger rightly underscores the fact that in *Veritatis Splendor*'s treatment of the "fundaments" or principles of moral action (cf. the encyclical's subtitle: *De fundamentiis doctrinae moralis Ecclesiae*), "[n]atural law figures prominently" (xxxviii), and that even if the terminology of natural law in this document is somewhat novel, "the definitional scheme [of its conception of natural law] is virtually the same as that of St. Thomas" (xl). He goes on to observe that "natural law as a 'fundament' of moral theology" is certainly to be found in the writings of Popes Leo XIII, Pius XI, Pius XII, and John XXIII (xliii). For more on this, cf. idem, "Natural Law as 'Law': Reflections on the Occasion of 'Veritatis Splendor,'" and Romanus Cessario, "Moral Absolutes in the Civilization of Love." Both of these essays are reprinted in J. A. DiNoia and Romanus Cessario, eds., *Veritatis Splendor and the Renewal of Moral Theology* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1999). We should also note that Vatican II's Declaration on Religious Liberty, *Dignitatis Humanae* (§3), explicitly grounds its view of religious liberty in Aquinas's natural law doctrine.

[15] For enlightening expositions of the natural law thought of Aquinas, besides Russell Hittinger's *The First Grace*, see, for instance, John Goyette, Mark S. Latkovic, and Richard S. Myers, eds., *St. Thomas Aquinas and the Natural Law Tradition: Contemporary Perspectives* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004); and Fulvio Di Blasi, *God and the Natural Law: A Rereading of Thomas Aquinas* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine Press, 2003).

good and end, and thus of what proper human flourishing consists in, the natural law's bearing on our sexuality will play an indispensable role in instructing us of the true meaning and purpose of human sexuality.[16] So while the moral system of Aquinas, not without good reason, is often denoted as virtue-oriented rather than as duty-oriented, we should not take this to mean that duty, or law, plays an unimportant or purely ancillary role in this system. At bottom law provides one of the necessary means by which our lives attain their proper happiness and fulfillment, since legislation for the purpose of instruction about the true human good sums up Aquinas's doctrine of law.[17] Proper human happiness and fulfillment in the sexual arena will follow strictly, then, upon our living in close harmony with what the natural law demands of human sexual comportment.

More specifically, the principal thrust of this essay shall center on the role of the inclinations of nature in Thomas's natural law doctrine, since this is where we can see how the natural ordering to heterosexual marriage is inscribed in the metaphysical fabric of our being. The language of natural inclinations makes clear the fact that human sexuality targets not merely the good of sexual enjoyment or pleasure (as western culture would often have us believe), but the two higher co-essential goods of procreation and unitive love-making (into which sexual pleasure is subsumed). And as nature intends these goods always to be united, nature orders our sexuality, our sexed bodies, to heterosexual marriage alone. More than this, God our Maker has implanted in our minds a moral precept, known through the natural light of human reason, directing the use of our sexuality always and everywhere to marriage as its end. The order of nature, inclusive of our sexuality, is imbibed with moral meaning and purpose which our minds, imprinted with the moral precepts of the natural law, can know and understand. This essay shall close with brief consideration of related issues, such as how our natural ordering to heterosexual marriage concerns our mental well-being and

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[16] In the prologue to his treatise on law in the *Summa theologiae* (hereafter cited as *ST*) I–II, q. 90, Aquinas writes: "[T]he extrinsic principle moving [the human being] to the good is God, who both instructs us by means of his law and assists us by his grace." Hence John A. Cuddeback's insistence that, for Aquinas, law is first and foremost an affair of reason as directing action to an end ("Ordered Inclinations," in *Philosophical Virtue and Psychological Strength: Building the Bridge*, ed. Romanus Cessario, Craig Steven Titus, and Paul C. Vitz [Currently under review by Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI]).

[17] This point, among others, marks the principal thrust of John A. Cuddeback's essay, "Law, Pinckaers and the Definition of Christian Ethics," *Nova et Vetera* 7:2 (2009): 301–25.

happiness, and how it concerns discussion in the public square as well as public and social policy-making.

One last preliminary observation. While nothing sounds quite so foreign, or inimical, to modern ears than the idea that nature determines normative guidelines for human action, we need not see the intended order of nature as the supposed rival to the notion of "consent." For, we might ask, why must sex be consensual in order to be considered morally good? On what grounds can one argue that sex must be consensual, unless one implies a deeper ontological sense of what it means to be human, and thus a deeper sense of the order of nature, of an objective human nature? If most individuals, for instance, consider acts like bestiality or rape or sexual abuse of children as abhorrent and subhuman, is it *merely* because such acts are non-consensual? Is it not *ultimately* because these acts, as all know even if merely intuitively, are opposed to what is appropriately human, that is, opposed to the inherent moral worth of our common humanity? In short, appeals to the notion of consent imply a deeper standard of measure, one that we could call the standard of acting according to what is proper for a human being *as a human being* (that is, as an individual endowed with a human nature) to act: namely, that to be human is to be free, and that humanly appropriate sex must subsequently be consensual sex. Hardly endowing us with the raw ability to choose whatever we wish as a kind of end in itself, freedom (autonomy) instead serves our nature by assisting us in becoming the creatures we were made to be, to be what we *are* in truth.[18]

The Inclinations of Nature and the Common Attraction of the Good

We turn, then, to the inclinations of nature. On Aquinas's account, God has designed us with a tri-partite package of natural inclinations in order that our entire being might operate under the common attraction of the good in a three-tiered fashion: first, we own an inclination to the preservation of our being at the lowest level, namely, at a level common to all things (at the physical level, this inclination is assisted by the body's inherent ability to heal and protect itself, such as in the way blood immediately clots when our skin suffers a cut, or when our hands instantaneously recoil from a burning pan without any conscious choice or command on our part); second, we enjoy an inclination to procreation and the rearing of offspring at the animal or sentient level, to which our sexuality first

[18] This, in short, sums up the principal thesis of Georges Cottier, theologian of the pontifical household under Pope John Paul II, in *Deviens ce que tu es* (Paris: Parole et Silence, 2003), which constitutes his commentary on *Veritatis Splendor*.

and foremost belongs; and, third, we possess an inclination to knowing the truth and to living in society, which is proper to us as rational beings.

The common attraction of the good unifies the three-tiered inclinations of nature in an organic, hierarchically ordered whole.[19] Taken together, the inclinations, which play an indispensable role in any sound exposition of the natural law, signify the "charge" whereby God orders us, in both physical and moral ways, to the good, indeed, whereby God communicates his own wisdom and goodness to us, and in which our freedom flourishes.[20] They signify our sharing in the very power and ability of God himself to order the world, since the inclinations of nature endow us with the capability of bringing proper moral order to our lives.

Let us be clear: the inclinations of nature signify not mere "biological processes," as they are too often narrowly understood, as if imposing a kind of physical constraint upon us. On this score, we should not be fooled by the charge of "physicalism," which critics often level against neo-scholastic natural law doctrine. In reality, the charge of "physicalism" (in other words, "too much biology," or excessive importance placed upon biological processes and ends, like procreation) is nothing more than a ruse camouflaging an underlying Cartesian bias against the physical, or biological,

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[19] "All the inclinations of human nature . . . are reduced to the one first precept [namely, that good is to be done and pursued and evil is to be avoided]." *ST* I–II, q. 94, a. 2, ad 2. Commenting on this, Romanus Cessario (*Introduction to Moral Theology* [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001], 87–88) explains: "The first directive or inclination of natural law, viz., that the good must be sought and done, forms the ground for all other natural law inclinations. . . . [This axiom] enshrines an actual direction by way of inclination toward proper moral conduct. In other terms, the basic principle of natural law, 'Good is to be done and pursued and evil avoided,' remains normative for every human act; it forms the pattern of a complete and fulfilled human life." For more on this, cf. Jean Porter, *Moral Action and Christian Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 107–10. Cf. as well Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. Mary T. Noble (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 432–34, 442–47; and Albert Plé, *Chastity and the Affective Life*, trans. Marie-Claude Thompson (New York: Herder & Herder, 1966), 144–47.

[20] As for the inclinations of nature ordering us ultimately to God, Lawrence Dewan ("St. Thomas and the Divinity of the Common Good," paper delivered at the conference "Providence, Practical Reason, and the Common Good," Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island, April 26, 2008, p. 21) observes how "the first level [of inclination] presents the natural inclination *common to all substances* [emphasis his]. This is almost always read as though having reference merely to the individual and its individual good. It surely should be read as relating to the inclination which all substances have, viz. as including their love for God more than for their own selves, each mode of substance in the mode of love appropriate to it [cf. *ST* I, q. 60, a. 5, ad 3]."

order.[21] Recognizing that God has, indeed, created us with *bodies* joined to rational souls, the Thomist natural law proponent should not hesitate to concede the charge of physicalism. If God should design us with a body-soul composite nature, we should not be surprised that the law which God writes into our nature, as exhibited in the natural inclinations, should have both physical and spiritual dimensions to it. We should expect the law of our nature to concern, because imbibed in, both our bodies and our souls as in a composite whole, and thus to be deeply physicalist—though not *merely* physicalist. While *beginning* in the physical order, the natural law is *finalized* in the spiritual and moral spheres. Natural law thought will not allow us to divorce the physical order of nature, inclusive of our bodies, from our overall moral good.

The Love that Moves Us toward Our True Good

With the foregoing in mind, we can see how the inclinations of nature provide the "metaphysical medium," by which God the supreme Legislator measures or governs us. The inclinations represent the metaphysical means by which we act under the governance of divine Providence. Indicating the way God has "hard wired" us to live, so to speak, they serve as cues to proper moral conduct. And since the natural inclinations are implanted in us in a three-tiered manner, we can speak of our being hard

[21] "Given the directions of modern moral philosophy, there exists the temptation to confuse the in-built structures of human nature with an inert physicalism, as if the Christian view of the body were that of a Cartesian machine." Romanus Cessario, *Introduction to Moral Theology*, 73. One detects this Cartesian bias in the following scholars who, in one form or another, make this charge of physicalism: Richard McCormick, "The Consistent Ethic of Life: Is There a Historical Soft Underbelly?" in *The Critical Calling* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1989), 211–32 (cited in R. Cessario, *Introduction to Moral Theology*, 72, n. 50), who criticizes Aquinas's natural law theory for its treating "biological givenness as normative"; Philip S. Keane, *Sexual Morality: A Catholic Perspective* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 46, who advocates a moral theory that goes "beyond physicalism"; Daniel A. Helminiak, *Sex and the Sacred: Gay Identity and Spiritual Growth* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2006), 92, who alleges that "the Catholic Church has co-opted the notion of natural law and uses it . . . to reduce sex to a mere biological function and [to] turn human sexuality into a barnyard-animal affair"; and Charles Curran, "Natural Law," in *Directions in Fundamental Moral Theology* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985). Even John Grabowski veers towards this negative physicalist charge against natural law in his *Sex and Virtue: An Introduction to Sexual Ethics* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 143–44 (additionally 81 and 129); cf. as well his "Mutual Submission and Trinitarian Self-Giving," *Angelicum* 74 (1997): 489–512, at 501, n. 30.

wired from the ground up, as it were, namely, from what we share in common with all material beings to what is unique to us as human.

Put in other terms, since by means of these inclinations our lives are inscribed with profound moral meaning and purpose, they stand as powerful testaments to God's *love* for us. Just as the medieval poet Dante, deeply influenced by Aquinas's doctrine on the divine governance of the world, closes his *Divine Comedy* with the declaration that it is God's love that "moves the sun and the other stars," so does the natural law point to the divine love which moves us toward our true good, toward our true home.[22] Pope Benedict XVI expressed this very point when, in his "State of the World address" in 2010, he remarked that the moral meaning of nature "expresses a plan of love and truth which is prior to us and which comes from God."[23]

Natural law proponents know it is unwise to consider nature as irrelevant to our moral actions, since nature orders us to and safeguards our happiness. Natural law proponents see nature as given, dynamic, and goal oriented. They recognize that, as with all beings, man receives a nature with a kind of "hard wiring," with a predetermined structure, regardless of whether human nature has "evolved" to its present condition through evolutionary natural selection (which God can easily employ as a secondary instrumental cause in his design). To be sure, even cognitive neuroscientists, albeit in their own language, lend support to the view that we are endowed with natural inclinations: they commonly affirm, for instance, that human beings are characterized by a given set of goal-oriented dynamisms (they often use the term "mechanisms").[24] Goal-oriented to the good, the inclinations of nature act as the metaphysical or anthropological grounding for the entire moral life.

Contrary to the opinion, though widespread in the Anglo-American world, that God takes little interest in our sexual lives, the integral role that sexuality enjoys in our natural inclinations (namely, at the second-rung, animal-like dimension of our being), and thus in the natural law, shows us just the opposite: God takes great interest, indeed he takes *loving*

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[22] For more on this, see Fulvio Di Blasi, "Natural Law as Inclination to God," *Nova et Vetera* 7 (2009): 327–60.

[23] Pope Benedict XVI, annual address to the Vatican diplomatic corps, January 10, 2010 (posted on the Vatican Radio website [oecumene.radiovaticana.org; Jan. 11, 2010]).

[24] See, for example, Richard D. Lane and Lynn Nadel, eds., *Cognitive Neuroscience of Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). I am grateful to Kenneth Schmitz for bringing this point to my attention (in personal conversation).

interest, in our sexual conduct. We shall see in a moment the specifics of such "interest."

Here we should clarify that mentioning God in reference to the natural law is to make not a theological or faith-based claim per se, but a philosophical one. It is to affirm attributes of God which the human mind on its own can know. Natural law doctrine understands that a supreme Author, a supreme Lawgiver, must stand behind the order of nature with its predetermined laws. Every law implies a lawgiver, the law of nature included; every law presupposes a mind which has formulated and promulgated it. Even the deist Thomas Jefferson, while a secularized proponent of natural law but a proponent of natural law as "written reason" nonetheless, understood this. When penning the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson inserted into the opening lines the phrase "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God" in order to establish the foundation of such "unalienable Rights" as "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."[25] By asserting "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God" in the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson was simply echoing the philosopher John Locke's view that the "Law of Nature" is but the handiwork of "one Omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker."[26]

Furthermore, by seeing the natural inclinations as the metaphysical "bridge" to the moral life, I am consciously distancing myself from the so-called "new" natural law theory.[27] Accusing an ethical theory that

[25] Jefferson's view of natural law as "written reason" can be found in Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings*, ed. Paul Leicester Ford (New York, 1898), 9:480; 18:1 ("The Batture at New Orleans"), 15:207; cited in Russell Hittinger, *The First Grace*, 64. Hittinger goes on to note how "the constitutions and bills of rights of both the United States government and the governments of the various states reflect a commitment to the idea of fundamental rights. Most everyone knows, or should know, that these rights were formulated in light of natural law theories of one sort or another" (71). Again, Pope Benedict XVI reminded Americans of the Declaration of Independence's appeal to the natural law at the White House South Lawn when inaugurating his apostolic visit to the United States in April of 2008.

[26] Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett, New American Library edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), n. 6.

[27] Proponents of this new natural law theory, who appeal to St. Thomas for support, would include, among others, Germain Grisez, John Finnis, Robert P. George, Ronald Lawler, Joseph Boyle, and William E. May. *The New York Times* recently showcased the influence of this new natural law theory with a lengthy profile of Robert George (David D. Kirkpatrick, "The Conservative-Christian Big Thinker," December 16, 2009). Here the *Times* does not hesitate to call George, professor of jurisprudence at Princeton University, "(America's) most influential conservative Christian thinker," who ranks "among the most-talked-about thinkers in conservative legal circles" and who acts as the American Catholic bishops' "intellectual point man" and "pre-eminent Catholic intellectual."

derives an "ought" from an "is" of committing the "naturalistic fallacy," the new natural law theorists seek to ground the natural law not in a metaphysics of human nature, or in an objective human nature, nor ultimately in God. Rather, in a more Kantian than Thomist move, they ground natural law in the human consciousness, namely, in the mind's pure intuition of a self-evident set of incommensurable goods that all can recognize as requisite for integral human flourishing.[28] But the natural law, as Aquinas presents it, is hardly this. Presupposing and building on the order of being, especially the body-soul unity in the human being, the natural law burgeons forth from this order into human action. The natural law, truly, bridges the metaphysical order with the moral order.

We should also stress the hierarchical ordering among the three-tiered inclinations, with the inclination to self-preservation occupying the lowest rung and the natural inclinations proper to us as rational beings standing at the top. The lower ones are subordinate to and finalized by the higher rational ones; indeed, the lower are for the sake of the higher. That the lower inclinations are not intended to give way to actions that remain isolated in a sub-human, "centaur-like" sphere of activity, but

[28] As Russell Hittinger, who provides the classic critique of this more Kantian than Thomistic theory in his *A Critique of the New Natural Law Theory* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), has pointed out to me (in personal conversation), deriving an "ought" from an "is" marks a commonplace fact of life. Consider, for instance, the situation in which a person is injured and in need of medical attention. If there is an individual on hand who "is" a doctor, who would deny that this person "ought" to be the one to provide the requisite medical attention? Further, in his review of Fulvio Di Blasi's *God and the Natural Law: A Rereading of Thomas Aquinas* in *Nova et Vetera* 5 (2007): 694–98, Steven Jensen notes how "God as a final end of human life is essential to any Thomistic ethics, especially on account of Thomas's natural law, which demands God as the lawgiver" (695). But as Jensen observes (ibid.), the Finnis, Grisez, et al. new natural law school of thought (of which Di Blasi is not a proponent) "leaves out the divine lawgiver, thereby transforming the precepts of natural law into mere counsels." Jensen continues: "[The new natural law theorists] attempt to make morality autonomous, that is, arising from some internal source, which for (them) is our intuitive grasp of basic human goods. Unfortunately, this entirely internal morality becomes a set of counsels given by ourselves, rather than a set of commands that we must follow, for (this) view fails to recognize that the binding force of morality must arise from someone outside of ourselves, someone who directs us to the end" (696). Agreeing, Russell Hittinger (*The First Grace*, xii) notes what such a "free-floating" understanding of the natural law, which detaches it from a higher divine authority or even from a deeper metaphysical grounding, implies: "[N]atural law [comes] to mean the position of the human mind just insofar as it is left to itself, prior to authority and law. Natural law constitutes an authority-free zone."

ought to become integrated into the properly human we see in the simple case of our drive to eat, a drive following upon our lowest inclination, that to self-preservation. Hardly a purely physical or animal activity, eating serves a profound human function, indeed, it becomes an art, in as much as we prepare our meals with the highest of nutritional, gustatory and even aesthetic quality in mind, we observe proper etiquette when consuming our food, and, typically the preferred occasion of shared human fellowship, mealtime satisfies deep social (i.e., rational) needs. Commensurate with the sensate or animal-like dimension of our nature, the inclination to procreation and to the rearing of offspring becomes properly *human* only when *integrated* into the rational dimension of our lives, and thereby made to serve the higher inclinations.

Where conflict might arise between the various inclinations, the rational (or properly human) ones, aiming more properly at the common good, should "override" the lower ones. We see this illustrated in the case of the soldier who dies defending his country. Here the inclination to the common good of communal living, for whose conservation the soldier dies, takes precedence over the inclination to the preservation of life (his life), a private good. In the case of those select individuals called to celibacy, the inclination to knowing the truth about God takes precedence (for them) over the inclination to procreation.[29]

The Natural Inclination to Marriage

With the foregoing in mind, we are now in a position of seeing how (heterosexual) marriage, nuptiality, is inscribed in our very natural inclinations in an especially remarkable way. Let us briefly sketch this.

The natural inclination to procreation and to the rearing of children ensues specifically upon our sexed bodies, which again is commensurate with the sensate or animal-like dimension of our nature. Yet for the human being, this inclination to sexual union remains incomplete, or in need of finalization, since our animal-like inclination to procreation becomes properly human only when integrated into human rationality, that is, only

[29] "If a man refrains from bodily pleasures in order more freely to give himself to the contemplation of truth, this is in accordance with right reason. Now holy virginity [celibacy] refrains from all sexual pleasure in order more freely to have leisure for divine contemplation." *ST* II–II, q. 152, a. 2. In ad 1 of this article, Thomas explains how the duty to obey the natural law precept of procreation falls on the human race as a whole, not on every human individual. This is where the new natural law theorists of the Finnis and Grisez school run into difficulty, since for them the grounding of the natural law is not the inclinations of an objective human nature, but the mind's intuiting of basic goods that are "incommensurable," that is, unable to be hierarchically ordered.

when it is integrated into the human being's ordering to knowledge and love, to friendship (wherein knowledge and love are united).

This integration and finalization is achieved by the inclination to living in society, one of the inclinations following upon our rationality. And the only human society that can embrace the procreative inclination to bodily sexual union is, obviously, marriage. To be sure, while the inclination to communal living orders us to many forms of social institutions, that society which represents the bedrock of all other societies is what Aquinas terms "the society of domestic fellowship" (*domesticae conversationis consortium*), namely, marriage.[30]

In short, the inclination to living in community joins with the inclination to procreation and to the rearing of children in the way that form (representative of human rationality) joins with matter (representative of our animal-like bodies) in order to inscribe in the deepest fabric of our being a most powerful inclination to marriage.[31] This hylemorphic-styled

[30] *Summa contra Gentiles* (hereafter cited as *ScG*) III, ch. 123. For more on the development in Thomas's views on marriage belonging to the natural law as found in his Commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard and in his later work *Summa contra Gentiles*, cf. Angela McKay, "Aquinas on the End of Marriage," in *Human Fertility: Where Faith and Science Meet*, eds. Richard J. Fehring and Theresa Notare (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2008), 53–70. Repeating a long-held Catholic teaching, Vatican Council II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, §12, affirms that marriage is the bedrock of all social institutions. This view can also be found in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, bk. VIII, ch. 12 (1162a17–19); for Thomas's commentary, *Sententia Libri Ethicorum*, bk. VIII, lect. 12 (nn. 1719–23); trans. *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, by C. I. Litzinger (Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books, 1993).

[31] This is essentially Thomas's argument in *ST* Suppl., q. 41, a. 1 (pulled from his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, bk. IV, d. 26, q. 1, a. 1), where, in answer to the question of "whether matrimony is of the natural law," Aquinas replies in the affirmative, as we are inclined by nature both to "the good of offspring" and to "the society of marriage," whereby the spouses render to each other "domestic service" (*mutuum obsequium . . . in rebus domesticis*). Granted, Thomas considers the first inclination the "principal end" (*principalem finem*) of marriage and the second inclination its "secondary end" (*secundarium finem*). But this is because he sees sexuality as owing first and foremost to our bodily distinction between male and female, whereby we participate in the power to procreate enjoyed by the entire animal kingdom. Furthermore, it would be a grave error to read "secondary end" as signifying "accidental" or "non-essential." The conjugal act has a per se ordering *both* to procreation, its per se primary ordering, *and* to unitive love (or to what Thomas calls the society of marriage), its per se secondary ordering. As the moralists John C. Ford and Gerald Kelly (*Contemporary Moral Theology. Vol. 2: Marriage Questions* [Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1963], 76; emphasis theirs) put it: "the secondary, personalist ends, while remaining essentially subordinate, are nevertheless truly *essential* ends of marriage, just as the primary ends are." Analogously,

inclination to marriage means our sexuality targets not merely the good of sexual enjoyment or pleasure, but the two higher co-essential goods of procreation and unitive love-making (or spousal friendship), into which sensual pleasure is subsumed. And since nature targets these goods *together*, it intends them always *to be together*, which only (heterosexual) marriage accomplishes; nature orders our sexuality—expressive of our body-soul composite nature—to heterosexual marriage alone.

Nuptiality, heterosexual marriage, operates, then, as a kind of intrinsic measure of what constitutes proper sexual activity—for *every* human individual. If the natural inclination to offspring builds on and imbibes with moral direction the procreative dimension of our sexuality, which is expressive of our sexed animal-like bodies, the inclination to living in society builds on and gives moral aim to what today we call the unitive or personalist dimension of our sexuality, which is expressive of our rational souls. After all, the unitive or personalist dimension pertains to nothing other than the friendship (or *consortium*, as Thomas calls it) shared by husband and wife (thereby showing just how "personalist" a Thomist natural law account of human sexuality truly is). As our bodies become human only in their being informed by our rational souls, so does the inclination to procreation and to the rearing of children become properly human only when it is informed by, that is, integrated into, our inclination to communal living. And as body and soul must always be found together, so must the procreative and unitive dimensions always remain united, accomplished in (heterosexual) marriage.[32]

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consider the co-essential primary and secondary ends of a mother preparing a meal for her family, where the secondary end of serving good-tasting food is no less essential than, even if subordinate to, the primary end of providing wholesome nutrition to her family. Thus the misleading observation of Marie Leblanc ("Amour et procréation dans la théologie de saint Thomas," *Revue thomiste* 92 [1992]: 433–59, at 434) when he writes: "The gift of life in view of human progeny stands out clearly and constantly in the works of St. Thomas as the primary and essential end [of marriage]; on this point he does not modify his thought" (translation my own). I read this as implying (wrongly) that, on Aquinas's account, procreation marks the only essential end of marriage. It is no doubt on account of the confusion that the term "secondary" engenders that the 1983 Code of Canon Law simply drops out all language of primary and secondary ends altogether when holding in canon 1055 that marriage "is by its nature ordered to the good of the spouses (*ad bonum coniugum*) and the procreation and education of offspring" (*Code of Canon Law. Latin-English Edition*, trans. Canon Law Society of America [Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1984], 387).

[32] For much more on this, see my previous essay, "The 'Inseparable Connection' between Procreation and Unitive Love (*Humanae Vitae*, §12) and Thomistic Hylemorphic Anthropology," *Nova et Vetera* 6 (2008): 731–64.

The Spurious Appeal to Nature in the Marriage Debate

Thus the hijacked notion of "nature" by which homosexual persons claim it is "natural" for them to feel sexually drawn or "inclined" to members of the same sex. The problem here is that, without further ado, such a line of reasoning could be used to justify any tendency as a "natural inclination" by the sheer fact that it is a tendency for the individual in question. This would include adults who feel sexually drawn to children, or, say, those who feel prone to setting fires.

Clearly, subjective tendencies or desires on their own do not rise to the level of "natural inclination" in the way signified by natural law theory. Only tendencies or inclinations that belong to our species as such attain to this level. Hence Pope John Paul II's insistence in *Veritatis Splendor*, §51, that one cannot separate individual freedoms (as acting upon personal tendencies) from the nature we all have in common. Supposed "natural" tendencies found within certain individuals must be weighed against the objective goods which our common nature as such targets or inclines us towards. And homosexual tendencies are opposed to the objective goods to which our sexuality orders us, namely, the joint goods of procreation and unitive love. With this opposition in mind, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1986, with Cardinal Ratzinger as prefect, famously observed that the homosexual tendency, while "not a sin" in itself, nonetheless "must be seen as an objective disorder."[33] There is only one natural inclination of our sexuality, and it is to heterosexual marriage.

To be sure, since human nature includes biology, nothing truly "natural" can be opposed to our physical, biological makeup as objectively constituted. It is disingenuous, to say the least, then, for same-sex proponents to dismiss nature as irrelevant at the common level of our species, inclusive of our biological design, but then, in the same breath, appeal to nature as decisive at the level of the individual in the case of those persons who, no matter our biological design, feel sexually inclined to members of the same sex. At the risk of stating the obvious, one cannot ignore biology and still lay claim to its being natural.

Furthermore, Aquinas's use of the term *consortium* in reference to marriage helps us see how deeply shallow and misleading it is to view marriage as a mere "private agreement," as is implied in most legal defenses

[33] "Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil, and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder." Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* (Vatican translation, 1986), §3.

of gay marriage. While *consortium* is usually translated as "society" or "social union," the term carries a yet stronger sense. More than a communion or friendship, and certainly much more than a private agreement, the *consortium* of marriage is an *institution*, that is, a social union that marks a permanent aspect of the social order and which is of interest to everyone in society.[34] Even if marriage fails to provide all the goods requisite for human flourishing (which only a polity can do), it does unite knowledge and love in a communion of persons as nowhere else. Marriage unites human persons in the most intimate communion of body and soul possible. Marriage unites man and woman in "highest friendship," *maxima amicitia*, to use Aquinas's bold term in the *Summa contra Gentiles*.[35] Little wonder the Genesis creation narrative holds up the conjugal union as the most fulfilling of human friendships, in as much as God creates a woman, not a man (!), to fulfill Adam's longing for companionship.

Goods We *Ought* to Pursue

The natural inclinations extend to the realm of actual legislated precepts because they are expressive of God's hardwiring in us and thus of how God our Maker intends us to live. Aquinas, in fact, observes that our minds "naturally apprehend (the inclinations of nature) as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit."[36] The inclinations of nature direct us to goods we *ought* to pursue. After all, every type of law, including the natural law, must legislate toward a predetermined end.

Existentially, we see this exhibited in the fact that all humans make judgments on what they consider constitutes good and bad behavior, and thus on how they *should* act, and that most persons agree along very general lines on what good or bad behavior consists in. For all persons

[34] These insights I owe to Russell Hittinger, both from personal conversation and from his lecture "Social Justice: Devolution or Subsidiarity?" delivered at Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island, October 23, 2007.

[35] *ScG* III, ch. 123. This qualification of marriage as *maxima amicitia* is all the more significant in light of the fact that, as Charles J. Reid (*Power over the Body, Equality in the Family: Rights and Domestic Relations in Medieval Canon Law* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004], 105) observes, canonists and lawyers since the twelfth century had stressed "the sense of obligation (*debitum*) [rather than friendship] that bound [married] parties together." At the same time, Reid does explain how "women and men were recognized [in twelfth- and thirteenth-century theology] as spiritual equals, who benefited equally from Christ's salvific acts. Men and women alike and in equal measure have gained eternal life through Christ's death and resurrection" (99). For more on male and female equality in Aquinas, cf. Michael Nolan, "The Aristotelian Background to Aquinas's Denial that 'Woman is a Defective Male,'" *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 21–69.

[36] *ST* I–II, q. 94, a. 2.

know, even if merely intuitively, that we *should* do the good and avoid the bad (the first principle of all the natural law precepts), that we *should* take care of our bodily life, that we *should* procreate and rear our children, that we *should* be honest with each other, and that we flourish when we do so. How could this be if we did not all possess a basic inclination ("hard wiring") to the good in the very core of our being?

Accordingly, Aquinas holds that the precepts of the natural law (what the natural law commands us to do) follow the order of the natural inclinations.[37] Further, that all persons possess an intuitive basic moral sense is evidence for Aquinas that the natural law's generalized precepts not only work in tandem with our natural inclinations, but they also mark an "imprint" (*impressio*) on our minds by God himself: "God instilled the natural law into (our) minds," Thomas famously writes, "so as to be known by (us) naturally."[38] Thus Russell Hittinger observes that the natural law signifies "the communication of moral necessities to a created intellect."[39]

So while Thomas attaches the word "extrinsic" (*exterius*) to the natural law to signify a divinely legislated or measured ordering to the good, he would not want this to shield the fact that the natural law is at the same time deeply interior. Not an external imposition, the natural law is inscribed in the received fabric of our being, and this makes moral compliance (as opposed to physically coerced compliance) with the natural law possible.

From this it follows that sexual intercourse and the rearing of offspring, to which we are naturally inclined, are goods that we "naturally know" as something we *ought* to pursue, as something that our very moral flourishing hinges upon. This does not mean the natural law commands us to pursue sexual intercourse without further ado—something akin to mere beasts. Recall, again, that the three-tiered inclinations are hierarchically ordered; the lower is for the sake of the higher. The inclination to

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[37] "Since good has the nature of an end, and evil the nature of its contrary, all those things to which man has a natural inclination are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance. Wherefore according to the order of the natural inclinations is the order of the precepts of the natural law. Because in man there is first of all an inclination to good in accordance with the nature which he has in common with all substances." *ST* I–II, q. 94, a. 2.

[38] *ST* I–II, q. 90, a. 4, ad 1. In question 91, article 2, Aquinas writes: "[T]he light of natural reason, by which we discern what is good and what is evil, which is the function of the natural law, is nothing but the imprint (*impressio*) of the divine light on us." We shall see in a moment what the precepts that God imprints upon our minds are.

[39] Hittinger, *The First Grace*, xxiii.

procreation and to the rearing of offspring becomes properly human only when integrated into the rational dimension of our lives, namely, when integrated into the communion of marriage.

Innate Knowledge of Our Ordering to Heterosexual Marriage

Since the natural law is "instilled into our minds so as to be naturally known by us," every human being, by virtue of the natural light of reason and independent of religious faith, has the ability to grasp the nuptial ordering of our sexuality. Every human individual can and should know in his conscience that we have been endowed with the gift of sexuality for the purpose of marriage.[40]

Even a generation ago most Americans would probably have affirmed the fact that our sexuality owns a per se ordering to marriage. Still today, though, countless aspects of our present culture, no matter what it might otherwise trumpet, give tacit, unreflective witness to the simple truth that, at bottom, the institution of indissoluble heterosexual marriage stands as the rule and measure of sexual comportment. To take one simple and seemingly trivial example, in the 2006 remake of the film *Poseidon*, one of the main characters of the film, the former mayor of New York City (played by Kurt Russell), is at one point caustically derided by another character (a drinking gambler played by Kevin Dillon) for failing to make his marriage last. In a culture of unrestricted divorce and remarriage, and where "consent" establishes the norm, such derision makes little sense. *If*, on the other hand, heterosexual lifelong marriage is the moral norm that we would all instinctively recognize, because inscribed in our nature, if we were but honest with our consciences, then poking fun at a man for his failed marriage does not seem so out of place.

Admittedly, to affirm the natural human ability to know the ordering of our sexuality to marriage invites wider consideration of the notion of synderesis, whereby our minds (the mind as ordered to action) know the first principles of good moral action. And it is conscience that allows our minds, through the judgments we reach about what to do in particular

[40] From his theology-of-the-body perspective, Pope John Paul II calls this the "spousal meaning [that every human person has] of his own body, of his own masculinity and femininity." *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books, 2006), 200; from the general audience of February 13, 1980. This spousal meaning, the late Pontiff continues in the same passage, "is important and indispensable for knowing who man is and who he ought to be, and therefore how he should shape his own activity."

instances, to apply the principles known through synderesis to concrete acts. Such wider consideration, however, would take us too far afield.[41]

We might simply mention that knowledge of the first principles of good moral action, and subsequently of the precepts of the natural law, does not come "automatically," as if detached from our own experiences and moral development. Thomistic natural law precepts communicated from God's mind to ours are not the Kantian equivalent of a delineated or clearly stipulated moral code (or "moral imperatives," as Kant calls them) which our reason somehow knows independently of or prior to our experience.

Firstly, the content of this knowledge, on Aquinas's account, does not extend much beyond the most indeterminate of notions of doing the good and avoiding the bad. God imprints a general moral "sense" upon us, nothing more. The natural law precepts provide the "seeds" (*semina*) of good moral conduct, as Thomas says in one suggestive passage, often times requiring experience and instruction for their sprouting forth, such as when a child, after having stolen candy from the local grocery store, needs instruction from his parents in order to know clearly that stealing is wrong.[42] Thus the door remains easily ajar to our reaching erroneous judgments on what constitutes morally appropriate conduct.

As for how these "seeds" of good moral conduct find formulation in natural law precepts, Aquinas ranks them according to three successive

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[41] In a word, synderesis and conscience introduce the *practical* dimension of the natural law, and thus sit over and above the *ontological* dimension of the natural law, or the natural law *qua* inscribed or imprinted in us. The principal *locus* for Aquinas's discussion of synderesis and conscience is *ST* I, q. 79, a. 12 (for synderesis, which Thomas calls a *habitus* of the mind and which he defines as "the first practical principles bestowed on us by nature") and a. 13 (for conscience, which he sees as an act of the mind and defines as reflective moral judgment); cf. as well *ST* I–II, q. 94, a. 1, ad 2 ("synderesis is a habit containing the precepts of the natural law, which are the first principles of human actions"); *De malo*, q. 3, a. 12, ad 13; and *De veritate*, q. 17, aa. 1–2. For the confusion of conscience with synderesis, cf. Romanus Cessario, *Introduction to Moral Theology*, 86–87. Cf. as well Servais Pinckaers, "Conscience and Christian Tradition," and "Conscience and the Virtue of Prudence," in *The Pinckaers Reader: Renewing Thomistic Moral Theology*, ed. John Berkman and C. S. Titus [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005], 321–55; the latter essay offers a response to the attempt of Joseph Ratzinger ("Conscience and Truth," in *Catholic Conscience. Foundation and Formation* [Braintree, MA: The Pope John XXIII Center, 1999], 19) to supplant the term *synderesis* with *anamnesis* because of what Ratzinger (before becoming pope) perceives as the drawbacks of the former term.

[42] "[C]ertain seeds or first principles of acquired virtue [that is, of good moral conduct] pre-exist in us by nature." *ST* I–II, q. 63, a. 2, ad 3.

"grades" (*gradus*), from more generalized yet better known to more determinate (though still generalized) but not so easily known. At the most generalized and fundamental level, we find the twofold moral duty which requires no instruction from the wise to know, namely, that we should "behave well towards the head of the community" and that we should "behave well towards one's fellow and partner in the community."[43] And so the first-grade natural law precepts, which Thomas affirms are the only truly "self evident [ones] to reason," are that we should love God (the ultimate head of the community) wholly and that we should love our neighbor as ourselves.[44] The second-grade natural law precepts follow upon these self-evident ones as more determinate applications or specifications of the first-grade precepts. The Decalogue gives well-known expression to these second-grade moral precepts (honoring God properly; respecting each other's lives, wives, and property; being honest in speech; etc.).[45] Finally, the third-grade precepts give further specified application of the second grade precepts, such as the duty to respect the aged, which is a further application of the duty to respect one's parents. These third-grade precepts for the most part, Aquinas observes, almost always require experience and instruction from the wise in order to be known.[46]

For St. Thomas, though, "instruction from the wise" is a broad notion and may include societal traditions, both past and present. We can learn a great deal from the basic agreements human cultures have reached on what constitutes morally right behavior (examples would include being honest in our speech, safeguarding our lives, respecting each other's property, and the like) and morally wrong behavior (such as lying, stealing, murdering, etc.).[47] What we learn, for instance, when we read in the

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[43] *ST* I–II, q. 100, a. 5.

[44] "Loving God and other human beings is the *ratio* of natural law, and it is therefore the central truth that all people should understand by their reason if they have to act righteously." Fulvio Di Blasi, "Natural Law as Inclination to God," 331. For the precepts of loving God and loving neighbor as the only natural law precepts that are self-evident, see *ST* I–II, q. 100, a. 3, ad 1, and a. 4, ad 1.

[45] See *ST* I–II, q. 100, a. 1 (cf. as well a. 3, ad 1, and a. 4, ad 1). One finds this view already in the early Church Father St. Irenaeus, *Adveresus Haereses*, bk. IV, 15, 1 (*Patrologia Graeca* [ed. J. P. Migne]: 7/1, 1012).

[46] *ST* I–II, q. 100, aa. 1 and 11.

[47] I owe this point to John Cuddeback, "Ordered Inclinations," who in turn cites the following important passage from Jacques Maritain (*Man and the State*, [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951], 92: "Those inclinations *were really genuine* which in the immensity of the human past have guided reason in becoming aware, little by little, of the regulations that have been most definitely and most generally recognized by the human race, starting from the most ancient

Babylonian *List of Sins* that it is evil to despise one's father and mother, in Exodus 20:12 that we should honor our father and our mother, in the ancient Stoic philosopher Epictetus that it is a moral duty to care for one's parents, in Hindu wisdom that our first duty is to honor our father and mother, and in native American tradition that old men should be taken care of, is that the duty to care for one's parents, or, more generally, for the aged, marks a moral precept binding on all because it is written in the very fabric of our being.[48]

Returning, then, to our natural ordering to heterosexual marriage, we might ask how this is stipulated in a natural law precept. Earlier it was suggested that God has implanted in our minds a moral precept directing the use of our sexuality always and everywhere to marriage as its end. If we attend to Aquinas's way of looking upon the Decalogue as offering generalized or indeterminate natural law precepts which allow for further correlative determinations (such as, again, how the duty to respect one's parents extends to the correlative duty to respect the aged), we will have found our answer. Because it places us in an arena of moral precepts that sum up "the first elements of law," as Thomas calls them,[49] or whole classes of moral duties, the Decalogue offers two commandments, namely, the sixth ("You shall not commit adultery") and the ninth ("You shall not covet your neighbor's wife"), that encapsulate the natural law ordering of our sexuality to the joint goods of procreation and unitive love, that is, to heterosexual marriage.[50] Thomas himself lists the prohibitions against

communities. For the knowledge of the primordial aspects of natural law was first expressed in social patterns rather than in personal judgments: so that we might say that that knowledge has developed within the double protecting tissue of human inclinations and human society."

[48] C. S. Lewis compiles this list, as well as many other common moral and legal directives spanning ancient Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Old Norse, Hindu, Chinese, Anglo-Saxon, and native American cultures, which testify to the universality of the natural law, in his *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), "Appendix: Illustrations of the *Tao*," 93–121, at 104–5.

[49] *ST* I–II, q. 100, a. 5, ad 6.

[50] For agreement, see Servais Pinckaers, *Morality: The Catholic View*, trans. Michael Sherwin (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2001), 104. We should note that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* does the same by outlining the Church's vision of the meaning and purpose of human sexuality under the heading of "The Sixth Commandment" (§§2331–2400). We should also note that the Genesis creation narrative makes clear the fact that our sexuality is ordered to marriage, in as much as it encompasses the joint goods of procreation (Gen 1:27–28) and unitive love (Gen 2:18–25). This creation account thereby establishes the proper moral and anthropological foundation that sets in relief the Decalogue's prohibition of adultery and the whole class of sexual sins associated with it.

prostitution and the "unnatural sins" (he has in mind homosexual acts and bestiality, but we could add incest, masturbation, contraceptive intercourse, and the like) as examples of correlative duties following upon the prohibition against adultery.[51]

Veiled Knowledge of Natural Law Precepts

There is a second reason Aquinas gives for why knowledge of the first principles of good moral action does not come easily or with clarity. Moral corruption—sin—has "obscured" (*obscurata*) the natural law precepts God imprints upon our minds. Sin—both at the personal and at the larger cultural level—makes us calloused to the innate moral sensibilities implanted within us by the natural law, sometimes even to the point of "blotting out" (*deletur*) these sensibilities, to use Thomas's term.[52] Such corruption helps explain why we find natural law precepts reiterated in the Decalogue, a law revealed by God to persons of faith, in as much as this law "reminds" us of our moral duties which are imbedded within all of our consciences, whether or not we are persons of confessional faith, but which have become shrouded by sin.[53] (Citing Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars*, Aquinas refers to the ancient Germans' failure to consider theft wrong as an example of this shrouding.)[54]

Concretely, the dulling of our moral sensibilities happens, as St. Thomas observes, by "concupiscence or some other passion," by "bad influence" (*malas persuasiones*), or by "perverse customs and corrupt habits" (such as the just-mentioned German view on theft).[55] Here Thomas's words are not far removed from our contemporary situation, where "perverse customs and corrupt habits" abound, whether we are speaking of rampant cohabitation and extra-marital sex, no-fault divorce, auto-sexual practices including internet voyeurism, contraceptive intercourse, or homosexual

[51] "[O]ther moral precepts which are added to the Decalogue are reducible to the precepts of the Decalogue after the manner of so many corollaries (*per modum cuiusdam additionis ad ipsa*). . . . Thus to the sixth commandment, which forbids adultery, is added the prohibition against prostitution, according to Deuteronomy 23:17 . . . as well as the prohibition against unnatural sins, according to Leviticus 18:22–23." *ST* I–II, q. 100, a. 11. Previously in article 4 of question 100, in fact, Thomas relates the proscription against adultery "to the concupiscence of the flesh," and thus to all those sexual immoralities which stem from disordered sexual desire. Cf. *ScG* III, ch. 122.

[52] *ST* I–II, q. 94, a. 6.

[53] "There was need for man to receive a precept about loving God and his neighbor, because in this respect the natural law had become obscured (*obscurata*) on account of sin." *ST* I–II, q. 100, a. 5, ad 1.

[54] *ST* I–II, q. 94, a. 4; and Julius Caesar, *De bello Gallico*, VI, 23.

[55] *ST* I–II, q. 94, a. 6.

unions. Indeed, it is impossible to underestimate the *malas persuasiones*, the bad influence, which the widespread acceptance of the same-sex lifestyle, to the point of its growing legal recognition, exerts on the ever increasing denial of the ordering of our sexuality to heterosexual marriage.[56]

No matter the spreading influence of this denial, though, the obvious merits of a natural law account stem from the fact that it proposes a vision of human sexuality which targets the true human good, true or ultimate human flourishing. Catholic moral teaching, rooted in a Thomist account of natural law, invites us to embrace our teleological ordering to ultimate happiness by respecting the nuptial meaning of our sexuality, even if this respect demands of us a kind of self-mastery over our sexual instincts which many today regard as "retrograde" or excessively repressive and dehumanizing.

So let the Catholic moralist operate with the conviction that the Thomist vision of human sexuality, because grounded in the natural law, resonates deep within the truest part of ourselves, in the deepest fabric of our being. It targets a good that all ultimately yearn for, even if one's habits have succeeded in blotting out what otherwise marks the key to genuine sexual freedom. Human sexuality is, first and last, symbolic of man's procreative-unitive ordering.

Natural Law and the Separation between Religion and Politics

While it is clear the natural law argument in this essay addresses itself to all persons of good will because it stands on the authority of reason alone, discourse in the public square today, especially in the United States, often assumes that one opposes something like the same-sex lifestyle exclusively on the basis of religious faith. Not infrequently one hears the

[56] A recent survey conducted by the Knights of Columbus and the Marish College Institute for Public Opinion bears out such *malas persuasiones* among Catholic millennials (Catholics between the ages of 18 and 29) in particular (see "New Survey of Young Catholics Shows Promise and Challenges for the Catholic Church," posted on the Knights of Columbus website [kofc.org]; February 11, 2010). This survey found, for instance, that only 37% of this group of Catholics think same-sex marriage is wrong, 35% think homosexual relations are immoral, and only 20% think pre-marital sex is wrong. Yet, as Romanus Cessario (*Introduction to Moral Theology*, 98) points out, it is our relationships that suffer as a result: "When a sexual partner is chosen outside of the stability that the permanent and exclusive commitment between husband and wife both generates and demands, broken relationships and hearts give testimony to the raw destructive power of intemperate passion. Such passion can lead both men and women to act, even habitually, in a way that contravenes the principles of natural law. A similar analysis can be made of persons who negate the inherent relational character of sexual relations by engaging in auto-sexual activities."

charge that opposition to same-sex unions threatens to compromise the separation between church and state, or religion and politics. Such a charge, which many Catholics themselves believe and even echo, grossly misrepresents natural law teaching in general and the traditional Catholic position in particular.

Even if it is true that many oppose gay marriage on the grounds of strict religious faith, especially for those Christians who lack appreciation of or familiarity with the natural law, this does not mean that arguments against same-sex unions which appeal to the authority of reason alone cannot be formulated.[57] Discussion on the compatibility of homosexual relations, or, for that matter, abortion, premarital sexual relations, the use of artificial contraceptives, and the like, with the truths of faith does not and should not *de facto* exclude discussion on the compatibility of these acts with the truths of reason.

This holds especially for those democratic societies that stand upon the bedrock principle of freedom of speech in the public square. It is more than ironic to witness, at least in the United States, the ever increasing social trend to exclude opposition to same-sex unions, or more generally to the homosexual lifestyle, from the public square. Generally speaking, it is outright assumed that the same-sex lifestyle stands above moral reproach and condemnation, and that no moral argument can be made against this lifestyle. As a result, many same-sex advocates are attempting to ban from the public square those voices that argue against homosexual unions on the grounds that such arguments constitute homophobic "hate speech."

As all are aware, more and more this push by same-sex proponents is securing judicial and legislative support, such as through the extension of hate crimes laws—as occurred recently at the federal level in the United States—to include those victimized on the basis of sexual orientation.[58]

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[57] While it has been standard since Karl Barth to hold that the Reformers' view on the corruption of human nature by sin leaves no room for the natural law—how, after all, can a law of nature be followed if nature itself inclines to sin?—John Witte in his magisterial *The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion, and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) has shown that, in fact, the idea of natural law and of natural rights was a vibrant and integral element of early Reformation thought.

[58] The United States Congress passed legislation (approved by the House of Representatives on October 8, 2009, and by the Senate on October 22, 2009) extending hate crimes to include crimes committed on the basis of sexual orientation, which President Obama signed into law on October 28, 2009. However, while most western European nations race toward the same goal, there are exceptions, as Italy's parliament voted down, also in October of 2009, an effort

Indeed, fearful of "hate speech" lawsuits and of federal funding that would be withdrawn as a result, and no matter the U.S. Constitution's protection of freedom of religion, some Catholic universities in America are currently advising their faculty members not to "advocate" the view that the homosexual lifestyle is inherently disordered. Certainly, it remains to be seen whether hate crimes legislation covering sexual orientation stands as a threat to religious freedom and whether opposing homosexuality on religious or natural law grounds shall be seen as constituting criminal behavior. It is a telling commentary on a society that, on the one hand, allows vocal public support for the same-sex lifestyle in the name of "diversity" and "freedom of speech," but then, on the other hand, revokes that same right to diversity and freedom of speech (not to mention freedom of religion in the case of Catholic institutions) when opposition to the homosexual lifestyle is voiced.

Current reforms in the educational system, especially in the United States, testify to the way in which the trend to exclude opposition to the homosexual lifestyle is taking firm root in western society. Touted by some as the embodiment of "tolerance and diversity" and as standing "at the frontier of sex education in the United States," some school systems in America (and Britain), for example, are requiring health education courses at the middle-school and high-school levels to offer lessons on homosexuality.[59] Others are imposing a pro-homosexual curriculum on

to introduce the equivalent of the American hate-crime legislation. As Catholic World News (catholicculture.org; October 14, 2009) reports: "Opponents [in Italy] argued successfully that the legislation was unconstitutional insofar as it gave unequal protection to favored groups. One prominent Catholic lawmaker, Rocco Buttiglione, noted that homosexuals already enjoy full protection of law against violent crime. 'The legal protection exists, and it is the same protection that the law accords to every other citizen,' he said."

[59] This as reported by *The New York Times* on August 15, 2007, on its website (nytimes.com) in particular reference to the situation in Montgomery County, Maryland. Barring any last-minute court action, this school system was set to offer lessons on homosexuality, including videos demonstrating how to put on condoms, in its eighth- and tenth-grade health education courses. *The New York Times* hails this as an example of "respect and acceptance of the many permutations of sexual identity." As for the United Kingdom, the British Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights declared in its report on the implementation of Sexual Orientation Regulations (February 26, 2007) that even religious schools (Catholic or otherwise) cannot offer instruction in which "homosexual pupils are subjected to teaching, as part of the religious education or other curriculum, that their sexual orientation is sinful or morally wrong." Then in 2009, the United Kingdom's General Teaching Council, a professional regulatory body, passed a revised code of conduct which requires that teachers, even those at Catholic schools, "proactively challenge discrimination" and "promote equality and value

even lower educational levels, including kindergarten.[60] In the name of "tolerance," the view that favors the same-sex lifestyle is being imposed on western society, by legal force if need be, whether some members of this society—perhaps even a majority—like it or not.

Mental Health, Clinical Therapy, and the Natural Law

Because the natural law orders our sexuality to the joint goods of procreation and unitive love, and thus to marriage, any sexual act that opposes the nuptial meaning of human sexuality by opposing one or both of these dimensions can be said to frustrate God's wise providential ordering of our sexual lives to the good. As such, they mark intrinsically disordered acts and allow for no proportionalist-like exceptions.[61] Inherently disordered acts are always morally bad for us and can never contribute to our genuine happiness, no matter the circumstances.

The point to stress here is that the moral good, of which the natural law instructs us, provides the whole foundation for human flourishing. The fruits of living in accordance with the human moral good extend to the whole of our lives, and are determinative of our emotional and psychological well-being. This fact stands in contrast to the way our culture encourages us to adopt a compartmentalized attitude toward our moral lives, as if we could ignore or lay aside our moral duty as we would lay aside a note from our parents, with little discernable impact on other parts of our lives, namely, on the emotional or psychological dimensions of our lives. But if the common human experience of casting aside the moral good, particularly in the arena of human sexuality, can teach us anything, it is that engaging in behavior contrary to God's natural design and intention leaves nothing but wreckages of human relationships and broken lives in its wake. Sexual habits which thumb the natural law are

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diversity in all their professional relationships and interactions" (as reported by the Daily Mail Online, www.dailymail.co.uk, March 2, 2009).

60 This is the situation in Alameda, California, whose school board approved a "safe schools curriculum" on May 26, 2009. This curriculum requires respect for the homosexual lifestyle to be taught to kindergartners through fifth graders with no right for students to opt out. The curriculum will include the book *And Tango Makes Three*, by Justin Richardson and Peter Pornett, about two gay penguins who raise a baby penguin.

61 Cf. *ST* I–II, q. 94, a. 5; and Ralph McInerny, *Ethica Thomistica: The Moral Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 61. To remind the reader, proportionalism, or consequentialism, holds that there are no intrinsically evil acts; rather, an act is accounted good solely on the grounds that its good effects outweigh, or are in greater proportion to, its bad effects.

deleterious not only to our moral well-being, but also to our *entire* well-being as human persons, including our mental well-being.

In this respect, the field of clinical psychology would provide an invaluable service to natural law teaching, as indeed to Catholic moral thought, by conducting serious empirical research on the way sexual habits and customs impact our mental health. Ideally, these studies would target first the normative good of human sexuality, namely, fulfilling heterosexual marriages, and from there move to maladaptive or aberrational sexual practices.

One finds a beginning attempt at this in the work of the positive psychologist and former president of the American Psychological Association, Martin Seligman. Admittedly concerned not with problematic marriages but with "solid" marriages in "good shape," and equipped with statistical evidence for support, Seligman sees marriage and family, understood in its traditional sense, as an important and necessary means to happiness and fulfillment.[62] This fits within Seligman's larger project of correcting what he views as a glaring weakness in the field of clinical psychology, namely, its expertise in mental *disease* without a complementary expertise in what constitutes mental *health* (analogous, say, to the moral theologian who knows mostly about sin and little about holiness and virtue). The object of clinical research and therapy, in other words, is more often than not the person of mental imbalance rather than the person of mental health.

In addition to the pioneering work of the positive psychologists, there are a few studies that exist which can help chart the course briefly sketched here. For instance, there is the highly reputable New Zealand study showing that abortion increases the risk of such mental health problems as depression, anxiety disorders, suicidal behavior, and drug and alcohol abuse (substance use disorders).[63] There is also the Johns Hopkins

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[62] See, for instance, Seligman's *Authentic Happiness* (Boston: Nicholas Brealey, 2002), esp. ch. 11, "Love," 185–207, and ch. 12, "Raising Children," 208–46. Cf. as well Christopher Peterson and Martin E. P. Seligman, eds., *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). For an even more serious beginning attempt at charting the course initiated by Seligman, cf. Craig Steven Titus, ed., *The Psychology of Character and Virtue* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009).

[63] David M. Fergusson, L. John Horwood, and Elizabeth M. Ridder, "Abortion in Young Women and Subsequent Mental Health," *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 47:1 (2006): 16–24. What is significant about this Christchurch Health and Development Study, the largest of its kind internationally and funded mainly by the New Zealand government, is that, according to Ruth Hill ("Abortion Researcher Confounded by Study," *The New Zealand Herald*, January 5, 2006),

Hospital and University study which throws into serious question the prevailing view among psychologists that sexual identity is more a matter of social conditioning than of biological constitution; this study found that, in general, sex-change operations performed in the 1970s (typically with the blessing of psychologists) either for sexually confused adults or for male infants born with malformed, sexually ambiguous genitalia (hermaphrodites) succeeded only in causing further psychological harm.[64]

"[t]he researchers expected to find no evidence of harmful effects of abortion. But they found the opposite." Indeed, one of the researchers and authors of this study, the psychologist and epidemiologist David Fergusson, supports unrestricted access to abortion and is a self-proclaimed "atheist, rationalist and pro-choice [advocate]" (quoted by Julie Robotham, "Abortion Linked to Mental Problems," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, January 3, 2006). In this study, the researchers tracked more than 500 women over a twenty-five year period. It is telling that, whereas Fergusson and his team of researchers normally find little difficulty in getting their work published, this study was sent to four different journals before it was accepted for publication.

64 This study was conducted by Paul McHugh ("Surgical Sex," *First Things* 147 [November 2004]: 34–38), who at the time was psychiatrist-in-chief at Johns Hopkins Hospital and University Distinguished Service Professor of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University. McHugh's research, which challenges the "deep prejudice [amongst clinical psychologists] in favor of the idea that nature is totally malleable," was aided by other studies performed by the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Jon Meyer and by the psychiatric services of the Clark Institute in Toronto. In sum, McHugh's study consisted of a systematic follow-up analysis of the individuals who received this sex-change surgery. In the case of the sexually confused adults, McHugh found the patients "little changed in their psychological condition . . . [and that t]he hope that they would emerge now from their emotional difficulties to flourish psychologically had not been fulfilled. . . . [From this] I concluded that to provide surgical alteration to the body of these unfortunate people was to collaborate with a mental disorder rather than to treat it." The sex-change procedure for the male infants born with malformed, sexually ambiguous genitalia that psychologists were sure would lead to sound female sexual identity "if backed up by familial and cultural support" produced similar results. With the help of his resident psychiatrist William G. Reiner, who published his own findings in the January 22, 2004 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, McHugh discovered that "re-engineered males were almost never comfortable as females once they became aware of themselves and the world. . . . The children transformed from their male constitution into female roles suffered prolonged distress and misery as they sensed their natural attitudes." McHugh's final conclusion: "We have wasted scientific and technical resources and damaged our professional credibility by collaborating with madness rather than trying to study, cure, and ultimately prevent it." There exists an almost identical study on a case where a boy, after a botched circumcision, was transformed into a girl by castration, surgery, hormonal treatment, and subsequent "feminized" nurturing, all with the blessing of a Freudian psychologist. This resulted in a very maladjusted adolescent "girl"

One could point to other studies as well: there is research that correlates advances in artificial contraceptives with the sharp rise in the divorce rate, and thus with marital disorder. This same research reveals a much lower divorce rate (around five percent) among married couples who practice (the morally licit) natural method of birth control.[65] Additionally, a sociological study out of Ohio State University found that depressed people received a "greater psychological boost" from being married.[66] Research has also documented the deleterious effects of pornography on marriage and family.[67]

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who, upon learning the truth of "her" condition, opted for a surgical return to manhood. For this study, see Milton Diamond and H. Keith Sigmundson, "Sex Assignment at Birth: Long-Term Review and Clinical Implications," *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 151 (1997): 298–304. Choosing to ignore these findings, Children's Hospital of Boston has opted to offer the "Gender Management Service Clinic" in order to provide hormonal treatment for young people seeking to change their gender identity, as reported by Catholic World News (cwnews.com, May 5, 2008).

[65] Cf. John F. Kippley, *The Legacy of Margaret Sanger, the Foundress of Planned Parenthood* (Couple to Couple League International, 1988). The natural family planning center Kippley has founded has tracked how the founding of the National Birth Control League in 1913 (which in turn was succeeded by Planned Parenthood in 1939) in the United States sparked the widespread use of artificial contraceptives in the 1920s, and along with it the American divorce rate rose 92 percent from one out of eleven marriages in 1910 to one out of 5.75 marriages by 1930. The divorce rate continued to rise sharply, coinciding with the FDA's approval of the birth control pill in 1960, so that by 1977 the national divorce rate had reached one out of every two marriages, marking a 470 percent increase since 1910. While opining that "[t]he Catholic Church's opposition to birth control can be critiqued," David P. Gushee (*Getting Marriage Right: Realistic Counsel for Saving and Strengthening Relationships* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004], 28) nonetheless acknowledges that Catholic leaders "were right" in fearing that artificial birth control would "undermine the links between sex, marriage, and procreation and [would] underwrite a cultural practice of casual or marriage-free sex."

[66] This as reported by Melinda Wenner, "Study: Marriage Greatly Counters Depression," on the FoxNews LiveScience website, June 4, 2007. The study was conducted by Adrianne Frech and Kristi Williams and is to be published in the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. The findings surprised Frech, who "expected the depressed to have worse marital quality and therefore benefit less from a transition into marriage."

[67] See the psychologist and researcher Patrick F. Fagan, "Pornography—and Marriage," *The Catholic Thing* online (nfiproofs.com); January 29, 2010; and "The Effects of Pornography on Individuals, Marriage, Family and Community," from the Family Research Council website (frc.org); December 2, 2009). Among the "documented effects [of pornography] on family life" that Fagan enumerates, one finds: infidelity and divorce; a loss of interest and satisfaction in sexual intercourse

There is also serious psychological research casting doubt upon the permanence of the homosexual orientation, and thus upon the widespread view that the homosexual orientation enters unalterably into the intrinsic part of a person's identity. Studies show that clinical therapy, alternatively called reparative or conversion or reorientation therapy, can often modify the homosexual orientation to the point that persons with this orientation can attain a satisfactory heterosexual lifestyle.[68] In this

with one's spouse; emotional distancing from and general dissatisfaction in one's spouse; the perception of infidelity by the other spouse (usually the wife), resulting in a sense of "betrayal, loss, mistrust, devastation, and anger," as well as of sexual inadequacy, if not in outright depression; a strong tendency by men who engage in voyeurism to view women as "commodities or as 'sex objects' "; etc.

[68] See especially Robert L. Spitzer, "Can Some Gay Men and Lesbians Change Their Sexual Orientation? 200 Participants Reporting a Change from Homosexual to Heterosexual Orientation," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 32:5 (October 2003): 403–17. A prominent psychiatrist from Columbia University, Spitzer, it should be noted, was viewed as a champion of gay activism and was instrumental in the removal of homosexuality from the American Psychiatric Association's list of psychosexual disorders in its 1973 edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. Spitzer notes that, while "complete" change in orientation was not common, most of the participants did report a change from a predominantly or exclusively homosexual orientation before therapy to a predominantly or exclusively heterosexual orientation after therapy. This leads Spitzer to assert in his conclusion that "mental health professionals should stop moving in the direction of banning therapy that has, as a goal, a change in sexual orientation." Spitzer's study was confirmed and expanded upon by Elan Y. Karten's doctoral dissertation at Fordham University's Department of Psychology. Spitzer's study was also confirmed by Stanton L. Jones and Mark A. Yarhouse, "Ex Gays? An Extended Longitudinal Study of Attempted Religiously Mediated Change in Sexual Orientation," presented at the American Psychological Association's annual convention on August 9, 2009; consider, for instance, their conclusion: "[T]he findings of this study would appear to contradict the commonly expressed view of the mental health establishment that sexual orientation is not changeable and that the attempt to change is highly likely to produce harm for those who make such an attempt." For other studies supporting the possibility of change in homosexual orientation, see the website of the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH) (narth.com). The founder of reparative therapy is the psychologist Joseph Nicolosi, who boasts over thirty years of successful experience in offering reparative therapy; see his *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality: A New Clinical Approach* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004); and idem, *Healing Homosexuality: Case Stories of Reparative Therapy* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), though Nicolosi does offer some failed cases in this latter work in order to show that the success of this therapy is not guaranteed. John C. Cahalan ("A Liberal Case Against Gay and Lesbian Rights," *New Oxford Review* 61:10 [1994]: 8–15) claims that the results of such studies show that "[p]eople with a homosexual orientation [whether bisexual or exclusively homosexual] can achieve a happy heterosexual marriage."

respect, that the American Psychological Association (APA), in the face of the contentious debate over whether there is a genetic predisposition to homosexuality, came out in 2008 with the extraordinary statement that "no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation is determined by any particular factor or factors" is most significant.[69] For, if there exists no "single" factor leading to homosexuality, then one cannot point to a so-called "gay gene" as *the* cause of homosexuality. And if, as the APA goes on to affirm, every client owns the autonomous "right to self-determination," then this would, in principle, seem to open the door to the possibility of genuine therapeutic change, particularly for those homosexual patients who desire heterosexual "self-determination."[70] With the current state of research indicating that there exists no simple biological predisposition to homosexuality, the APA, which does regard the homosexual orientation and lifestyle as "normal aspects of human sexuality," despite the disproportionate number of persons who claim a homosexual orientation, has inadvertently given a not-so-gentle tug on the plug of "I was born gay and this is who I am and why I can't change."[71]

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[69] American Psychological Association, "Answers to Your Questions for a Better Understanding of Sexual Orientation & Homosexuality," March 2008 (posted on the APA's website: apa.org). What is even more extraordinary is that this document was produced with "editorial assistance from the APA Committee on Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Concerns." The APA also admits here that it is difficult at the adolescent stage to determine what a person's ultimate outcome will be relative to sexual attraction, sexual orientation, or sexual identity.

[70] While this document by the APA offers a negative, though nuanced, assessment of reparative or conversion or reorientation therapy—"To date, there has been no scientifically adequate research to show that therapy (sometimes called reparative or conversion therapy) is safe or effective"—it makes no mention of those studies, noted above, which do corroborate the effectiveness of said therapy. (American Psychological Association, "Answers to Your Questions for a Better Understanding of Sexual Orientation & Homosexuality" [March 2008].) This omission leads the psychologist Scott Hershberger (lifesitenews.com; May 13, 2009) to say this: "The orderly, law-like pattern of changes in homosexual behavior, homosexual self-identification, and homosexual attraction and fantasy observed in Spitzer's study [see above] is strong evidence that reparative therapy can assist individuals in changing their homosexual orientation to a heterosexual one."

[71] "Both heterosexual behavior and homosexual behavior are normal aspects of human sexuality. Both . . . these orientations represent normal forms of human experience. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual relationships are normal forms of human bonding." APA, "A Better Understanding of Sexual Orientation & Homosexuality" (2008).

Adding to the debate is the body of research showing higher rates of mental disorder among homosexuals.[72] These findings might rekindle debate over the American Psychiatric Association's controversial and rather extraordinary decision to remove, without any body of research, homosexuality from its list of psychosexual disorders in its 1973 edition

[72] According to the psychologist A. Dean Byrd ("APA's New Pamphlet on Homosexuality De-emphasizes the Biological Argument, Supports a Client's Right to Self-Determination," narth.com; March 6, 2008), this research "clearly demonstrates that homosexuals are at greater risk for some forms of mental illness [such as suicidality, depression, anxiety disorder, substance abuse]." Hence the remarkable assertion of the APA's "A Better Understanding of Sexual Orientation & Homosexuality" (2008), when, flatly ignoring such research, it writes: "Research has found no inherent association between any of these sexual orientations [lesbian, gay, and bisexual] and psychopathology." Published research contradicting this claim and to which Byrd is referring would include the following: B. Riess, "Psychological Tests in Homosexuality," in *Homosexual Behavior: A Modern Appraisal*, ed. J. Macmor (New York: Basic Books, 1980), 298–311, which used the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory to show that homosexuals are prone to "personal and emotional oversensitivity"; G. Remafedi, et al., "The Relationship between Suicide Risk and Sexual Orientation: Results of a Population Based Study," *American Journal of Public Health* 88 (1998): 57–60, which found that homosexuals were six times more likely to attempt suicide; D. M. Fergusson, et al., "Is Sexual Orientation Related to Mental Health Problems and Suicidality in Young People?" *Archives of General Psychiatry* 56 (1999): 876–80, which showed a much higher rate of depression, anxiety disorder, substance abuse, and suicidal attempts among active homosexuals; and T. G. M. Sandfort, et al., "Same-Sex Sexual Behavior and Psychiatric Disorders," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 58 (2001): 85–91, which showed higher levels of mental health problems among homosexuals in the Netherlands (the authors were surprised at this, given that tolerance of homosexuality in the Netherlands is perhaps greater than anywhere else in the world). Even a recent issue of the Brown University Medical School's magazine, *Brown Medicine* ("The Doctor Is Out," 12:1 [2007]: 33–38, at 37), acknowledges that homosexual persons suffer from a "higher incidence of substance use and mental illness, namely depression and eating disorders" and that "the rate of attempted suicide [is] three to seven times higher in gay and lesbian youth." Further, despite its goal of promoting positive exposure to "Queer Med," Brown University's gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgender medical student organization, this article admits that "research has shown [that health issues] are more prevalent among gays and lesbians, such as other sexually transmitted diseases, substance use, mental health issues, and certain types of cancer" (36). Obviously, proponents of the same-sex lifestyle would argue that these higher rates of mental disorders among homosexual persons result from the stigma the homosexual lifestyle has traditionally suffered in western society. But from a natural law perspective, such higher rates give evidence of the fact that we are here dealing with an inherently disordered lifestyle, a *malum in se*.

of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.[73] While political correctness would have us believe same-sex attraction and activity remain "normal aspects of human sexuality," to quote again the APA, and thus beyond moral and even medical reproach, natural law reasoning can help us question the wisdom of such correctness. Natural law reasoning can help us see that we should not always equate "normal" with "normative" behavior.

These studies stand at the tip of an immense iceberg. What the natural law tells us is requisite for moral, and thus psychological, health still needs the backing of significantly more empirical psychological research. If what has been outlined above on the natural law's ordering of our sexuality to our true good, to our true human flourishing, is correct, such clinical research should only corroborate this.[74]

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[73] As is well known, whereas previous editions of the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* classified homosexuality as a psychosexual disorder, the 1973 edition dropped this classification. Few doubt that this omission was politically or socially, and not scientifically, motivated; Stephen Worchel and Wayne Shebilske (*Psychology: Principles and Applications* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1983], 406), for instance, plainly admit that "the difference in the two classification systems is largely the result of greater acceptance of homosexuality in today's society as compared to the attitudes that were common just a few years ago." The end result is that now it is commonplace for therapists to suspend any moral or psychological judgment on the role of homosexuality in mental health; cf., for example, *Gender Identity Disorder and Psychosexual Problems in Children and Adolescents*, by the psychiatrists Kenneth J. Zucker and Susan J. Bradley, and in particular the chapter "Homosexuality in Adolescence," 339–53. For an analysis of the APA's handling of this issue, cf. Ronald Bayer, *Homosexuality and American Psychiatry: The Politics of Diagnosis* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), esp. 179–95.

[74] In his Mapping America project, which studies the volumes of data concerning sexuality and family life, the psychologist and researcher Patrick F. Fagan ("The Data that Do Not Fit," *The Catholic Thing* [nfiproofs.com], March 9, 2010) does not mince words as to what such data, no matter politically correct sensibilities, clearly shows: "marriage (is) fundamental to individual well-being and to the normal functioning of society . . . [Indeed, while] social scientists [might] often disagree with the Church [in its vision of the true human good], their data do not . . . In the social sciences, [then,] the abuse lies not in directly falsifying data (where the punishment is also severe), but in deliberate avoidance or blocking of investigation of a host of 'politically incorrect' topics such as the effects of abortion, the psychogenesis of homosexuality, or the consequences of contraception . . . [For] I suspect investigation of the data may actually bolster traditional natural law . . . and witnesses to the potential power of the social sciences to confirm natural law and help the Church help man be true to himself."

What about Civil Law and the Natural Ordering to Heterosexual Marriage?

Our ordering to heterosexual marriage via the natural law has obvious implications for human jurisprudence and the just ordering of civil society. The simple reason for this, of course, is that in Thomas's doctrine of law the very purpose of civil law (or positive law, as he calls it) is to make specific applications, in accordance with the particular determinations of the societies in which we live, of the otherwise generalized precepts of the natural law. Our natural law ordering to the good is merely generalized or indeterminate. Since we live in the concrete, in the here and now, the natural law's indeterminate ordering to the good must be made more determinate and concrete if it is to serve us in our actions. And this is what human man-made (positive) law accomplishes.

Thus Aquinas's famous observation that civil law "enjoys the nature of law in the very measure that it derives (*derivatur*) from the natural law."[75] Not simply a reformulation of natural law precepts, civil law truly *adds* to the natural law, and this because the natural law equips us with the necessary moral sensibilities by which our minds can render such adjudications.[76] Not a "closed system," the natural law, as intended by God, is meant to be *completed* by the laws we pass. For Aquinas, civil law does not "rival" the natural law; it *complements* it: "Human law is necessary," writes Russell Hittinger, "for the purpose of making, changing, and applying rules left indeterminate by natural law."[77]

With respect to our natural ordering to heterosexual marriage, then, civil law completes or concretizes the natural law when our legislative bodies pass laws upholding and safeguarding the institution of heterosexual marriage, that is, when our societies codify the nuptial meaning of human sexuality.[78] Any civil law impinging upon our sexuality will enjoy the force of law only to the extent that it enshrines the nuptial meaning of human

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[75] *ST* I–II, q. 95, a. 2.

[76] "Having received a law, the human mind can go on to judge and command according to that law." Russell Hittinger, *The First Grace*, 97.

[77] Hittinger, *The First Grace*, 102.

[78] *ScG* III, ch. 123: "Since then there is in the human species a natural exigency for the union of male and female to be one and indivisible, such unity and indissolubility must needs be ordained by human law. . . . [And] since all other factors in human life should be subordinate to that which is the best thing in man, it follows that the union of male and female must be regulated by law, not from the mere point of view of procreation, as in other animals, but also with an eye to good manners, or manners conformable to right reason, as well for man as an individual, as also for man as a member of a household or family, or again as a member of civil society."

sexuality, or the body-soul (procreative-unitive) symbolism of our sexuality. Most fundamentally, this happens when societies ascribe the legal recognition of marriage *exclusively* to the union of one man and one woman, as Pope Benedict has observed.[79] But it also happens in less obvious ways, such as in what the same Pontiff has called "family-friendly fiscal policies."[80] Examples would include extending tax benefits to married couples, or the granting of a special family allowance to married couples with children, an allowance that would increase with the birth of each successive child, as is the current practice of some western European governments.[81]

Certainly, much more could be said on this point. But that would be the subject of another essay.

Conclusion

In a world that has lost its bearings on the meaning of nature in its headlong rush to redefine marriage, Thomistic natural law theory offers a sober return to reason and common sense. While the desire to extend "tolerance" to alternative lifestyles is an understandable one, the order of nature is not so fluid as to allow us to throw it to the prevailing cultural winds no matter what we wish to accommodate. When, in an analogous case, the Roman emperor Caligula notoriously sought to redefine, so to speak, the office of Roman consul by attempting to appoint his horse Incitatus to a consulship, this emperor, in his madness, resorted to pure nominalist double speak. Caligula could say or believe whatever he wished, but his imperial authority could not change the simple fact that a horse lacks the requisite nature, and thus the intrinsic authority, to hold the office of Roman consul.

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[79] As already seen, in his weekly Wednesday audience on December 16, 2009, Pope Benedict pointed to laws that respect "the relationship between natural law and positive law" as truly "equitable" laws, in as much as such laws attest to the fact that there exists "an objective and immutable truth, the origin of which is in God, a truth accessible to human reason and which concerns practical and social activities. This is a natural law from which human legislation, and political and religious authorities, must draw inspiration in order to promote the common good" (as reported on the Vatican website, www.vatican.va, December 16, 2009).

[80] In his talk to European family associations on May 16, 2008, Pope Benedict promoted a "family-friendly fiscal policy" whereby governments would "examine taxes, fiscal policies and government programs from the perspective of how they would affect family life," as reported by Catholic World News (cwnews.com, May 16, 2008).

[81] The family allowance is also the practice of the small liberal arts school St. Thomas Aquinas College in Santa Barbara, California. This college is to be commended for faithfully implementing the demands of social justice as it pertains to marriage and family.

It holds the same for any judicial or legislative action seeking to confer the title of marriage, and the civil rights attached to it, upon same-sex unions. Thomistic natural law, appealing to the authority of reason alone, makes clear the fact that our sexed nature is "hard wired" for heterosexual marriage, in that we enjoy a natural inclination to the joint goods of procreation and the rearing of children and of unitive love. These goods rank as the highest that our sexuality targets, and it targets them together. Since they are not by nature ordained to procreation, nor to unitive love (with no bodily complementarity, there can be no real bodily union), same-sex unions lack the requisite nature, and thus the intrinsic authority, needed to enjoy the juridical status of marriage. They are opposed to the true human good and can never contribute to genuine human flourishing. Only heterosexual marriage can. NV

Tight Neo-Platonist Henology and Slack Christian Ontology: Christianity as an Imperfect Neo-Platonism

GUY MANSINI, O.S.B.
Saint Meinrad School of Theology
St. Meinrad, Indiana

Introduction

ROBERT SOKOLOWSKI says that it is more difficult for Christianity to come to terms with Plato and Platonism than with Aristotle, precisely because Platonism seems closer. It is easy, he says, to distinguish the Christian God from Aristotle's first mover. The possibility of identifying God with the Good and the One beyond being, however, is seductive, and many Christian thinkers have borrowed Platonist expression to articulate Christian belief. Sokolowski is nonetheless certain that what Plato and Plotinus named the One is not the God of the Bible.[1]

I think Sokolowski is correct on both counts: the One is not the God of the Bible, but it can be difficult to distinguish them.

I will be concerned in this essay with Platonism in its neo-Platonic form, and with Christianity in the expression it finds in St. Thomas.

Many studies have picked out the relation between St. Thomas and the Platonists, indicating identities and differences.[2] I want to pick out the

[1] Robert Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason: Foundations of Christian Theology* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), 50–51.

[2] Foundational is Robert Henle, S.J., *Saint Thomas and Platonism: A Study of the "Plato" and "Platonici" texts in the Writings of Saint Thomas* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956), for St. Thomas's own view of his relation to Platonism, and on such discrete topics as participation, human cognition, and the human soul. See the important review of this book, however, by Norris Clarke, "St. Thomas and Platonism," *Thought* 32 (1958): 437–43. For the actual relation of St. Thomas to Platonism, one can begin with Wayne Hankey, "Aquinas and the Platonists," in

difference at a point where St. Thomas seems most of all to be close to neo-Platonism, and that is in St. Thomas's adoption of the *exitus-reditus* pattern for expressing the relation of God to what he produces. As Jean Trouillard says, speaking of Christian and neo-Platonist transcendence, "the same language can mask very different ideas."[3] While I do not accept the still common thesis of M.-D. Chenu that this pattern structures the *Summa theologiae* as a whole, as does Wayne Hankey, I do accept Hankey's demonstration of *exitus-reditus* loops or circles within the *Summa*, patterns the detail of which he shows for the *prima pars* in his book *God in Himself*.[4] The difference I want to draw attention to within the loops has to do with the necessity with which they unfold. Hankey himself has drawn attention to this, to be sure.[5] My ambition in this essay is to show how this difference is related to quite fundamental metaphysical and theological positions.

Exitus and *Reditus* in St. Thomas

Let us look at the circles. Hankey takes it that the *Summa* as a whole describes "the Neoplatonic structure of remaining, *exitus*, and *reditus*, by which all things except the One return upon their principle."[6] Within the great circle, however, there are many smaller circles, those of St.

The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period: A Lexicographic Appoach, ed. Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen and Stephen Gersh (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 279–324. See also Fran O'Rourke, "Aquinas and Platonism," in *Contemplating Aquinas: On the Varieties of Interpretation*, ed. Fergus Kerr, O.P. (London: SCM Press, 2003), 247–79.

[3] Jean Trouillard, *L'Un et l'Âme selon Proclos* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1972), 5.

[4] Wayne Hankey, *God in Himself: Aquinas' Doctrine of God as Expounded in the Summa Theologiae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); and cf., more recently (2003), his "Aquinas' Doctrine of God Between Ontology and Henology," classics.dal.ca/Files/Dieu_Laval.doc. See also Jan Aertsen, *Nature and Creature: Thomas Aquinas's Way of Thought* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 44–45, on "circulation" in St. Thomas. For Marie-Dominique Chenu, O.P., on the plan of the *Summa*, see *Toward Understanding St. Thomas* (Chicago: Regnery, 1964). For criticism of Chenu's position, see Michel Corbin, *Le chemin de la théologie chez Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1974), 788–91, and more recently Rudi te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The 'Divine Science' of the Summa Theologiae* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 11–18.

[5] Wayne Hankey, "*Ab Uno Simplici Non Est Nisi Unum*: The Place of Natural and Necessary Emanation in Aquinas's Doctrine of Creation," in *Divine Creation in Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Thought: Essays Presented to the Rev'd Dr. Robert D. Crouse*, ed. Willemien Otten, Walter Hannam, and Michael Treschow, Studies in Intellectual History (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 309–33.

[6] Hankey, "Aquinas' Doctrine of God," 3.

Thomas's treatment of the names of God, of the divine operations, of the Trinity of persons, of creation as a whole, and finally, of salvation. Hankey importantly observes that each circle is differentiated from the one before by "more and more differentiated processions" as we go down the list.[7] The unfolding of the *prima pars* is the unfolding of an increasingly complex network of relations, rational and real, and of things and natures as we proceed from the divine names to the operations, on to the distinction of persons, and of creatures. We want also, however, to follow things back up, considering the kind of return that is envisaged for the rational creature, and, adding the *tertia*, considering as well the concrete means by which this is achieved. In the ascent, in other words, we have to consider the supernatural character both of the end and therefore perforce of the *via* by which human beings return to God, namely, the incarnate Word. In each case, on each level, we need to focus on: (1) what things are being distinguished on this level, and (2) by what principle or principles these things are distinguished.

Questions 3–11: The Distinction of Names

The circle of the names, from question 3 to question 11, moves from the divine simplicity, which is a denial of composition, through the discussion of the dispersal, as it were, of the divine essence present everywhere (question 8) and every when (question 9), to the divine unity, which is a positive appreciation of the uniqueness of God explicitly recalling this circle's point of departure in the divine simplicity. The distinct names we have for God correspond to no real distinction in God. The names are not synonymous, but the perfections they signify are one and united in God. Thus they all signify one thing, but under diverse aspects, according to different conceptions of the human intellect (q. 13, a. 4). The names, human names for divine things, are of course distinct from one another; "infinite" is not "omnipotent." The things, the aspects, are also distinct one from another in our mind insofar as our understanding of infinity is not the same as our understanding of omnipotence, and so on. In God, however, the realities so named and understood are not distinct at all: the divine infinity is the divine omnipotence is the divine eternity is the divine omnipresence. It is in virtue of one and the same divine perfection that all the names are suited to him; he is universally perfect, as Thomas has it, and "he contains the whole perfection of being in himself" (q. 4, a. 2). So, one must say that the principle of the distinction of names is, in one respect, the plenitude of the divine perfection, and, in

[7] Ibid.

another respect, the limitation of the human mind, which understands one rich reality only under many penurious aspects.[8]

Questions 14–26: The Distinction of Operations

The discussion of the divine operations moves from understanding (question 14), the most immanent of operations, through will (question 19) and providence (question 22), which are directed to reality *ad extra*, and back to intellection, for beatitude consists in an act of understanding (question 26).

The operations, like the names, are not really distinct, either from one another or from the divine being. God's understanding, his willing, his loving, his providing for his creatures are all one with his being (q. 14, a. 4; q. 19, a. 1). However, as Hankey notes, the first two operations put God in relation to himself, as the principal object of his knowledge and will.[9] What is the nature of this relation? It is rational, not real, and in both directions. In the very conception—our conception—of the operations of intellect and will, we must understand a duality of operation and object, even if they are not really distinct in God. That is, to think the divine understanding, we must think it understanding something, even if we assert in the next breath that the principal object of God's understanding is himself, and that there is no distinction of his being and operation. God's understanding is himself, and so object and operation turn out to be really the same (q. 14, aa. 2 and 4). So also with his will.

Thomas considers here also the divine power—the divine operation which by definition, as it were, refers to an external effect, an effect composed of the created natures really distinct from the divine nature.[10] Creation has already been anticipated, however, when it was asked whether and how God knows and loves anything other than himself, or even when it was asked how God is related to created duration and place. He knows others in knowing how he can be imitated, and the divine ideas are many only rationally (q. 15, a. 2). And he loves creatures as unto an end in loving himself as the end. Just as when God is said to know and love created things there is a real distinction between object and act, so it

[8] Already in question 2, article 3, God is named according to the distinct ways in which he can be the cause of created being. According to the fourth way, he is "cause of being, and of goodness, and of whatever other perfection there is." Questions 3 through 11 can therefore be thought to be an elaboration of God known in this way.

[9] Hankey, *God in Himself*, 97–98, 109.

[10] Power is said to bear on what the will commands at *ST* I, q. 25, a. 1, ad 4; it is understood as referred to what is not God, therefore, and notwithstanding the identity *in re* of *potestas generandi* and *potestas creandi*.

is with the divine power. The distinction, however, is asymmetrical. In all three cases, God, and his understanding, willing, and making, are rationally related to creatures; creatures are really related to God's knowledge, love, and power. The ground of the distinction between God and creatures as known and loved is the divine power, for there are no things other than God for God to know and love unless he makes them.

The principle of the distinction of operations themselves is, as for the divine names, the divine perfection: there is will in God because there is knowledge (q. 19, a. 1), and there is knowledge in God because he is the most immaterial of all things (q. 14, a. 1), and he is immaterial because perfect (q. 4, a. 1).

Questions 27–43: The Distinction of Persons

The treatment of the Trinity begins with the processions (question 27), finds one return in the notional acts (question 41), which are the processions considered as belonging to the persons, and another end in question 42, where we are returned to the unity of essence. Following Denys and the *Liber de causis* and ultimately Proclus, Thomas distinguishes the essence, powers, and operations of substances. Of a set purpose he has treated the operations before the persons, contrary to the order of the *Sentences*, because the principle of the processions is located in the operations.[11] The persons, to be sure, are really distinct. Paradoxically, however, the principles of the processions, which are the divine understanding and the divine love, are not really distinct from one another. Accordingly, as speaking proceeds from understanding, so does the Word proceed from the Father, and in their mutual opposition of speaking-spoken, begetting-begotten, Father and Son are really distinct from one another, but not, of course, from the divine understanding and being. Again, in the way that the beloved is in the lover, so the divine goodness is in the divine love, and in their mutual opposition of "breathing" and "breathed," Father and Son are really distinct from the Spirit, and vice versa.

Questions 44–119: The Distinction of Creatures

The treatment of creatures begins with the procession of all things from God (question 44), proceeds through the distinction of creatures angelic, corporeal, and human, each considered distinctly, and ends in the unity of the divine government of all things. On this level, we come at last to a distinction of natures, of one created nature from another, and of each from the divine nature. The principle of the distinction is the divine

[11] Hankey, *God in Himself*, 27ff.

wisdom (q. 47, a. 1), and the principle of the reality of the distinction is the divine will and power. Accordingly, as the divine wisdom is expressed in the Word, one can of course also say that the second Person is the principle of the distinction of creatures, and as the divine love proceeds in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is the principle of the production of creatures. It is to be remembered, however, that the love of God whence creatures proceed is free. One can say that there is a *convenientia* in the fact that supreme Goodness shares itself with others, and this *convenientia*, as well as the distinction of creatures, is an object of the divine wisdom. Because creatures are no necessary means to God's love and enjoyment of himself, however, they are willed freely.

This freedom embraces both the fact of there being any thing distinct from God, and the array of creatures the divine will chooses.[12] The infinity of the divine being means that it is infinitely imitable and thus not perfectly imitable by any one created and finite nature, however richly endowed. There will therefore be many created natures in the world (q. 47, a. 1). A real world, however, must contain natures that are compossible, and must necessarily be finite as to both the kinds and numbers of kind of creatures (see q. 7, aa. 2 and 4). So there is a choice of kinds. This choice is not arbitrary, and cannot be, for in each case the creature, as an imitation of divine goodness, is good. And that is a sufficient reason of its being chosen (see q. 19, a. 2).

The Prima Secundae

Last, there is the circle of salvation. The nature and end of the divine government of men is considered, beginning with the questions on man's end (questions 1–5 of the *prima secundae*); passing through the consideration of human acts, their intrinsic principles, the divine and indeed supernatural principles of law and grace that enable human acts to bear on the end; and finishing with the merit by which the acts attain the end (question 114).

The distinction of natures necessarily brings with it a distinction of ends, since each nature moves to its own end, its own "happiness" as suited to that end, to which end there is inscribed in each nature a natural desire. Nature, end or proportionate end, natural desire—all these are strictly coordinate with one another.[13] To say "proportionate end," however, bespeaks an end beyond the proportion of nature. To distinguish between the proportionate end of human nature and the supernatural

[12] See John H. Wright, S.J., *The Order of the Universe in the Theology of St. Thomas* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1957), on the parts and order of the created world.

[13] For texts, see Aertsen, *Nature and Creature*, 342–50.

end of human nature is to report the fact of Christian hope over against the world of Aristotelian nature, as its foil. Again, every nature is by itself, "naturally," in potency to its end, as to its characteristic (typical, specific, determinate) end. This is played off against "obediential potency," the potency whereby a creature is in potency to a supernatural end, supposing God has so ordained things.[14]

The principle by which there can be distinguished a proportionate end and a supernatural end for human beings and angels is not the natures themselves just as such and insofar as they are distinct from God. Rather, supposing the distinction of the natures from God, it resides in the divine wisdom, goodness, and freedom as envisioning, loving, and choosing an end for angels and men beyond the proportion of their nature.

The distinction of ends, natural and supernatural, is a greater distinction than that of the natures themselves. It presupposes the distinction of natures, but then distinguishes ends in such a way that God is introduced into the world in a way one could not predict or expect on the basis of creation alone, when that means merely "something distinct from God."

The Concrete Realization of Our End

The *tertia pars* lays out the conditions of the realization of our end, which are Christ and the sacraments of Christ. De facto, the Incarnation is presented as occurring on condition of sin; it depends on the logically prior divine permission of sin. The distinction between the divine positive willing of the good and the divine permitting of evil is no real distinction in God, although, should creatures sin, it entails a real distinction in creation between creatures as they should be and creatures as they in fact are. That is, the realization of sin, the failure of created freedom, introduces a distinction between fallen and sinful creation and creation as willed by God. It is the only distinction that does not depend on God. It depends on God only in that the creatures who sin depend on God. But sin itself is not willed by God in any way, either directly, as an end or a means, or indirectly (*ST* I, q. 19, a. 9, ad 3). Whatever is, of course, is good, and so willed by God. That the distinction between fallen and originally willed man can occur at all therefore depends strictly on the analysis of moral evil as a privation. All other distinctions, distinctions involving natural evil, and distinctions involving punishment and healing grace and

[14] For texts and a brief account of the quarrel over the application of the notion of obediential potency to man's end, see Aertsen, 290–92, 364–66. For a defense of the intelligibility and faithfulness to St. Thomas of Cardinal Cajetan's use of the notion, see Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2010), 101–65.

forgiveness after sin, depend originally on the divine wisdom, goodness, and freedom.

Observations

From the simplicity of God and the Trinity of Persons within the unity of the divine nature, we come to many composite natures, to a more than natural end for the rational nature, and to the strange condition under which that end is achieved, the mission of the Son, according to which we behold a created reality not only sustained by the divine power but a created nature in which a divine person subsists. The actual complications of reality go far beyond that of the distinction and multiplicity of creatures, given the supernatural character of man's end, grace, the permission of evil, and the Incarnation of the Son.

In the progression from names and perfections to operations and thence to persons, the distinctions of divine persons are the first real distinctions. They are presupposed to the subsequent distinction of creator and creature, but unlike all other real distinctions, they do not depend in some way on freedom, and they are the only real distinctions that are not a function of choice, divine or angelic or human.[15] That there be any distinction of natures, on the other hand, is a function of the divine choice.[16] The distinction between good and evil moral actions, another real distinction, depends on the angelic and human will. One may say that the distinction between good and evil is a function of the divine wisdom and goodness; it does not, however, distinguish anything real until there exist evil actions, which, supposing the divine permission, are a function of created will and in no way—directly or indirectly—of the divine will.[17]

Given the Incarnation, it can even be said that the will of a divine person responds to created personal freedom.[18] This is a *novum*, for even with the reality of sin the divine will should not be said to "respond" to created, personal will, so much as to have willed consequences to foreseen free choices even when such choices are defective. "Before ever a word is on my

[15] To be sure, the fact that the distinction of the divine persons is not an object of divine choice does not render the distinction opposed to the divine will or mean that the persons are a result of an "impersonal" nature. I thank Christopher Malloy for this precision.

[16] Recall that according to *Summa theologiae* I, q. 15, a. 2, corpus and ad 3, the divine ideas are multiplied only according to the actual existence of creatures. Therefore, I say not simply that the *distincta*, but that the distinctions, are a function of the divine choice.

[17] See *ST* I, q. 19, a. 9.

[18] See Robert Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 75.

tongue, you knew it through and through," and "all my days were made known to you before one of them came into being" (Ps 139). Given the Incarnation, however, the human will of the Son of God freely responds to the will of Mary and Joseph, of Peter, of Zacchaeus, of Pilate. The Son of God responds, via his human will. The condition of the possibility of "theo-drama" is the Incarnation, not the creation of finite freedom all by itself.

It is to be observed that the divine freedom plays a crucial role at five places in the ever richer array of distinctions, aspects, persons, etc. in their ordered descent and ascent: first, for the creation of anything whatsoever that is really distinct from the divine nature; second, for the array of created natures actually obtaining; third, for the call of man to a super-natural end, the vision of God; fourth, for the permission of sin; and fifth, for the Incarnation of the Word.

The assertion of the first freedom is express and prominent in *ST* I, q. 19, aa. 3 and 4. The assertion of the second is implied at q. 47, a. 1, ad 2. The assertion of the third is to be found by implication wherever the gratuity of the end or superaddedness of grace and the gifts is asserted.[19] The assertion of the fourth is deployed already in *ST* I, q. 19, a. 9, ad 3.[20] The assertion of the fifth freedom is express at *ST* III, q. 1, a. 2.

Freedom and Necessity in the *Exitus* and *Reditus*

In the remainder of this essay I will concentrate mainly on the first and third moments of the divine freedom, but they are all important ways in which St. Thomas modifies neo-Platonism, and modifies it in order, as it were, to Christianize it. Neo-Platonism unmodified and indeed insufficiently modified by Christianity has the following features. First, it is a metaphysics in which the One necessarily overflows, in which the world necessarily proceeds from the One. Plotinus:

> The One has no such end [to which it moves], so we must not consider that it moves. If anything comes into being after it, we must think that it necessarily does so while the One remains continually turned toward itself.[21]

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[19] *ST* I, q. 12, a. 4; q. 56, a. 3; q. 62, aa. 1 and 2; I–II, q. 62, a. 1; q. 68, a. 1; q. 106, a. 1, ad 2; q. 109, aa. 2 and 5; q. 112, a. 1; q. 114, a. 2.

[20] The possibility that the angels may take such permission is asserted at *ST* I, q. 63, a. 1, and actuality of the angelic taking of the permission at *ST* I, q. 63, a. 3. The possibility that man may take such permission is to be found in *ST* I–II, q. 18, aa. 1–4, and again at qq. 75–80; and the actuality of man's taking the permission is found at *ST* I–II, qq. 81–83, where Adam's sin is taken as a fact.

[21] Plotinus, *Enneads*, trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978–1988) V.1.6.ll.16–19. Numbers following chapter numbers in citations

And:

> [The second] must be a radiation from it [the One] while it remains unchanged, like the bright light of the sun. . . . All things which exist, as long as they remain in being, necessarily produce from their own substances . . . a surrounding reality directed to what is outside them, a kind of image of the archetypes from which it was produced.[22]

In the great treatise on the freedom of the One, Plotinus is concerned to deny that the One is subject to coercion or some law extrinsic to it in producing the world or that the world occurs by chance. Rather, in choosing himself, the One chooses himself as the producer or, perhaps better, the production of all things. But it is not to be thought that another choice of himself could have been made; what is, is best and so must be as it is.[23] Proclus takes the same view of the necessity of the first principle's production.[24] For Christian neo-Platonism, this view is an invitation to say that God necessarily creates the world.

Second, in unmodified neo-Platonism, what emanates from the One necessarily returns and returns perfectly to the One. Plotinus:

> [T]his is the soul's true end, to touch that light [of the One] and see it by itself, not by another light, but by the light which is also its means of seeing. It must see that light by which it is enlightened.[25]

For Christian neo-Platonism, this translates into the view that God must call his rational and intellectual creatures to the divine beatitude of the vision of God. Correlatively, this is the view that there is an innate, natural desire in man for the vision of God, in the same way that Plotinus thinks

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to the *Enneads* are to the line numbers (ll.) in Armstrong's edition. I will use Armstrong's translation exclusively when citing the *Enneads*.

[22] Ibid., V.1.6.ll.29–34. In this passage, Plotinus denies that the second comes from the One by "any inclination or act of will"; he means, by any act of will that could be distinct from the One. In VI.8 he identifies the One with such an act.

[23] See Ibid., VI.8.13.ll.28–29: "[I]t is not possible to apprehend him [the One] without the will to be by his own agency what he is." And ll.33–34: "For what could he have wished to be except this which he is?"

[24] Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, trans. (with commentary) E. R. Dodds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), 29–33, Propositions 25, 26, 27; idem, *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, in *Proclus on the Causes of the Cosmos and its Creation*, ed. and trans. David T. Ruina and Michael Share, vol. 2, bk. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), at 29e1–2; 229, on the eternity of creation, and 230, the standard illustrations of sun and fire.

[25] Plotinus, *Enneads* V.3.17.ll.34–37. See VI.8.15. For Proclus, see *The Elements of Theology*, 35–37, Propositions 31, 32, 33; and Jean Trouillard, *L'Un et l'Âme*, 84ff.

there is an innate, natural desire in man to return to the One.[26] This issue, to be sure, has been more prominent than the first; it is the issue of whether Henri de Lubac's *Surnaturel* is thinkable as a Christian dogmatic position. It would seem that it is not; for if the desire is innate, it is unconditional, and if it is unconditional, it proves the possibility of the vision of God.[27]

Third, in Plotinus and Proclus, what emanates from the One is a kind of plenum, a "greater world than which cannot be thought," for the Good is ungrudging, and whatever it can produce it does produce. Fourth, in Plotinus at any rate, if not in Proclus, it is a metaphysics where evil is necessarily enacted by finite freedom. I return to this briefly in the next section. Fifth, because the world is a plenum, because the world itself is the fullest revelation of God possible, there can be no such thing as "special revelation" or such revelation as is comprised in the Incarnation. I have explored the third and fifth issue elsewhere. Here, I concentrate on the freedom of creation and the distinct freedom of the rational and intellectual creatures' call to a supernatural end—the two moments of the divine freedom that were embraced in the phrase "double gratuity."

The second issue, that of our end, is perhaps easier to focus than the first. An innate, natural desire for the vision of God really does destroy the supernatural and un-owed character of the destiny we have been assigned in the providence of God and the gratuity of grace which moves us to the end, and so is contrary to Catholic teaching. That it denies the gratuity of grace is massively demonstrated by Lawrence Feingold. Its contrariety to Catholic doctrine finds expression in Pius XII's *Humani Generis*. Its existential or dramatic import is easy to see, too. To say I cannot be happy unless I see God face to face, and this by my nature, paradoxically destroys the quality of Christian final happiness, which depends precisely on its unexpected character, its quality as a gift that need not be given but that, beyond all that we could naturally hope for, has been given.[28]

The difficulty of the distinction of ends, natural and supernatural, depends on two things. First, there is the fact that what is first given to the Christian mind is the supernatural end. Second, there is the way in which this fact is given to us. The full and perfect knowledge of our supernatural

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[26] Plotinus, *Enneads* VI.9.9.

[27] See Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God*, xxiii–xxxvii.

[28] I think de Lubac is correct that his formulation escapes the condemnation of *Humani Generis* but only, as it were, on a technicality, in that he can say that while God could create some intellectual creature not ordered to the vision of God, so satisfying the letter of Pius XII, God has in fact created human beings such that by their nature they are so ordered. His position nonetheless does not escape the existential or dramatic consideration I allege.

end is given only with Christ. The New Testament, furthermore, gives us to say not only that its realization *de facto* is through Christ and by our inclusion in Christ, but also that the presupposition of this end is *creation* in Christ (Col 1:16).[29] Because we are created in Christ, it cannot be that we are not called to the supernatural end of conformation to Christ. If we are created in and by and for Christ, if creation is so conceived as to make one thing in fact with the order of redemption according to which our final destiny is to be taken up into the Trinitarian relations as sons of God conformed to Christ by the Spirit, it can seem that it is not possible to think that the gift of creation is logically distinct from the gift of grace and sonship. Only slowly do we come to understand that we do not see any *necessity* connecting our end to Christ and our beginning to creation in Christ. We see the "one thing" that being created, being created in Christ, being redeemed by Christ, is. Only slowly do we see that, even so, being called to intimacy with God is not necessarily given with the divine will to create precisely as such. And given such an invitation, only slowly do we see that Christ, the Incarnation of the Word, is no necessary way to the attainment of our supernatural end, even under the condition of sin.

The Fathers, after all, do not discuss the gratuity of our end. It is implicitly asserted at the Second Council of Orange. For magisterial teaching bearing on this issue clearly and distinctly focused, however, we must wait for the condemnation of Baius and the teaching of modern times contained in *Dei Filius* (First Vatican Council) and *Humani Generis*.[30]

Even so, "not seeing a necessity" is not enough. In itself it permits, but does not require, the assertion of gratuity, double gratuity. The positive assertion of gratuity requires a demonstration. Only when a consideration of man as having a nature meets man as created and called by God does such a demonstration become possible. St. Augustine knows of the gratuity of our end, but it does not occur to him expressly to measure it against a natural end, because he does not think in terms of natures.[31]

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[29] I mean, of course, the incarnate Christ. See Pierre Benoît, O.P., "Préexistence et incarnation," *Revue Biblique* 77 (1970): 5–29.

[30] See Denzinger Schönmetzer (*Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 32nd ed.: hereafter DS) 3005 (*Dei Filius*), DS 3891 (*Humani Generis*). Second Orange (DS 337) and Pelagius I (DS 443) make the beatitude of man depend on grace. Pius XI, in *Casti Connubii* (DS 3714) has it that grace is the principle of supernatural life; this is indirectly asserted at Second Orange (DS 373 and 377), where grace is opposed to a purely natural principle.

[31] Nor, of course, has the distinction between the natural and the supernatural orders been worked out, the work of the first part of the thirteenth century. See Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. J. Patout Burns (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 13–19.

The first issue, too, the gratuity of creation, is of crucial import. Denying the gratuity of creation changes the quality of the drama just as much as does denying the second. The difference between neo-Platonism and Christianity is sometimes downplayed in one fashion or another, but I think wrongly. Notwithstanding Jean Trouillard, it is very difficult to extricate Plotinian emanation from the necessity commonly associated with it.[32] Notwithstanding A. Hilary Armstrong, Christianity can by no means be satisfied with holding that the only necessity we need be concerned to deny is the necessity that depends on a principle extrinsic to God.[33] For his part, Eric Perl does not downplay the difference, but rather thinks the ordinarily supposed Christian alternative to emanation cannot be stated without contradiction.[34]

To think the difference small compromises the unconditionality of the gift of being and destroys the astonishment the Christian experiences of our being here at all, which cannot be elicited if it cannot be played off against the possibility, really thinkable, that we had never been. The Christian character of the astonishment is parasitic on the apprehension that we need not be here at all in any sense or under any aspect or description whatsoever. To say we must be created, even when the necessity is said to be a necessity of love, will therefore change the quality of our gratitude. If I am in any sense necessary to God, then it seems strictly to follow that, did I not exist, God would be other than he is. Plotinus denies this,[35] but

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[32] Jean Trouillard, *La Procession Plotinienne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955), 69–80. Trouillard thinks opposing the operation of nature to personal initiative is "un peu facile" (76), and that we ought to think of emanation as beyond necessity and contingence (80). See also his "Procession néoplatonicienne et création judeo-chrétienne," in *Néoplatonisme: mélanges offerts à Jean Trouillard* Cahiers de Fontenay nos. 19–22 (Fontenay-les-Roses, 1981), 1–30, esp. at 10.

[33] A. Hilary Armstrong, "Plotinus and Christianity," in *Platonism in Late Antiquity*, ed. Stephen Gersh and Charles Kannengiesser (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 115–30, at 121–22, where he thinks the alternative to Plotinus is a "bare" and arbitrary act of will. See also his "Two Views of Freedom: A Christian Objection in Plotinus, *Enneads* VI.8[39]7, 11–15?" in *Studia Patristica*, XVII, Part 1 (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982), 397–406.

[34] Eric D. Perl, *Theophany: The Neoplatonic Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007), 49–51. For Perl, the One should not be said to overflow so much as to be Overflowing; the One is not a Producer so much as Production. And if we say the One overflows of necessity, this should not be understood to mean that the One submits to some law distinct from or extrinsic to itself. Perl undertakes in this book to show again and again the identity of doctrine of Plotinus, Proclus, and Dionysius.

[35] Plotinus, *Enneads* V.1.6.ll.23–27.

one wonders with what coherence, if it be the case that the One produces by choosing *himself* as the source of all that he produces.[36]

At the conclusion of this section, I wish to emphasize that the differences between Christian tradition and neo-Platonism on these two issues are not, for the Catholic Christian, merely speculative, such that we can incline to one or the other as we weigh the arguments. Rather, they are doctrinal. The necessities included in the neo-Platonic view are contrary to defined Catholic doctrine. This is easiest to see with regard to the freedom of creation. Irenaeus and Augustine provide very clear statements of God's freedom in creating.[37] There is the implication of the condemnation of Pelagianism for the gratuity not only of grace but of our end. Explicit magisterial assertions of the gratuities are, however, late. Why the doctrines in question are articulated so late in Christian tradition is another question, but in part, one suspects the role of neo-Platonism itself.

Henological Necessity and Ontological Freedom

It is now time to show how this difference between neo-Platonism and Christianity, between Plotinus and St. Thomas, flows from certain basic principles.

For the necessities in Plotinus, we can repair to an article by Leo Sweeney, "Basic Principles in Plotinus' Philosophy." The principles are three.

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[36] Ibid., VI.8.20.ll.14–19 and VI.8.14.ll.41–42. For the One as origin of all else by first choosing itself to be such, see Trouillard, *Procession*, 80; John Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 83; Georges Leroux, "Human Freedom in the Thought of Plotinus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 292–93; and Maria Luisa Gatti, "Plotinus: The Platonic Tradition and the Foundation of Neoplatonism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, 30.

[37] See *The Teachings of the Church Fathers*, ed. John R. Willis, S.J. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), no. 84. There are not so many clear witnesses here as one might expect. On the other hand, moreover, there is this from Gregory of Nazianzen: "But since this movement of self-contemplation alone could not satisfy Goodness, but Good must be poured out and go forth beyond Itself to multiply the objects of Its beneficence, for this is essential to the highest Goodness, He first conceived the Heavenly and Angelic Powers" (Oration 38, *On the Theophany or Birthday of Christ*, ix, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, vol. 7, ed. Philip Schaff [New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1984], 347). The very nature of God as goodness requires the production of creatures, and this seems as Plotinian as one could want. It is worthwhile to note that John Damascene's paraphrase of this passage in the *Orthodox Faith* II, 2, removes any note of necessity, and makes it rather a statement of suitability, of *convenientia*.

First, "to be real is to be one."[38] This means that nothing distinct from the One can be adequately distinct from it and still real. Accordingly, as distinctions are real, one proceeds into unreality. This means further that the principle of contradiction, a principle of being, after all, does not have universal empire. What follows from the One both is and is not the One.[39] Second, "whatever is genuinely real must by that very fact cause subsequent realities, which turn back to their source"[40] in love and desire. The emanation of being from the One cannot not happen, and the One is at once the Good, "good *to* others by producing them automatically and necessarily, good *for* others as the object of their seeking."[41] The return, further, is to the One itself in itself. There is no end for creatures that is not "supernatural."[42] Third and last, "whatever is prior is of greater reality than that which is subsequent."[43] And this gives us a universe not of two, but of many grades, at least those four great grades of the One, Intellect, Soul, and nature.

The first principle is the most important.[44] Here is a nice expression of it:

> Everything which is brought into being by something else is either in that which made it or in another thing, if there is something after what made it. . . . The last and lowest things, therefore, are in the last of those before them, and these are in those prior to them, and one thing is in another up to the First, which is the Principle.[45]

This first principle finds very clear expression, moreover, in Proclus's *Elements*, Proposition 30: "All that is immediately produced by any principle both remains in the producing cause and proceeds from it." And Proclus explains:

> In so far . . . as it has an element of identity with the producer, the product remains in it; in so far as it differs, it proceeds from it. But being like it, it is at once identical with it in some respects and different from it:

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[38] Leo Sweeney, "Basic Principles in Plotinus' Philosophy," in *Divine Infinity in Greek and Medieval Thought* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), 250. This article first appeared in 1961 in the *Gregorianum*.

[39] Ibid. For Proclus, see Jean Trouillard, *L'Un et l'Âme*, 8.

[40] Sweeney, "Basic Principles," 251.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., 252.

[44] Sweeney sends us to *Enneads* V.5.5.ll.11ff., VI.6.1.ll.1ff and ll.19ff., VI.9.1.ll.1ff.

[45] Plotinus, *Enneads* V.5.9.ll.1ff. And see, toward the end of the chapter, ll.30ff.

> accordingly, it both remains and proceeds, and the two relations are inseparable.[46]

Dodds comments:

> It will be noticed that Pr[oclus] does not in the present passage attempt to determine *in what sense* the lower is "in" the higher, and in what sense outside it; but elsewhere (*in Tim.* I.210.2) he has the interesting phrase *heautois men proelêluthe, menei de tois theois* [while they proceed to themselves they remain in the gods]. If this be pressed, it must mean that the separateness of the lower is an illusion resulting from a partial point of view, and it follows that the sensible and the intelligible cosmos are both of them appearance, and only the One fully real. This doctrine was never accepted by the Neoplatonists, but they often seem to be on the verge of falling into it.[47]

It may be added further that between the first and the second principles there is the tension of how the One, which as the Good necessarily produces what is good, necessarily produces also what is bad because in some way separate from—not one with—the One. In this sense, evil is built in to the universe necessarily. The sin of the soul in descending and completing the universe manifests in its ambiguity the original procession from the One itself.[48]

When we turn to St. Thomas, we see that it is true that he shares with Plotinus the conviction that whatever wealth creatures have is already in God. The creatures themselves, however, are not in God. The first principle of Plotinus that Sweeney picks out, by contrast, means that in some way they are in God. "Every effect is distinct from and yet *identified with its cause*."[49] This is a function of neo-Platonist henological commitment.

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[46] Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, 35. See Proposition 35: "Every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and reverts upon it."

[47] Dodds, commentary on Prop. 30, in Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, 217.

[48] See for example Plotinus, *Enneads* IV.8.5.ll.17–18. See John M. Rist, "The Problem of 'Otherness' in the *Enneads*," in idem, *Platonism and Its Christian Heritage* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1985), VIII, which originally appeared in *Le Néoplatonisme. Colloque international du C.N.R.S, Royaumont, juin 1969* (Paris: Editions du C.N.R.S., 1973), 77–87, at 84 (commenting on *Enneads* III.8.8): "[H]e says that the One somehow desired to possess all things, and it would have been better if this had not been the case. The only thing that this can mean, if Plotinus' consistency is to be saved, is that if things other than the One are to exist, evil must ultimately exist." Cf. St. Thomas, for whom there can be no naturally evil angel, *ST* I, q. 63, a. 4.

[49] Leo Sweeney, "Doctrine of Creation in the *Liber de Causis*," in *Divine Infinity*, 289–307, at 306. Sweeney is speaking of Proclus, but this is true of Plotinus too.

St. Thomas, by contrast, must be described as an "ontologist." For him, the first name of God is "He Who Is." Sweeney:

> In a position where reality is coterminous with being, real distinction is almost a law of reality: for *A* and *B* both to be real, *A* must have its own being, and *B*, its own. If *A* is *B*, then one or the other loses its own entity and is unreal.[50]

Here, the world is not God and God is not the world, both are (analogously) real, and they are adequately distinct.

The difference can be expressed in terms of otherness. Things are other than the One, but the One is not other than the things; it is not constituted by otherness.[51] If the One were other than things, they and the world of them could not exist. Neither is God constituted by otherness; that is, he does not need to be other than the world in order to be himself in the way the world needs to be other than God in order to be the world.[52] In fact, however, not only is the world other than God, God is other than the world.

For St. Thomas, *ens et unum convertuntur*, and there is no One beyond being that can escape the law of non-contradiction. Real distinction between the First and what proceeds from the First is therefore symmetrical. This means that distinction must be a function of principles wholly within being, as it is not in neo-Platonism.[53] Material individuals of the same kind are distinct in virtue of primary matter, and kinds are distinct in their essences or natures. The adequate distinction of natures within the world that St. Thomas finds in Aristotle is adjusted to be able also to express the difference between God and the world. God is beyond the world, but not beyond being. The natures or essences of created things are limits, measures, whereby one kind must in some way or ways not be another kind in order to be itself, as God, whose essence is infinite, need not be. Still, no created nature is the divine nature, and the divine nature is not any created nature.

This has consequences. Let us take up Aristotle's definition in the *Physics* according to which nature is a principle of motion and rest in that to which it belongs essentially and not accidentally,[54] or, in the Latin St.

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[50] Sweeney, "Basic Principles," 250.

[51] Perl, *Theophany*, 25. See also Eric Perl, " 'The Power of All Things': The One as Pure Giving in Plotinus," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 71 (1997): 301–14, at 308; and Rist, "The Problem of 'Otherness.' "

[52] Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason*, 33, 36.

[53] Proclus, *Elements*, Prop. 92.

[54] Aristotle, *Physics*, II.1; 192b22–23.

Thomas worked with: *principium motus et quietis in eo in quo est primo et per se et non secundum accidens*.[55] Natures, in an ontology, will be specifically adequately distinct. "Essentially and not accidentally": that is, the nature will be predicated of the individual according to the predicable relation of species, composed of genus and difference, and not as an accident (for instance, as "medical" is said of Peter). "Motion and rest": for corporeal natures, the motion and rest can be understood as materially conditioned; more broadly, the nature is a principle of operations (motions), where operations are defined by their objects, and where the possession of the objects is the successful deployment of the operation (rest). Moreover, the hierarchically ordered ensemble of operations delimits an end coordinate and specific to the nature. It may be that, generically, the angelic and human natures are ordered to a knowledge of the true, of being. Human nature, however, is specifically ordered but to an analogical knowledge of immaterial being, on the basis of the knowledge of its proper object, the abstract quiddity of material objects.

What, then, of the divine production of the world? Is it part of the divine nature to produce other natures? This is to ask whether it is the nature of infinite will willing infinite good actually possessed to will finite goods. And the answer is of course "No." There can be no necessary reason within the divine nature considered as an order unto its own end, the possession of itself in knowledge and love, also to will what is absolutely not required for the divine perfection and the divine felicity. So, if God wills there to be finite natures, it is by freedom, it is by will, and it is for the reasonable and suitable end of sharing his goodness with others.

Natura comes from *nasci*, to be born, as St. Thomas often reminds us. A form may appear by generation or by art. By art, beds come from carpenters. By generation, a man comes from a man—*fit enim ex homine homo*.[56] God does not birth the world. Creatures come from God as from the divine practical wisdom. If we are in the image of God, we do not have the divine form.

Distinct natures have distinct finalities, distinct ends. Determinate ends are correlated to determinate intrinsic principles or natures.[57] A created nature, in an ontology, therefore, cannot just of itself have the same end as

[55] St Thomas, *In octo libros Physicorum Aristotetis Expositio*, ed. P. M. Maggiòlo (Rome: Marietti, 1954), book II, lect. 2, no. 145.

[56] Ibid., bk. II, lect. 2, no. 154.

[57] Ibid., bk. II, lect. 14, no. 267: "Haec enim dicuntur esse secundum naturam, quaecumque ab aliquo principio intrinseco moventur continue, quousque perveniant ad aliquem finem; non in quodcumque contingens, neque a quocumque principio in quemcumque finem, sed a determinato principio in determinatum finem."

the divine nature. If it has the same end, it is the same nature, and there is no creation. Yes, there is a procession from God within God and so within the same nature according to which one really distinct from the Father has the same end as the Father, and that is the procession of the Word. But if human nature is to have the same end as the divine, a fact even whose possibility cannot be naturally known, it will be by superadded, supernatural gift.

The two issues of origin and end are intimately connected. Natural desire necessarily calls for a perfect return to the One, or God. But natural desire for perfect enjoyment of divinity means that the nature itself is divine. And this is to say that putatively created nature proceeds naturally, and so necessarily, from God. We are *consors naturae divinae* by reason of our substantial being, and not by reason of a superadded gift. In other words, almost perfect neo-Platonists like Henri de Lubac and John Milbank, who assert more or less clearly the necessity of the perfect return,[58] cannot coherently save their positions from the even more perfect—that is to say, unmodified—neo-Platonism of Sergius Bulgakov and, at least in Eric Perl's presentation of him, Denys the Areopagite, who assert not only the necessity of the return but the necessity of "creation" as well.[59]

The point, the necessity of the assertion of double gratuity, emerges. To be sure, in one and the same act of will, which is the divine being, God wills the world, and the supernatural end of man, and the Incarnation. But that man be called to a supernatural end cannot be contained in the bare idea of man's nature. Nothing except God naturally sees God. Not even God can think up something really distinct from himself that by its nature should aspire to the vision of God. So, while the creation of man and his supernatural end may be willed in the same act of the one divine willing, they cannot be willed as one object with one intelligibility. Just as alone by God's freedom can there be another nature than his, so alone by his freedom could that nature have its point of return in him as he knows himself, in the way he possesses himself. NV

[58] For Milbank, see his *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Debate concerning the Supernatural* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 26, n. 10; 29, 102. Milbank is very aware of the neo-Platonist character of his position; see 28, 50–55 (Pico della Mirandola), 101.

[59] For Bulgakov, see his *The Lamb of God*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 120–21 (necessity of creation), 169–70, 187 (necessity of a supernatural end). The return is altogether necessary for the neo-Platonic way in that, according to Perl, the difference between *exitus* and *reditus* is but perspectival; see Perl, *Theophany*, 38, 40. Bulgakov asserts the necessity of creation also in *The Bride of the Lamb*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 44–46, where one also finds expression (200) of Plotinian and Proclan plenitude—the idea that the world exhausts the creative power of God.

Unbelief and Sin in Thomas Aquinas and the Thomistic Tradition

THOMAS M. OSBORNE JR.
University of St. Thomas
Houston, Texas

DURING the last twenty years some theologians have supported their understanding of how unbelievers might be saved by appealing to Thomas Aquinas and the development of his thought by sixteenth-century Dominicans at Salamanca.[1] These Salamancan Dominicans applied Thomas's thought in the context of the New World's discovery. These recent theologians attribute two claims to this tradition: first, that not every unbeliever is guilty of unbelief; and second, that unbelievers can perform good acts which in some strong manner enable them to receive grace. I shall argue that although the first claim about the culpability of unbelief is held by the Thomist tradition, it has no historical or logical connection to the salvation of unbelievers. I shall argue that the second claim was not held by the tradition and that the contemporary misinterpretation results from a confusion over the relationship between moral goodness and merit. Whereas the first claim is historically accurate but irrelevant to the contemporary views for which it is invoked, the second claim is historically false if attributed to Thomas Aquinas or the Dominican tradition at Salamanca.

Francis Sullivan and Thomas O'Meara argue that the first claim that not every infidel is guilty of unbelief is connected with the view that

[1] Thomas F. O'Meara, *Thomas Aquinas: Theologian* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 235–41; idem, "The School of Thomism at Salamanca and the Presence of Grace in the Americas," *Angelicum* 71 (1994): 321–70; Francis Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church: Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 47–62, 69–76. J. A. DiNoia focuses on Thomas himself in his *The Diversity of Religions: A Christian Perspective* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 94–103.

God wills to save all men.[2] Neither Thomas nor any of the major commentators make this connection. It is hard to imagine what the connection could be, unless the suggestion is that those who lack faith might be saved if they are not guilty of unbelief. But Thomas and the commentators explicitly reject this view. On their view, although not every unbeliever has sinned through unbelief, every unbeliever has committed mortal sin for which he will be damned if he does not repent.

In the *secunda secundae pars* of the *Summa theologiae*, Thomas distinguishes between three ways in which someone can lack or could have lacked explicit faith in Christ.[3] There are those who deliberately reject faith, those who lack faith and yet have not explicitly rejected it, and those before Christ who lacked explicit faith but had implicit faith. The first category includes those who have been exposed to preaching but have not believed, whereas the second category includes those who have not been exposed to preaching and also have not responded to grace. Such persons must be distinguished from those who belong to the third category, which covers those who have not been exposed to preaching but nevertheless have responded to grace and made an act of implicit faith.[4] These persons who have implicit faith must explicitly believe in God and providence at least. Unlike some later Thomists, Thomas apparently denies that it is possible after the coming of Christ for someone to be saved with only an implicit faith in Christ. Moreover, Thomas thinks that before Christ's coming there were many Gentiles to whom the Incarnation was revealed.[5] Consequently, although only implicit faith in Christ was necessary for many pre-Christian Gentiles, many others had explicit faith.

In his discussion of whether unbelief is a sin, Thomas focuses on the distinction between the first two categories. The first kind of unbelief belongs to those who explicitly reject the faith, whereas the second kind of unbelief is purely negative. Thomas describes the latter unbelief, since it is involuntary, as more of a punishment of sin rather than a sin.[6] Although

[2] O'Meara, "School of Thomism," 363; Sullivan, *Salvation*, 70–76.

[3] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II–II, q. 2, aa. 7–8; q. 10, a. 1.

[4] See also Thomas Aquinas, 1 *Sent.*, d. 33, q. 1, a. 5 in *Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, ed. Pierre Mandonnet and M. F. Moos, 4 vols. (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929–1947), vol. 1, 777; 3 *Sent.*, d. 25, q. 2, a. 1, sol. 1–3 (Mandonnet, vol. 3, 796–98); *De veritate*, q. 14, aa. 11–12 (Thomas Aquinas, *Opera Omnia*, Leonine ed. [Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1884–], vol. 22, 469–73); *Super epistolam ad Hebraeos lectura*, cap. 11, lect. 2, n. 576, in *Super epistolas S. Pauli lectura*, 8th ed., ed. Raphael Cai, 2 vols. (Turin: Marietti, 1953), vol. 2, 463.

[5] "[D]icendum quod multis gentilium facta fuit revelatio de Christi." *ST* II–II, q. 2, a. 7, ad 3.

[6] Cf. *ST* II–II, q. 34, a. 3, ad 2.

this purely negative unbelief is not sinful in itself, Thomas emphasizes that those who die in such unbelief will be damned. Thomas states that no one without faith can be saved. He writes, "But those who are unbelievers in this way are damned on account of other sins, since without faith they are not able to be forgiven: but they are not damned on account of the sin of unbelief."[7]

If Thomas thinks that all unbelievers are damned, why does he distinguish between those who commit a sin of unbelief and those who are unbelievers in a merely negative sense? The key issue here is over the responsibility of the agent. He is not addressing the question of whether every unbeliever is guilty of mortal sin, but rather whether every unbeliever is guilty of that particular mortal sin which is unbelief. Many of his colleagues and predecessors at the University of Paris assumed that everyone is offered faith and concluded that every unbeliever has rejected faith. This position was held by William of Auvergne (d. 1249), William of Auxerre (d. 1231), the *Summa Halesiana*, and in a way even by Bonaventure (d. 1274).[8] They argue that if someone has not been exposed to Christian preaching then God will send someone to him or at least instruct the individual interiorly. Since they hold that everyone is offered faith, they also hold that there is no purely negative unbelief. In their view, every unbeliever is guilty of the mortal sin of unbelief.

It is important to recognize that Thomas does not reject their view that every unbeliever is in some way culpable. In some passages Thomas even states that God would send a preacher to someone whom he

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[7] "Qui autem sic sunt infideles damnantur quidem propter alia peccata, quae sine fide remitti non possunt: non autem damnantur propter infidelitatis peccatum." *ST* II–II, q. 10, a. 1.

[8] William of Auvergne, *De Fide*, cap. 2, in *Opera Omnia*, 2 vols. (Paris: Pralard, 1674; repr. Minerva: Frankfurt am Main, 1963), vol. 1, 7–13, but esp. 11–12; idem, *De Legibus*, cap. 21, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. 1, 57–59; William of Auxerre, *Summa Aurea*, lib. 3, tract. 7, cap. 7, q. 4, in *Spicilegium Bonaventurianum*, 16–20, 5 vols (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1980–1987), vol. 3.1, 229–31; *Summa Halesiana*, II–II, inq. 3, tract. 5, sect. 2, q. 2, n. 679 in Alexander of Hales, *Summa Theologica*, 3 vols. (Quarrachi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae), vol. 3, 659–70; Bonaventure, 3 *Sent.*, d. 25, a. 1, q. 2, ad 6, in *Opera Omnia*, 10 vols. (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882–1902), vol. 3, 541; cf. idem, 3 Sent. d. 25, a.1, q. 3, ad 5 (vol. 3, 545). These are the best examples that I could find. For a discussion and other references, see Francis Suarez, *Commentaria in Secundam Secundae*, disp. 17, sect. 1, n. 2, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. M. André and C. Berton, 28 vols. (Paris: Vivès, 1856–1878), vol. 12, 424; Dominic Bañez, *In II–II*, q. 10, a. 1, in *Scholastica commentaria in secundam secundae* (Douai: Peter Borremans, 1615), vol. 3, p. 241, col. 2 D–E.

inspires with his grace to act well.[9] In the *secunda secundae* Thomas states that someone might not have been exposed to faith on account of merely original sin.[10] Nevertheless, he assumes that the individual in fact commits a mortal sin. Anyone without faith has committed a mortal sin even if it has not been a sin of unbelief. In addition, Thomas may suggest that those who have not been baptized can respond to grace in their first moral act in which they can choose or reject God at least implicitly as their ultimate end.[11] But this order to God would require some sort of faith.[12] The implication is that an agent could be justified and consequently receive all of the graces which belong to baptism, including faith, in this first act. Nevertheless, even though someone who sins mortally in this first act may not explicitly reject faith, he will still lack faith. He is indirectly responsible for this lack of faith because he has committed mortal sin and not been offered faith. But he is not responsible for a sin of unbelief. Thomas resembles the other theologians in his belief that every unbeliever has mortally sinned. He differs from the others in that he does not think that every unbeliever has sinned against the virtue of faith. The difference is not over whether unbelievers can be saved, but the reasons for which unbelievers will be damned. Indeed, some theologians

[9] "Si qui tamen eorum fecissent quod in se est, Dominus eis secundum suam misericordiam providisset, mittendo eis praedicatorem fidei. . . . Sed tamen hoc ipsum quod aliqui faciunt quod in se est, convertendo se scilicet ad Deum, ex Deo est movente corda ipsorum ad bonum." Aquinas, *Super epistola ad Romanos lectura*, cap. 10, lect. 3, n. 849 (Marietti, vol. 1, 158). Thomas's early writings are less clear about the necessity of grace. See 2 *Sent.*, d. 25, q. 2, a. 1, sol. 1 and ad 1; *De veritate*, q. 14, a. 11, ad 1. For a discussion, see Sullivan, *Salvation*, 52–55. For the scholarship on the increasing Augustinianism of Thomas's position, see Joseph P. Warykow, *God's Grace and Human Action* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 34–55.

[10] "[T]alis ignorantia divinorum ex peccato primi parentis est consecuta." *ST* II–II, q. 10, a. 1. See also q. 4, a. 5, ad 1. Sullivan (*Salvation*, 54) suggests that this view may be incompatible with Thomas's statement that faith is given to the agent who does what is in him (*faciens quod in se est*). I do not see why this would be the case. For Thomas's understanding of this dictum, see Santiago Ramirez, *In I–II*, q. 112, a. 2, I, nn. 313–17, in *De Gratia*: *In I–II Summae theologiae divi Thomae expositio*, in *Opera Omnia* (Salamanca: Editorial San Esteban, 1992), vol. 9, 822–26. He states (822–23): "[F]acienti quod in se est viribus gratiae actualis, Deus non denegat gratiam habitualem seu homini se praeparanti ad gratiam habitualem ex gratia actuali, Deus non denegat gratiam habitualem." See also Dominic Bañez, *In I–II*, q. 109, a. 6 in *Comentarios a la Prima Secundae de Santo Tomás*, ed. Vincente Beltran de Heredia (Salamanca, 1932), vol. 3, 97–101.

[11] *ST* I–II, q. 89, a. 4. For the use of this passage in the context of salvation outside the Church, see Sullivan, *Salvation*, 61–62.

[12] *ST* I–II, q. 62, a. 4; II–II, q. 4, a. 7; II–II, q. 17, aa. 7–8.

are unclear on this point because they do not make such a distinction. It is clear that on their view every unbeliever is culpable, but they are not clear whether this culpability involves an explicit rejection of faith.[13]

Although Thomas's view eventually became the common view by the end of the sixteenth century, it had many opponents in the late Middle Ages.[14] For example, John Gerson (d. 1429), Gabriel Biel (d. 1495), and Hadrian Dedel—later to become Pope Hadrian VI (d. 1523)—argued that all unbelief is culpable as unbelief.[15] These figures were not concerned about salvation in the New World. Later Thomists such as Vitoria (d. 1546) and Bañez (d. 1604) explicitly refer to this earlier tradition.[16] Consequently, their defense of purely negative unbelief is a response to an earlier medieval debate and not some new development which opens the possibility that unbelievers in the New World might be saved without faith.

Vitoria does make the point about purely negative unbelief in the context of the debate over whether the Native Americans can be conquered because they are unbelievers. Nevertheless, he refuses to make a connection between purely negative unbelief and the salvation of the Native Americans.[17] Indeed, he explicitly states that his opponents erroneously draw this conclusion in their attempt to refute the Thomist distinction with a *reductio ad absurdum*: "But in this these teachers are deceived,

[13] Although many Thomists cite Hugh of St. Victor as holding the rejected view that every unbeliever is guilty of unbelief, it seems to me that Suarez's interpretation is more accurate (*In Secundam Secundae*, disp. 17, sect. 1, n. 2, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. 12, 424): "[S]i attente legatur, solum dicit hos infideles non salvari, non vero dicit propter proprium et speciale peccatum infidelitatis condemnari." See Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentiis*, lib. 1, p. 7, cap. 32 (PL 176, col. 302). It is hard to tell if Suarez is discussing this chapter.

[14] "Nihilominus contraria sententia communis est hodie, et fere ab omnibus recepta." Suarez, *In Secundam Secundae*, disp. 17, sect. 1, n. 2, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. 12, 424.

[15] Jean Gerson, *De vita spirituali animae*, lectio secunda (in principio) and lectio 4, corr. 3, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Palemon Glorieux, 8 vols. (Paris: Desclée, 1962), vol. 3, 128–33, 159–60; Gabriel Biel, 2 Sent., d. 22, q. 2, a. 3, dub.1 in *Collectorium circa quattuor libros sententiarum*, ed. U. Hofman, W. Wilbeck, et al., 4 vols (Mohr: Tübingen, 1973–1984), vol. 2, 460–61; Hadrian VI, Quod 4, q. 1, in *Quaestiones quodlibeticae* (Venice, 1522; repr. Ridgewood, NJ: Gregg Press, 1964), 20r–23r, esp. 21v–22r.

[16] Francis de Vitoria, *De Indis* II, 2, 12, in *Relectio de Indis*, Corpus Hispanorum de Pace, 5, ed. L. Perena and J. M. Perez Prendes (Madrid: Consejo Superior De Investigaciones Cientificas, 1967), 57–59. For Bañez, see *In II–II*, q. 10, a. 1, in *Scholastica commentaria in secundam secundae*, vol. 3, p. 241, col. 2 D–E.

[17] Vitoria (*De Indis* II, 2, 12 [Perna and Perez, 57]) cites Thomas, *ST* II–II, q. 10, a. 1: "dammatur quidem propter alia peccata, sed non propter peccatum infidelitatis."

because they think that if we hold that there is invincible ignorance concerning baptism or faith in Christ, it follows that someone is able to be saved without baptism or faith in Christ; but it does not follow."[18] Other theologians reject the Thomistic view because they think that it leads to the view that Native Americans can be saved without faith. Vitoria is in total agreement concerning the absurdity of the position that unbelievers can be saved. Vitoria differs from the others in denying that this position is a consequence of the Thomistic view that there can be purely negative unbelief among the Native Americans. His point has nothing to do with the salvation of the Native Americans, but is more narrowly about whether they are guilty of the sin of unbelief. If other theologians could show that the Thomistic distinction between kinds of unbelief leads to the conclusion that unbelievers can be saved, then the Thomistic distinction would be proven false.

Vitoria's understanding of this issue does not depart significantly from that of Thomas or other Thomists. An exception to this approach might be Domingo Soto (d. 1560), who at one time in his life did argue that someone who is not exposed to the faith might be saved without eliciting any supernatural act of faith.[19] But he very quickly and in print corrected this view precisely because it is incompatible with the wider Christian tradition. Bañez regarded it as heretical or close to heresy. It is important that on this point Soto briefly departed not only from those who think that all unbelief is itself a sin but also from Thomas, other Thomists, and the Catholic tradition. With this brief exception of Soto, the disagreement between Thomists and others is not over the salvation of unbelievers, but over who is offered faith. All sides to this debate think that God gives faith to everyone who does what is in them. But the Thomists deny that God offers faith to everyone.

It is important to recognize that for Thomists it is impossible to have charity without faith, and that the distinction between the sin of unbe-

[18] "Sed in hoc decipiuntur isti doctores, quia putant quod si ponamus ignorantiam invincibelem de baptismo aut fide Christi, quod statim consequitur quod possit aliquis salvari sine baptismo aut fide Christi; quod tamen non sequitur." Vitoria, *De Indis* I, 2, 14, p. 61.

[19] "Haec sententia profecto aut haeresis est, aut haeresi proxima: quamuis eam sequutus fuerit Magister Sotus lib. 2, de natura et gratia, c. 11, in impressione facta Venetiis. Postea tamen illam retractauit ut patet in impressione facta Salmanticae in fine quarti Sententiarum." Dominic Bañez, *In II–II*, q. 2, a. 8, in *Scholastica commentaria in secundum secundae*, vol. 3, p. 187, col. 2 D–E. For the change in the Paris edition, see Dominic Soto, *De natura et gratia*, lib. 2, cap. 11 (Paris: Foucher, 1549; repr. Ridgewood, NJ: Gregg, 1965), 143. See O'Meara, "School," 347–49, esp. 348, n. 55.

lief and purely negative unbelief makes no difference with respect to the lack of charity. Consequently, unbelievers of either stripe are equally unable to perform meritorious acts even though they are capable of performing good acts. The unbeliever's good act is both truly good and yet, strictly speaking, irrelevant to his salvation. J. A. DiNoia confuses goodness and merit when he writes:

> The choice of the particular, real human good (for Aquinas, the choice of the moral good) is always a confirmation of the human orientation toward enjoyment of the fullness of goodness in God. In the concrete order of salvation, there is no such thing as moral goodness—or moral defect, for that matter—as an ingredient of a purely natural order of things apart from grace.[20]

He is not far from holding that for Thomas every morally good act, including those of unbelievers, is in some way meritorious. O'Meara is similarly confused when discussing the Dominican Salamancans on the salvation of unbelievers.[21] Following Thomas and most of the Catholic tradition, the Dominicans at Salamanca do insist that unbelievers can perform morally good acts. Following Thomas as opposed to some other traditions, these Dominicans hold that such good acts in no way merit eternal life.

Thomas's distinction between goodness and merit merely reflects a common medieval position that whereas believers can perform meritorious acts, unbelievers can perform acts which are good but not meritorious. Thomas differs from some of his contemporaries in his denial that any particular human act can be indifferent to moral goodness or badness.[22] Nevertheless, he does not depart from their position that some acts can be indifferent to merit or demerit. For Thomas, the only such acts are the good acts of someone who does not have charity. Since faith is required

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[20] DiNoia, *Diversity*, 97. See also Sullivan, *Salvation*, 61–62; O'Meara, *Thomas Aquinas*, 239.

[21] O'Meara, "School," 360, 363–65, 367.

[22] *ST* II–II, q. 10, a. 4. The *Quaestiones disputatae de malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 7 focuses on someone who lacks charity. I use the Leonine edition as reprinted in Richard Regan and Brian Davies, *The* De Malo *of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 168. For a discussion of Thomas's position in its historical context, see my forthcoming "Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus on Individual Acts and the Ultimate End," in *Philosophy and Theology in the Long Middle Ages: A Tribute to Stephen F. Brown*, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters (Leiden: Brill). For the Thomistic development, see my "The Threefold Referral of Acts to the Ultimate End in Thomas Aquinas and His Commentators," *Angelicum* 85 (2008): 715–36.

for charity, all of an unbeliever's good acts would fall into this category. Thomas repeatedly makes this point throughout his writings.[23]

It is important in this discussion to be clear on the distinction between moral goodness and merit. In general, evil is the privation of a due good, and, in particular, moral evil is a privation of the due order in a voluntary act. The primary measure of moral goodness is the rule of reason, or God's eternal law.[24] Moral goodness belongs to a voluntary act in which nothing is lacking with respect to the order of reason in its object, end, and circumstances.[25] Any defect with respect to object, end, or circumstances takes away from the act's goodness.[26] A morally evil act lacks something that is due to the act itself. In contrast, a morally good act that lacks merit does not lack a due good, but merely something superadded to it. Thomas illustrates this point by using an example from the non-moral order.[27] A horse that lacks sight or legs is defective since it lacks what a horse should have. However, a horse that lacks rationality is not defective, since rationality does not belong to a horse by nature. Similarly, a naturally good act that lacks merit is not defective in the natural order, since merit is not due to it. It lacks only the extra goodness of merit which God would give to it if the agent possessed charity. Moral evil is a privation in the act itself, whereas the lack of merit is only a deficiency in the goodness which the act could have in the supernatural order that God has freely established. A morally good but not meritorious act implies a disorder in the agent who lacks charity.

Whereas moral goodness belongs to the act, merit requires an order to another through justice, whether it be in the context of the political community or in respect to God.[28] For theologians, "merit" strictly

[23] Aquinas, 2 *Sent.*, d. 40, q. 1, a. 5, sol. (Mandonnet, vol. 2, 1026); 2 *Sent.*, d. 41, q. 1, a. 1, sol. (vol. 2, 1038). See also 4 *Sent.*, d. 39, a. 2, ad 5 (Parma, vol. 7.2, 1025); 2 Sent., d. 41, q. 1, a. 2, ad 2 (Mandonnet, vol. 2, 1039); *Super epistolam ad Romanos lectura*, cap. 14, lect. 3, n. 1141 (Marietti, vol. 1, 213); *Super epistolam ad Titum lectura*, cap. 1, lect. 4, n. 43 (Marietti, vol. 2, 310).

[24] *ST* I–II, q. 21, a. 1. David M. Gallagher, "Aquinas on Goodness and Moral Goodness," in *Thomas Aquinas and His Legacy*, ed. David M. Gallagher, Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy, 28 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press), 37–60, esp. 55.

[25] *ST* I–II, q. 18, a. 5. See also *De malo*, q. 2, a. 4, corp. (Regan/Davies, 152–54)

[26] *ST* I–II, q. 18, a. 5, ad 3.

[27] "[E]t ideo non oportet quod omnis eorum actus sit malus, sed solum quod deficientis bonitatis; sicut quamvis equus deficiat a rationalitate quam homo habet, non tamen ideo malus est, sed habet bonitatem deficientem a bonitate hominis." Aquinas, 2 *Sent.*, d. 41, q. 2, a. 1, sol. (Mandonnet, vol. 2, 1038). See my "Threefold Referral," 721–23.

[28] *ST* I–II, q. 23, a. 3.

speaking refers to that merit which is in reference to eternal life or punishment.[29] An act must be morally good in order to be meritorious with respect to God, but moral goodness is not sufficient. Strictly speaking, we cannot merit anything from God, since God cannot be in debt to us.[30] Nevertheless, for those who have charity, there is a kind of merit and proportion. This possibility of merit is a result of God's free decision and is not owed to humans. Someone who has charity performs acts which proceed not merely from his own intellect and will, but also from the work of the Holy Spirit within him. Consequently, the morally good acts of someone in charity can be considered in two ways.[31] First, insofar as the act comes from the agent's own free choice, the act has a congruous merit (*meritorium ex congruite*). Second, insofar as the act is a work of the Holy Spirit, the act has a stricter condign merit (*meritorium ex condigno*). Both kinds of merit belong to one and the same act, and differ insofar as the one act proceeds from the two distinct principles. The first kind of merit is based loosely on a certain congruous proportion by which God rewards the agent, whereas the second kind of merit is based on the way in which someone with charity has been made a sharer of the divine nature. The Holy Spirit himself acts through the agent.

Denis Janz suggests that although Cajetan (d. 1534), in his earlier commentary on Thomas's *Summa theologiae*, emphasizes that merely natural good works are not meritorious in any sense, in his later polemic against Luther, Cajetan seems to say that they are meritorious *de congruo*.[32] It seems to me that although Cajetan does say that some such acts are useful (*utile*), he is not talking about merit or even about the moral value of all good acts. In addition to other good works, Cajetan's examples include prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, which are acts by which a sinner traditionally obtains mercy.[33] In general, Thomists have held that

[29] "Sed quia justitia reddit unicuique quod ei debetur et in bonis et in malis; bona autem simpliciter sunt ea quae ad vitam aeternam pertinent, et mala simpliciter ea quae ad miseriam aeternam; inde est quod secundum theologos meritum proprie dicitur respectu horum." Thomas Aquinas, 3 *Sent.*, d. 18, a. 2 (Mandonnet, vol. 3, 559).

[30] *ST* I–II, q. 114, a. 1.

[31] *ST* I–II, q. 114, a. 3.

[32] Denis R. Janz, *Luther and Late Medieval Thomism: A Study in Theological Anthropology* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1983), 146–51.

[33] "Vere benignissimus erga nos est Deus, providendo, ut quam in statu peccati, mereri non possumus, remissionem peccatorum, impetrare oratione, ieiunio, eleemosynis, aliisque bonis operibus valeamus." Thomas de Vio Cajetan, *Tractatus undecimus de fide et operibus adversus Lutheranos*, 10, in *Opuscula Omnia Thomae de Vio Caietani* (Lyons, 1581; repr. Zurich: Hildesheim, 1995), 291.

merely naturally good acts can contribute in some way to obtaining grace, but they differ about and can be unclear concerning the exact nature of this contribution.[34] Nevertheless, both Thomas and the Thomistic tradition are clear that the good acts of unbelievers and even sinners generally do not have even *de congruo* merit.

The only problematic passage for this interpretation of Thomas is in the *ST* I–II, q. 21, a. 4, in which he discusses the meritoriousness of good actions without a special reference to grace. How does this passage fit in with Thomas's many statements that merit requires grace? There are at least two ways of addressing this issue. First, Cajetan points out that this article is concerned with the act itself and not the disposition of the agent.[35] The acts which are described in this passage as meritorious are those acts which would be meritorious if the agent were in the state of grace. Cajetan finds support for this interpretation in the article itself, in which Thomas states that he is discussing merit "insofar as it is from the nature of the act."[36] I would also add that Thomas makes a similar distinction between the act and the agent in his *Sentences* commentary, and states that those good acts which are performed without charity can be said to merit only in a loose sense (*improprie*).[37] Consequently, Cajetan rightly suggests that Thomas is using a wider notion of "merit" here, one which is less proper and refers to the act apart from the agent's possession of charity. Second, Joseph Wawyrkow writes, "[T]hese articles cannot be read on their own and they do not constitute Thomas's major discussion of merit; this discussion is found in 114, 1–10."[38] In this later discussion Thomas denies the view that moral goodness is sufficient for merit.

Although Catholics denied that salvation is possible without faith, some non-Thomistic theologians were in certain respects closer to one view which O'Meara, Sullivan, and DiNoia attribute to Thomas and/or

[34] The necessity of some sort of actual grace as a preparation for habitual grace is made by Thomas. In such a case, there can be acts which have some sort of salfivic value even if they are not meritorious. See Ramirez, *In I–II*, q. 109, a. 6, nn. 362–89 (vol. 9, 363–78); q. 114, a. 5, nn. 606–15 (vol. 9, 1016–22).

[35] Cajetan, *In I–II*, q. 21, a. 4 (Leonine, vol. 6, 167)

[36] "[Q]uantum est ex ipsa ratione actus." *ST* I–II, q. 32, a. 4, ad 3.

[37] "Actio autem proportionata ad vitam aeternam est actio ex caritate facta; et ideo per ipsam ex condigno meretur quis ea quae ad vitam aeternam pertinent. Opera autem bona quae non sunt ex caritate facta, deficiunt ab ista proportione; et ideo per ea ex condigno non meretur quis vitam aeternam, sed improprie his dicitur aliquis mereri, secundum quod habent similititudinem aliquam cum operatione informata caritate." Thomas Aquinas, 3 *Sent.*, d. 18, a. 2 (Mandonnet, vol. 3, 559).

[38] Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action*, 163, n. 32. Wawrykow also argues that there is considerable development between the early *Sentences* commentary and *Summa theologiae*.

the Thomistic tradition, which is that merely natural good works in some sense merit or make salvation possible. Many theologians, especially those who belonged to the Franciscan tradition, held that although good acts without charity do not have condign merit, they do have a certain congruous merit.[39] This congruous merit should not be confused with the congruous merit of the Thomist position, which results from the free choice of someone who already has charity. Instead, they regard it as a kind of merit which prepares the way for charity. This Thomistic emphasis should be disconcerting to those theologians who attribute to Thomas the position that unbelievers can contribute to their salvation through good works. Gabriel Biel, a fifteenth-century theologian who was not a Franciscan even though he was influenced by this tradition, provides a good example of this alternative approach. He suggests that someone who performs certain naturally good acts will be given grace by God by which he can be justified.[40] On this view, the congruous merit in the present order leads to the reception of charity. It is hard to find a starker contrast with Thomas and the Thomistic tradition.[41] But this view does not entail the further position, which is incompatible with the Catholic tradition, that salvation is possible without implicit or explicit faith.

The Dominicans at Salamanca are conspicuously notable for their rejection of the view that the good acts of unbelievers require grace. Although John Capreolus (d. 1444) may not have held the view that grace is necessary for any morally good act, Francis Vitoria and Bañez interpret him as in some way holding this view.[42] But they explicitly reject this interpretation. Thomas O'Meara writes that according to Bañez, "Human actions based on the moral law would be, however, in their realizations influenced by grace."[43] But Bañez himself considers and rejects this position when he states: "Whether he is a believer or an unbeliever, a sinner

[39] Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 109–19.

[40] Gabriel Biel, *Collectorium* 3, dist. 27, q. 1, a. 2 (vol. 2, 517–18) and dub. 4 (vol. 2, 523–24). See Heiko Obermann, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and late Medieval Nominalism*, 3rd ed. (Durham, NC: The Labyrinth Press, 1983), 166–90.

[41] See Ramirez, *In II–II*, q. 14, a. 5, nn. 605–21 (vol. 9, 1014–23). For the contrast between Biel and Thomas on this point, see especially John Farthing, *Thomas Aquinas and Gabriel Biel: Intepretations of St. Thomas Aquinas in German Nominalism on the Eve of the Reformation*, Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 19 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988), 150–80.

[42] Vitoria, *In II–II*, q. 10, a. 4, nn. 4 and 6, in *Comentarios a la Secunda Secundae de Santo Tomás*, ed. Vincente Beltran de Heredia (Salamanca, 1932), vol. 2, 172–73, 174–75; Bañez, *In I–II*, q. 109, a. 1, n. 4 (vol. 3, 23); art. 10, n. 7 (vol. 3, 120).

[43] O'Meara, "School," 360.

can do many morally good works without any supernatural help."[44] It is hard to see how O'Meara could arrive at his interpretation. O'Meara does cite a passage in which Bañez is considering the importance of the first moral act in which someone who arrives at the age of reason accepts or rejects grace. It is true that for Bañez, and indeed many Thomists, someone who makes such a good choice will have at least implicit faith. But this point has no implications for the good actions of unbelievers.

The important point is that merit belongs to the supernatural order, whereas moral goodness does not. Bañez writes, "Therefore with only the general help of God, the author of nature, which is always presupposed, a man is able to work some good which is proportionate to rational nature."[45] Just as Thomas does, Bañez preserves the distinction between nature and gratuitous merit. Bañez does not think that difficult good acts can be performed consistently over a long period without God's special help, but he does think that at least some such acts are possible.[46] Moreover, Bañez rejects the view of those theologians who hold that some sinners can merit charity through acts which are meritorious in a condign sense: "And the reason is because even congruous merit presupposes friendship, or at least excludes enmity with God himself . . . no aspect (*ratio*) of congruity can be received on the side of the rational creature which is in sin, so that God could pay him a reward belonging to a supernatural order, such as is grace, which is the root of eternal life."[47]

Some of the confusion over the significance of an unbeliever's good acts may rest in a confusion over the scope of the previously mentioned discussion in the *prima secundae*, q. 89, art. 6, in which Thomas discusses an agent's first moral act in the context of whether it is possible for someone to have merely venial sin along with original sin. Thomas argues that an agent's original sin is remitted if through grace he orders himself to God through this first act. Both O'Meara and DiNoia interpret this

[44] "Peccator sive fidelis sive infidelis potest multa opera moraliter bona facere absque auxilio supernaturali." Bañez, *In I–II*, q. 109, *In Scholastica commentaria in secundum secundae*, vol. 3, p. 59, a. 2, n. 49 (Beltran, vol. 3, 59). See also *In II–II*, q. 10, a. 4 (Douai, 256–58).

[45] "Ergo cum solo generali auxilio Dei auctoris naturae, quod semper praesupponitur, poterit homo bonum aliquod naturae rationali propotionatum operari." Bañez, *In I–II*, q. 109, a. 2, n. 49 (Beltran, vol. 3, 60).

[46] Bañez, *In I–II*, q. 109, a. 4, nn. 9–12 (Beltran, vol. 3, 90–96).

[47] Bañez, *In I–II*, q. 114, a. 5, n. 12 (vol. 3, 332): "Et ratio est quia meritum etiam de congruo praesupponit amicitiam, vel saltem excludit inimicitiam ipsius Dei . . . nulla ratio congruitatis potest accipi ex parte creaturae rationalis quae est in peccato, ad hoc quod Deus reddat illi praemium ordinis supernaturalis, qualis est gratia, quae radix est vitae aeternae."

passage as stating that the reception or rejection of grace in an individual's first moral act is also a discussion of an unbeliever's every act.[48] But the text makes no such claim, and such an interpretation conflicts with Thomas's many statements that there are good acts which are indifferent to merit, and that the unbeliever's good acts belong to this group.

Their interpretation might seem to have some support in a position commonly attributed to Capreolus, namely that grace is required for every moral act. But aside from the question of whether Capreolus holds such a position, Capreolus himself says that the unbeliever's good act has no merit and is irrelevant to the agent's salvation.[49] Indeed, whether we describe God's assistance in such acts as "grace" or not, such assistance has merely a causal role in the action and is entirely different either from the assistance which is given to a meritorious act or that assistance which is given to an act which prepares the agent for justification.

Although the Franciscan understanding of merit and Biel's understanding of salvation could be invoked in support of O'Meara, Sullivan, and DiNoia, such views are foreign to both Thomas and the later Thomist tradition, including that of the Dominicans at Salamanca. They are most probably mistaken in attributing to Thomas the view that all good actions require grace, and those who attribute this view to Bañez and Vitoria are certainly mistaken. Moreover, even if Thomas held such a view, it would not have the implications which contemporary theologians would wish.

For Thomists, the distinction between unbelief as a sin and unbelief as purely negative does not affect the statement that faith is necessary for charity and merit. Only those with explicit or implicit faith can perform

[48] O'Meara, *Thomas Aquinas*, 239; DiNoia, *Diversity*, 97. For a discussion of the issues involved in the interpretation of this text, see Lawrence Dewan, "Natural Law and the First Act of Freedom: Maritain Revisited," *Études Maritainiennes/Maritain Studies* 12 (1996): 3–32.

[49] "Illa tamen non fiunt sine speciali Dei auxilio, non quidem habituali, sed se habente per modum motionis, et cujusdam passionis. Et hoc sufficit ad salvandum mentem Augustini." Capreolus, 2 *Sent.*, d. 28, q. 1, a. 3, n. 2, ad 14 (vol. 4, 307). Janz understands Capreolus to hold that every morally good act requires an *auxilium divinum*, which is grace. Nevertheless, Capreolus writes "[H]umana natura, in statu praesenti, per peccatum non est totaliter corrupta. Igitur potest in aliquod bonum opus sibi proportionatum, sine superadditione novae formae; tale autem velle vel agere est actus virtutis acquisitae." 2 *Sent.*, d. 28, q. 1, a. 1 (vol. 4, 284). This issue does not seem to bear directly on the question of whether there can be morally good acts without referral to the natural and supernatural ultimate end. For the different interpretations and uses of the *auxilium divinum* in Thomas, see Janz, *Luther*, 46–48. For my somewhat different account of Capreolus, see "Threefold Referral," 724–27.

meritorious actions, although even unbelievers can perform good actions. This distinction is important in itself and historically because it explains why some unbelievers have not committed mortal sins of unbelief or referred sins to the end of unbelief. Vitoria describes average sixteenth-century Native Americans as belonging to this category, since the faith was not adequately preached to them. Just as other unbelievers, they can perform good but not meritorious acts. Their lack of faith indicates that they have mortally sinned. Vitoria's position, along with the other developments, has no clear implication for the salvation of unbelievers. Contemporary attempts to apply his views to this end are historically mistaken and conceptually confused. N V

The Natural Desire to See God[1]

SERVAIS PINCKAERS, O.P.

The Merit of the Question

IS THERE any merit in once again raising the question of the natural desire to see God? Is there really anything more that can be said on the subject? Have not theologians already rehearsed all the imaginable arguments, raised them from every conceivable angle, and still failed to reach any agreement until, finally, the fighting has ceased, not because it has yielded to the force of any particular argument, but simply has exhausted itself by weariness? Some say that the question is too bound up with scholasticism, and so has therefore been superseded by more progressive developments in theology, centered on man, his liberty, and human nature already touched by grace and the supernatural.

The underlying reality of the question, however, is that of the relation of God and man, and so it lies unavoidably at the heart of Christian life and does not yield to the vagaries and intricacies of opinions and theological fashions. The problem of the relation of God and man lies beyond books and ideas, and so demands the attention of the theologian who wishes to follow the thread of truth rather than the current of fashion. But the new theology that takes man, nature, or science as its principle axis, will it not in the end result in the practical elimination of the supernatural under the guise of a general reinterpretation? When this new theology declares that the question of natural desire has been superceded, does it not at this point betray a secret fear of the resurgence of the problem of the supernatural? Is it not at this point subject to the reproach of having rejected an essential aspect of the Christian mystery, and so of revising the ground upon which the Christian mystery is founded? If there exists in the heart of man a desire for God rooted in his very

[1] Originally "Le désir natural de voir Dieu," *Nova et Vetera* 4 (1976): 255–73. Here translated by Aaron Riches.

nature—a distant desire, different from all other desires and needs, capable of getting the upper hand over them—then are not both the theologian and the philosopher compelled to take account of this desire and to accord it special attention, even if the existence of this desire might disrupt the anthropologist of the day?

The question of the natural desire for God in man is born with the creation of man according to the image of God and receives new vigor in light of the Christian revelation of the call of all men to the vision of God. This desire for God is not subject to either the silence or variations of theological opinion, rather it is present and active in the heart of every man and every Christian. It falls therefore to the theologian to express this desire in his own manner, to elucidate it with clarity, candor, and humility, and even courage.

In order to treat the problem of the natural desire to see God, we must begin with the terms in which it was classically elaborated. Thus, insofar as the limits of a brief article allow, we will retrace the contours of the classical elaboration of the natural desire to see God in order to propose a fresh response to this great difficulty, which involves the topic of natural desire as it is related to the supernatural and gratuitous character of the vision of God. After the great Augustinian intuition, the famous *inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat te*, St. Thomas Aquinas is the principle theologian of the natural desire of man to see God, and he expressed this theme with the rigor of the language of scholasticism. It is St. Thomas who forged with precision the apparatus that came to provide later theologians with the essential terms of discussing the natural desire to see God. It is thus to St. Thomas that this exposition is dedicated.

Part One: The Question of Natural Desire According to St. Thomas and His Posterity

The Importance of the Natural Desire to See God according to St. Thomas

When we read the texts of St. Thomas that treat the natural desire to see God and which demonstrate the possibility of the vision of God (which is the only true beatitude of man), when we follow his reasoning without prejudice or fear for the difficulties that may follow from his reasoning, it becomes clear that the natural desire to see God constitutes an essential aspect of Thomistic theology and its dogmatic orientation to the vision of God. More, theological knowledge of this natural desire to see God is an integral preparation and moral orientation, which disposes man toward the bliss of the loving vision of God that is his ultimate end.

At the beginning of the *prima pars*, q. 12, a. 1, answering the arguments of Arab and Jewish philosophers who, anxious to safeguard divine transcendence, deny that any creature could ever attain the vision of God, St. Thomas proposes the natural desire that animates the spiritual faculties of man (intellect and will) to demonstrate (according to reason itself, he says) the radical possibility of man seeing God in his very essence. "Therefore some who considered this, held that no created intellect can see the essence of God. . . . But this opinion is against reason [as well as faith]. For there resides in every man a natural desire to know the cause of any effect which he sees; and thence arises wonder in men. But if the intellect of the rational creature could not reach so far as to the first cause of things, the natural desire would remain void. Hence it must be absolutely granted that the blessed see the essence of God" [*Summa theologiae* I, q. 12, a. 1].

Here we should note two things. First, the natural desire in question is that which draws the mind toward the truth and the will toward the good by love. This is not a desire superadded. It is a desire constitutive of our spiritual faculties, natural to them in the strongest sense of the word. Secondly, the argument proposes the radical possibility of vision of God by man—vision of God is not impossible, as it was for the Arab philosophers. If the natural desire which drives man toward the true and the good ran up against the impossibility of seeing God, nature would do something in vain and we would have to admit a contradiction in the work of God, who would thus have ordered human nature to an impossibility. This radical possibility can be called a passive capacity to see God: a capacity to receive a vision unique to spiritual beings. This is not to claim that the vision of God is an active possibility, a power man possesses in himself by which he could attain this end of himself. The vision depends on God. Nevertheless, the argument takes on a special force in light of divine revelation, by which man is called to vision and given the promise of grace. No argument of reason can set aside the possibility of this vision of God; on the contrary, the movement of intellect and will yearning by the force of natural desire suggests the positive ordinance of man to the vision of God.

The natural desire of man forms the basis of the argument found in the treatise on beatitude at the beginning of the *secunda pars*, where an investigation into the true happiness of man entails a transition from man to God, proving that the full happiness of man cannot reside in anything whatever save God alone. In question 2, which inquires about the multiple objects which correspond to the desires of man (riches, honors, glory, power, bodily goods, pleasures, spiritual goods), proving that St. Thomas applies himself to the universal dimension of the desire of the will in order to demonstrate

that none of these goods can fully satisfy man, that only the universal good—that is, God—can constitute the perfect beatitude of man.

In question 3, responding to the question from the point of view of the human subject and the nature of happiness that is formed in him, after having shown that beatitude consists in an activity of our spiritual faculties—intellect and will, with priority given to intellect—St. Thomas distinguishes every knowledge of the creature between that of science and that of angelic knowledge, and this in order to support natural desire, the fact that man cannot be fully happy apart from the vision of the essence of God. "If therefore the human intellect, knowing the essence of some created effect, knows no more of God than 'that He is,' the perfection of that intellect does not yet reach simply the First Cause, but there remains in it the natural desire to seek the cause. Wherefore it is not yet perfectly happy" (*ST* I, q. 3, a. 8).

The whole investigation of the treatise on beatitude converges on the natural desire to see God inscribed in our spiritual faculties, in our inclination to the true and the good, and to love.

The importance, therefore, of the natural desire to see God for St. Thomas cannot be overstated, especially since, at least on my reading, the treatise on beatitude lays the groundwork for his moral theology and is, in fact, the backbone of the structure of his thought on the matter. For St. Thomas, as for all of antiquity, the question of morality is preeminently the question of what is the true happiness of man. The moral life is nothing but a response to this question. The natural desire to see God is thus brought to bear by St. Thomas on the final answer to this question of happiness, which underpins the desire for happiness, and so the whole realm of moral action. Later, in the seventeenth century, the question of morality became first and centrally that of moral obligation dissociated from the treatise on beatitude, severing consideration of man's natural desire for God from his fundamental morality. Thus was the advent of a new conception of morality.

The Originality of the Thomist Argument Concerning Natural Desire

We should also note how the conceptualization of natural desire according to St. Thomas was an original contribution he made, a formulation proper to him. In his first work, the commentary on the *Sentences*, in book IV, distinction 49, at the place where Peter Lombard offers his own theological exposition of final beatitude, here St. Thomas does not yet raise the issue of natural desire. This is noteworthy especially because at this juncture it would have served St. Thomas well, since he is forced here to address the argument of the impossibility of seeing God, as held by

certain Arab philosophers among others (IV *Sent.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1: *Utrum intellectus humanus possit prevenire ad videndum Deum per essentiam*). Nevertheless, at this early stage, St. Thomas had not yet formulated his conception of natural desire.

St. Thomas's argument concerning natural desire does not in fact appear until the third book of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, where, even in this first formulation, it comes already to occupy a central position in the long and extensive discourse on human happiness, which is a first draft of the treatise on beatitude and occupies chapters 1 to 63, and principally chapters 48 to 50. In chapter 48 we read: "[I]t is impossible for natural desire to be unfulfilled, since 'nature does nothing in vain.' Now, natural desire would be in vain if it could never be fulfilled. Therefore, man's natural desire is capable of fulfillment, but not in this life, as we have shown. So, it must be fulfilled after this life. Therefore, man's ultimate felicity comes after this life." And, recurring like a refrain after each argument in chapter 50 is the phrase "ex hac cognitione non quiescit desiderium naturale,"[2] or similar such expressions.

The argument concerning the desire natural to see God, along with the role it plays in the question of the happiness of man, is a discovery of the genius of St. Thomas. Moreover, it plays an essential role within his overall theological system.

The Personal Character of the Desire for God according to St. Thomas

A long and deep familiarity with the work of St. Thomas is needed to pierce beneath the shell of the technical tone of his language and thereby apprehend the sensibility underpinning the logical rigor of the author. Thus we come to see how the desire to know God in himself is in fact a very precise expression of the soul St. Thomas himself, of his own love of the truth joined with the desire for happiness that animated his life and directed his theological trajectory. Have we not heard it said of him that he began earlier than others to seek after God? St. Thomas expresses this theme with incomparable discretion, as a personal experience at once theological and mystical, which for him is one. The soul of St. Thomas himself and all of his theology is related to the natural desire to see God, which is the cornerstone of his system.

The question of the vision of God has for St. Thomas a double aspect: (1) There exists in man, in his spiritual faculties, a natural desire which cannot be fulfilled except in the vision of God's essence. There is thus a

[2] Our natural desire is not satisfied by this knowledge.

passive capacity to see God inscribed in man, which differentiates him from creatures that lack reason.[3] (2) On the other hand, it is impossible for man, as for any creature, to attain to the vision of God by his own natural power; he requires a special divine assistance, the "light of glory," which is entirely gratuitous and supernatural, as is the grace by which he proceeds toward that vision (cf. *ST* I–II, q. 5, a. 5).

The vision of God is thus supernatural because no creature can attain it by his own natural power, nor does any creature possess an active capacity for it. This desire is nevertheless natural to spiritual beings insofar as it is inscribed in them as a passive capacity to receive from God this vision. Such is the clear and explicit position of St. Thomas. He does not appear to be the least bit anxious about the coordination of this natural desire with the gratuity and transcendence of the vision of God, which is grace.

The Problem of Natural Desire in the Sixteenth Century

Changes in Thinking Between the Thirteenth and the Sixteenth Centuries

The problem of natural desire as we now understand it was not explicitly raised until the sixteenth century. By this time, intellectual inquiry and the context of theological reflection had changed from what it had been in the thirteenth century. Thus, even while they adopted the *Summa* of St. Thomas as the basis of their theological instruction, nevertheless they interpreted him through the ideas and problems of their own age.

In particular, the thirteenth century, and St. Thomas primarily, constructed a theology characterized by a harmony established between God and man, faith and reason, grace and freedom, supernatural gifts and human nature. This theology originated first of all in the divine truth communicated by faith and derived from reason. As a result of the advent of nominalism, however, a new vision of man and his relation to God, to wider society, and to other created natures was elaborated. Characteristic of this new vision was the imposition of a radical tension between these elements (God, society, and nature) on the one hand, and human freedom on the other. The new perspective is particularly manifest in the question of the relation between grace and nature, which lies at the root of the Lutheran crisis and the cause, later on, of the fissures between the different schools of

[3] This passive capacity needs to be distinguished from the simple obediential potency we find in every creature, cf. *ST* I–II, q. 114, a. 10; II–II, q. 2, a. 3; III, q. 4, a. 1; q. 9, a. 2, ad 3. See also L. Charlier, "Puissance passive et désir naturel," in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 7 (1930): 5–28, 639–62.

theology—Jesuits, Jansenists, Dominicans, etc. If we begin from a notion of human freedom as absolutely self-determining in its choice between good and evil, between yes and no with regard to grace, a freedom of indifference, then we are led to conceive of human nature as radically self-sufficing. Thus the problem of the relation of nature with the supernatural becomes critical. And the problem of the relation is raised in a particular way by the notion of the natural desire for the vision of God as it was articulated by St. Thomas, who became the dominant theological authority. If human nature is self-sufficing—at least according to the principle of a freedom to act—then how do we conceive a desire for God that is really natural but yet concerns the vision of God, which is evidently supernatural?

This problem is rendered more acute by the separation that has developed between speculative theology, with its technical precision taught in universities, on the one hand, and mysticism and spirituality, which tend to be expressed in the more common language of the experience of the relation of God and man in the life of faith, on the other. Thus the desire for God, bound up with the experience of humanity and of Christianity, is reduced in theology to a "concept" and is treated in terms abstracted from the contours of experience.

If we wish to remain faithful to St. Thomas—who evidently maintains in man a natural desire to see God—we must interpret and discover explications of this desire which correspond to the problems of his age.

The Status of the Problem of Natural Desire

Reflecting on natural desire, theologians of a certain period tended to make the hypothesis of a state of pure nature their starting point—whether they admitted that the first man was placed by God in a state preceding the gift of grace or refused this interpretation of the book of Genesis, they nevertheless made pure human nature a starting point from which to reason about human nature. This hypothesis, we should note, is not unrelated to the philosophical penchant among modern philosophers to posit a state of nature for man anterior to the formation of society.

Thus the problematic of natural desire was taken according to this dilemma:

- Either we allow that there exists in human nature a real desire for the vision of God, prior to the intervention of grace. The beatific vision thus becomes the sole ultimate end of man, and the link between the order of nature and that of the supernatural is strongly established. But in this case, we are forced to presume a certain requirement of human nature toward the beatific vision according to the principle of

St. Thomas that a natural desire cannot be in vain. God would be unjust to human nature, it seems, if he did not respond to this natural desire, leaving it unaccomplished. In this way we compromise the purely gratuitous character of the vision of God, of grace and of the supernatural order, and thus it becomes difficult to safeguard the transcendence of supernatural and divine action.

- Or we affirm before all else the supernatural character, gratuitous and transcendent, of the beatific vision and the order of grace, such that we are led to reduce to the extreme—if not to cancel all together—the natural desire in man to see God, forced to posit for him an ultimate end and natural beatitude that is different from this vision. Thus, if we do not wish to abandon the doctrine of St. Thomas concerning natural desire, we must reinterpret it. The risk in this case is that we will begin to see the natural and supernatural orders as independent from one another, as two parallel worlds without any need of being reciprocally related. This position inevitably becomes detrimental to the supernatural order, while, on the other hand, man can now do anything without any detriment to his nature.

In conclusion we restate our question: Can there be a natural desire for the supernatural? It seems one is forced to choose between either the transcendence of the grace of the vision of God on the one hand, or the existence in man of a natural desire to see God on the other.

The Principle Answers Given to the Problem of Natural Desire

The principal answers given to the modern problem of natural desire are as follows. We shall reduce them to their essential points. We seek here, not to rehearse the history of opinions on the subject, but rather to outline their most characteristic aspects. The authors themselves interest us less than the elements of thought they occasion.

As we have already suggested, these theologians all generally presuppose a hypothesis, at least theoretical, concerning the existence of man in a state of pure nature.

1. Cajetan (1469–1534), the great commentator on St. Thomas, construes the difficulty of natural desire in the work of St. Thomas in a rather simple manner: the Angelic Doctor, he thinks, speaks of natural desire in the context of human nature as it exists historically, which is now effectively called to grace and the beatific vision. The natural desire for this vision is thus already a work of grace in man and consists therefore in the order of the supernatural. According to

this hypothesis, which is not posited by St. Thomas, the state of pure nature would have been merely an obediential potency toward the supernatural, the disposition in every creature to be a recipient of the effect of any divine action, as for example in the case of miracles.

2. Suarez (1548–1617) rigorously expressed the spirit of his epoch. He begins from an idea of man as a creature who possesses a nature that entails a normative end that can be completed within the limits of that nature, according to the Aristotelian principle that all natural beings have an end proportionate to their nature. By virtue of his creation, man is therefore made for a beatitude, the essence of which conforms to his nature and so is natural. Supposing man finds himself called to a higher end, this higher end will necessarily involve a superaddition to his nature, a superaddition that cannot enter into our definition of man. With regards to the natural desire for a supernatural beatitude, Suarez rejects categorically this possibility, in conformity with the principle of Aristotle according to which natural appetites follow the power of nature.

3. The Salamancans of the seventeenth century sought to undermine the reality of natural desire, which they supposed St. Thomas never to have spoken of as 'real' desire. On their view, St. Thomas was not concerned with a substantial or innate desire, but rather with an elicited desire, optional and freely given, a desire ineffective and conditional on God's call to vision, mere velleity of nature insofar as it conforms to nature.

4. Other theologians, for example Père Descoqs, S.J., have more recently tried to discern a purely natural end that orientates the natural desire to see God. On this view, the vision of the divine essence is to be distinguished from the supernatural vision of the persons of the Trinity—knowledge of God is part of God's work.

5. Père Henri de Lubac, S.J., in his work *Surnaturel* (1946), reignited the debate concerning natural desire that had raged between the two world wars. De Lubac sought to retrieve the patristic tradition, Greek and particularly Augustinian, which conceived man as the image of God and thus as essentially directed to God by his spiritual nature as to its model and archetype. Père de Lubac vigorously attacked the system of pure nature, with its self-sufficient and natural end independent of the supernatural. He argued that there was not—nor could there ever be—any but one end of human nature, of the human spirit: the supernatural end. For Père de Lubac, the vision of

God is the object of natural desire, the real desire of man, concrete and absolute and not conditional.

To the objection that this scheme places in man a necessarily entitlement to the vision of God, Père de Lubac responds:

> What we desire necessarily, what we desire with an absolute desire, in general we can say we desire this with exigency. Provisionally this can even be said of our desire for God. But we must immediately add: we do not have this exigency because it pleases us to have it, rather this exigency is the reality that *we cannot not desire God*. Far from being dominated by this exigency, the object of our desire rather imposes itself upon us, even when our conscience ignores it, even when our freedom turns away from it. The exigency of our desire is such that we cannot be without it. Therefore if we have an exigency for God, it is that he first demands this exigency of us; and by the same means, he transforms our nature. The necessity of desire is a harsh law: it is *received* by the spirit, not dictated by it. . . . This exigency is therefore an essential exigency, an exigency in nature, which—though it is natural—is in reality no more natural in its source of desire than in its object of desire.[4]

Further, Père de Lubac considered St. Thomas a transitional author in whose system there is both a patristic notion of man ordained to the vision of God coupled with the Aristotelian conception of human nature as closed in on itself. On Père de Lubac's view, these two conceptions were not fully harmonized in St. Thomas.

As we perceive the discourse of these different opinions and interpretations, the problem of natural desire is concentrated on the exigency of this desire regarding the vision of God, which appears to compromise the character of the supernatural. It is on this critical point that we make our specific reflection. Here lies the nettle of our problem.

Part Two: A Response to the Problem of Natural Desire

The Spiritual Nature of the Desire to See God

We have already noted above how theology during the Renaissance suffered from a separation from spirituality and mysticism, from the expression of the Christian experience of the relation of God and man. Separated thus, theology became overly speculative, abstract, and rational. The consequence of this orientation was an excessive diminishing of

[4] Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Surnaturel: Études historiques*, Théologie 8 (Paris: Aubier, 1946), 490.

theological matters to the plane of concepts, ideas, and rational propositions. Under this condition, the natural desire for God becomes a merely theoretical notion, the more abstract, the more it is associated with a state of pure nature in which, in any case, man no longer actually exists, and of which there can be no question he no longer has any experience of. Theologians who reason from this natural desire will do so without any sense of how it confronts actual experience. They will not think to analyze the desire, but rather will accept it as a primary datum, a primitive tendency of the appetite found in all beings, even unreasonable beings. This natural desire of which we speak will thus be the blind desire of all beings toward the good. In this way, we will imagine this desire in the same manner as any other natural desire we find in man, like hunger, thirst, or sexual appetite, the kind of desire that is exercised before the intervention of reason and will. In this case, it will be clear that if this natural desire remains in vain, with no opportunity to attain its object, leaving man in a state of hunger, we could then justly reproach to the creator for the defectiveness of his work. For this kind of desire bears within it an exigency directed toward its satisfaction, or at least the possibility of its accomplishment. Every appetite is ordered from within toward its satisfaction as to its own natural end, and therefore involves a natural exigency to be able to achieve this end.

This manner of approach is defective in that it is grounded in a very particular kind of desire, one that proceeds from the sensitive nature of man, to which a universal dimension is conferred, thanks to its natural characteristic. What is neglected by this approach is that which is proper and unique to the spiritual nature of man, the desire that arises spontaneously from the will of man in the light of his intellect brought before God. It is essential here to bring an analogical conceptuality to bear, a conceptuality of both likeness and difference—this analogical conceptuality must be allowed to affect the nature and property of desire, where we pass from the sensitive to the spiritual plane, when we study man in comparison with irrational beings or with irrational aspects of his own being.

Building on the Spiritual Experience of the Desire for God

In order to discern the movements and properties of the spiritual nature of man, it is necessary to refer to the spiritual experience of the desire for God as it is expressed by the best authors, the Fathers of the Church and the mystics—the experience of a theologian as much as any Christian can be an experience of his life of faith. This desire, like every reality of the order of the will or the affective dimension of man—love, hope, etc.—is best understood when it is grasped from the inside, thanks to some

concrete experience. One of the merits of the work of Père de Lubac was precisely to have reintroduced into the discourse of theology the testimony of the Fathers of the Church concerning the desire for God in man.

Doubtless an objection along the lines of Cajetan will here be raised against us; it will be argued that there cannot be a purely natural experience of desire for God because the Christian is a man who works by grace, the subject of theological virtues and of the action of the Holy Spirit. But what prevents us from taking the Christian experience of the desire for God as that desire flourishes under the action of the Holy Spirit, in order to ask ourselves whether and to what extent this desire corresponds to the nature of man himself, especially his higher faculties? Hereby the essential problem is raised: how can there be a correspondence between the vision of God, the action of grace, the desire and striving it excites in us on the one hand, and human nature on the other. And yet to approach this problem of natural desire we have no need of the hypothesis of a state of pure nature, which in fact escapes our grasp and takes us away from real experience. The problem here is the problem that concerns the whole of theology: the link between vision, grace, God, revelation, and human nature. The question of natural desire is therefore an expression of this difficult point of theology. But to truly study this natural desire do we not need a notion of this desire as it has reached maturity and thereby become sensible, as opposed to imagining the seeds of this desire as it may exist in an inaccessible state?

In this way, St. Thomas treats the natural desire to see God as part of the experience of Christian faith conjoined to reason. But the superior light of faith is not an obstacle to our perception of what is merely natural—to the contrary. For St. Thomas, as for St. Augustine, the more man submits to the light of faith and to the action of grace, the more he comes to know his own true nature. We do not find any trace in St. Thomas of the common modern presupposition according to which the intervention of faith and grace disrupts necessarily, as a foreign element, the activity of reason, liberty, and human nature.

Here however it is important to note how St. Thomas's conception of human nature is not quite the same as the one presented by Père de Lubac. St. Thomas's use of Aristotle does not entail a self-sufficient human nature, as it does with Suarez and others of his time. Rather human nature for St. Thomas is open to God and his grace. This openness of human nature to God works precisely within St. Thomas's theory of the natural desire to see God in man, ordering him to the beatific vision as to his final and true end. St. Thomas is thus not at all the transitional figure Père de Lubac discerns, one who couples positions that nevertheless poorly harmonize. On the contrary, St. Thomas seems rather, to us,

to be more the summit of the equilibrium of theology, even while the equilibrium he achieved was unfortunately all too quickly lost.

The Connection of Desire with Love and Hope

We can directly approach the major problem of the thesis of natural desire by indicating the apparent exigency this desire brings to bear upon God, vision, and grace. Our response to this problem of exigency begins with an analysis of desire in its relation with other movements of the will, given that the will—for us as for St. Thomas—is not only a power of a *conscious pressure of the self for the self*, as it was defined by Mounier, but is above all the source of the spontaneous movements of love, desire, and hope, etc.

In his treatise on the passions, a study which extends into the realm of spiritual theology, St. Thomas conceives desire in such a way that it is clearly not an act or feeling of man, neither does it exist alone. Its origin and cause, in effect, is love, from which it is normatively deployed in the hope of achieving joy. In the movement of the will, therefore, love, desire, joy, and hope form a concrete continuum. Thus, treating the movement of free will in the work of justice, St. Thomas writes in *De veritate* (q. 28, a. 4): "Primus autem motus affectus in aliquid est motus *amoris* . . . ; qui quidem motus in *desiderio* includitur sicut causa in effectu; desideratur enim aliquid quasi amatum. Ipsa vero *spes* desiderium quoddam importat cum quadam animi erectione, quasi in quoddam arduum tendens."[5]

The desire for God in us must therefore be understood in terms tightly bound to its relation, principally, to love, which is the cause, along with hope, in which the desire for God is developed.

Love of Friendship as the Root of the Natural Desire for God

The decisive point for our question lies in the causal connection that links love and desire. The first movement of the "appetite," which is at the origin of all other movements and remains constantly present in them, is love, which we can define as a direct and simple delight in the object perceived and known as good (this object and its good can obviously be a person, as when one says: this or this person gives me joy, intrigues me, touches me, etc). Different species of love correspond with different species of desire.

The two species of love are: (1) love of friendship and (2) concupiscent love (*ST* I–II, q. 26, a. 4). Love of friendship consists in loving someone for himself—this is love in the proper and full sense of the term, such

[5] "The first motion of the affections toward anything is the motion of *love* . . . ; this motion is included in *desire* as a cause in an effect; for something is desired as loved. *Hope*, moreover, implies desire accompanied by the rousing of one's spirit as tending to something arduous."

love desires the good of the other. This is how we love a friend. The intention and the desire that directs it are both related to the friend and remain with him. Concupiscent love, on the other hand, is related to a good that appears and affects us, but it is related to someone, ourselves or another, to whom the object is pleasant or useful. Thus we love wine, an animal, a car, or a collaborator, or a pleasant companion. In the case of concupiscent love, the intention that animates love and drives desire supersedes its object and is thus ordained to an end other than the object. The object of desire is not loved for itself, but rather in view of something else, profit or pleasure usually.

Here is an example of this distinction. With money we can buy all the goods we want or need, including companions who will share our interest and joy. But we cannot attach a price tag on friendship, on the true love according to which we are a friend both in poverty and in abundance. Such love, that of friendship, is of another kind and of another order.

Desire born of concupiscence is fixedly interested in utility and satisfaction; while the desire that proceeds from friendship is disinterested to the extent, not that it will exclude utility and satisfaction altogether, but to the extent that utility and satisfaction will be subordinated to the principle intention determined by the relation of friendship between persons.

Why Natural Desire Does Not Impose any Demand on God

The decisive point of our inquiry is to understand and show how the love of friendship confers on desire a quality that engenders it such that we will be able to remove the bind of exigency that imposes a demand on what it loves and desires. Our thesis is as follows: when man loves God with friendship—that is, with true love—the desire which proceeds and drives man toward God (as toward beatitude) contains in itself, in its source from man's side, a decisive refusal to impose any exigency on God under the pretext of a demand for the satisfaction of this desire. Such an exigency would evidently contradict both the love of friendship, which is the source of this desire, and God who is its object.

To clarify this point, we take as an example the relation of friends who open themselves in love of friendship to one another in maturity. This is a profound desire and one that is natural in man, who desires to have friends, to love and to be loved. Aristotle justly esteemed that we cannot be happy without friends. This desire nourishes us and fortifies us in our exchanges with friends, who love nothing more than to be together, to speak, live, and work together. This desire, however, bears on all the desires that are interested in the other's wellbeing; thus friends voluntarily consent to sacrifice for each other and to put in common what they possess.

The experience of friendship quickly shows that the greatest danger to friendship is that one would impose a demand of service or affection on the other, thus using the auspices of friendship to impose a selfish claim. Such a exigency of desire is directly opposed to the heart of friendship and in fact signals its destruction. The true law of friendship lies in liberality and gratuity, in respect and in the love of the freedom of the other as one's own freedom. A true friend would refuse, following the spontaneous movement of his sentiments, to make a demand a pretext of his friendship. Indeed a true friend would be prepared to deprive himself of his friend's presence, even for a long time, if that was what was needed for the good of the friendship. The most important thing for a true friend is to know of his friend's happiness, from which he draws his highest joy.

We have here an example drawn from the common experience of natural desire which, in powerfully and profoundly human terms, displays an internal refusal to exert any exigency upon the object of desire in the name of liberality and gratuity. This constitutes what we can call a natural law of friendship from which this desire proceeds. This is the paradox of friendship as true love: the cause of the most powerful and natural human desire is wholly opposed to the imposition of any exigency on its object. Such is the love that serves for St. Thomas as the basis of his definition of charity and establishes the connection of charity with the natural desire for the good, which forms the foundation of St. Thomas's moral theology.

If we proceed now to the relation between God and man, we discover an intensification of this natural paradox of love. To the extent that man discovers God as the source of all truth and goodness, he comes spontaneously to love him as the most desirous object of his love. From this love of friendship toward God proceeds a natural desire to know God in himself and to attain him as the cause of goodness and truth. Such is the natural desire to know the truth of God which St. Thomas places in the law of nature and as the ground of theological and philosophical exploration (cf. *ST* I–II, q. 94, a. 2).

However, and at the same time, such a love, because it seeks to love God for himself, refrains from every demand of desire that would seek to grasp God, which would attempt to place a restriction on God's liberality, on the gratuity of his giving, and especially on God's revelation of his intimate life. Is not the most significant betrayal of friendship to demand that one's friend reveal his personal secrets? The most serious sin of the spiritual life will likewise be to demand of God that he reveal and give himself—such would be an inconsiderate desire that would betray the friendship of God.

The Natural Love for God More than Self

In the case of desire for God, the refusal of exigency is stronger than in the case of normal friendship since, following St. Thomas, man naturally loves God more than himself (at least when his will is not corrupted by sin). St. Thomas writes: "Ideo etiam amore amicitiae naturaliter Deus ab homine plus seipso diligitur. Et quia caritas naturam perficit, ideo etiam secundum caritatem Deum supra seipsum homo diligit, et super omnia alia particularia bona."[6] When man knows God as the source of all truth and goodness, and when he recognizes this as something received from God through the creation of his being and the faculties of understanding and love, where he experiences himself before God as a part before the whole—as a being drawn from him, taken hold of by him, and ordered by him—then he is spontaneously inclined to love this divine whole more than himself (cf. *ST* I–II, q. 109, a. 3). Charity contributes to this natural love a direct participation in the love and beatitude of God himself, without changing the relation implied by this natural love. Hereby, natural love is renewed in the sinful heart of man, where it is fortified and developed by its proper virtue, that of hope. The imposition of demands and the hoarding of divine gifts will thus be counted among the most sever transgressions contrary to the right intention and spontaneity of charity.

In conclusion, the natural desire to see God—which is rooted in the natural love of friendship for God and is fulfilled in the beatific vision of God in supernatural terms—is proper to the nature of spiritual beings. Because this desire proceeds from the intellect (which seeks to know God in himself, in all truth) and from the will (which tends already to love God in himself in all purity) this desire naturally contains within itself a refusal to assert an exigency by which it could itself reach God. Within the natural desire to see God, therefore, there is inscribed a refusal to breach the liberality, gratuity, and supernatural character of the gifts of God.

The Hypothesis of Pure Nature

Now if we insist on considering man in a hypothetical state in which he is placed in the world by God in a state of pure nature, where he is not accorded the promise of vision, then we must say that whatever happiness man could find would be imperfect yet real. In this state man's knowledge and love of God would be developed according to his natural powers. Happiness for man in this state would have been composed of the orientation of man's being and his faculties toward God, as he is

[6] III *Sent.*, d. 29, q. 1, a. 3: "By love of friendship man also naturally loves God more than himself. And since charity perfects nature, therefore by charity also man loves God more than himself and all other particular goods."

known through creation as the source of perfection, truth, goodness, and happiness beyond all things. In this state God would be loved with a love that reverently respected his divine superiority, balancing the desire to know with an indiscretion that would avoid the imposition of any claim or demand. Thus man would love God as a friend who finds his true joy in beholding the superiority of this friend without any jealousy.

Is not this desire, which is full of a reverent respect, precisely what theology calls filial fear?—that which subsists at the heart of charity?

We can add that his reverent respect is rooted in love of friendship, and so is also the surest way of evoking the freedom of the divine initiative. In any case, this is the appropriate disposition of man as he stands before the grace of God. This is, in fact, the nub of the ongoing debate concerning natural desire: the attitude of man must be conformed to his true nature before the divine initiative.

Natural Desire and Hope

When desire forms the basis of love it tends to be transformed into hope. This passage from desire to hope raises a particular question. St. Thomas expresses the difference between desire and hope in terms of their object. Desire has for its object *bonum futurum*, a future good that attracts us simply because it appears as a good and brings pleasure. Hope has for its object *bonum arduum*, an arduous good that is difficult to attain. The object of hope is one from which we are separated by a great distance, a distance which makes us simultaneously afraid that we will not be able to achieve it, while at the same time spurring us on with the effort required to achieve it. In other words, hope adds to desire a judgment on the possibility of attaining a good desired, according to the means and strength that we have at our disposal to attain to it. Desire is broader than hope, for we can desire many things that we do not hope to achieve; desires are often thwarted because we do not recognize any possibility of achieving a particular object. For a long time men desired to voyage to the moon, for example, but they did not hope to go there until man discovered the means of rocketing into space, opening up the possibility of realizing this ancient dream. Then the desire, molded by hope, became active, directing the research and efforts of scientists and technicians.

At the same time, between natural desire and the hope of seeing God there arises the issue of the active possibility of man's attainment. This is the question: *Utrum homo per sua naturalia possit acquirere beatitudinem perfectam*? Can man by his natural powers attain perfect happiness? (cf. *ST* I–II, q. 5, a. 5). St. Thomas responds in conformity with all of Christian theology that neither can man nor any creature attain, by his own natural

power, the fullness of the blessedness that resides in the vision of God. Only a special help, of a unique kind—the grace we call the "light of glory" in the hereafter—permits the beatific vision. This is why the vision and the whole order of grace, with the virtues and gifts that accompany them, can be properly called supernatural.

The natural desire for God does not therefore become a hope until man has received a positive response to the question of attaining that vision, a response that can come from God alone: the promises revealed in the divine initiative of the call of man to this vision and the means of achieving this by the access granted through faith. This is why, each time God speaks to man, from Abraham to Jesus, he begins with a promise that awakens hope. More precisely, the promises of God are promises of happiness that correspond to the desires of man: the desire to have a son, to be the father of many nations, etc. Wherever these promises are revealed, they are revealed by a certain infinite and eternal dimension (descendents more numerous than the stars of the sky, a blessing to all nations, forever . . .), indicating that they exceed man and all that he can accomplish, and thus they can only be accomplished by the power of God through the faith and hope that is in man.

When a desire is for something impossible, it withdraws into itself and becomes merely latent (unless, perhaps, it is redirected to another object). Apart from the promises of God, the desire to see God in man would become atrophied by awareness of the abyss that separates the creature from the creator, an abyss man cannot cross by his own power. But if God has made himself manifest in his works and is thus understood by man, then we must say that he has manifested himself at once as the most "arduous" of all things to attain, the most distant and beyond the reach of man and all of his faculties; while at the same time, God's manifestation of himself entails the revelation that this great obstacle to man's desire is not to be experienced by man as a misfortune or injustice (at least not in the state of primitive righteousness). Within man this desire for God refrains itself from exigency, retaining a spontaneous and reverent respect for God rooted in the natural love with which we are made to love God as the God who is beyond us, who is an inaccessible mystery. At this point of demurring before God we experience a very pure joy that could, in principle, constitute a real bliss, though imperfect compared to the vision of God.

What we have said here applies just as much to the present economy of man as it does to the apparent state of pure nature (which of course never existed). Every Christian can discover such a movement and feeling in himself: there, where charity gives us impetus and power, the ability to both desire and hope.

Conclusion

This then is the answer I propose to the question as to whether there is in man a natural desire to see God. How does this desire in man not entail the imposition of a demand upon God? How does it not compromise the supernatural gratuity of the vision of God? On our view, this desire, which proceeds from the spiritual nature of man, must be studied in terms of what is proper to it, and thus in terms different from those of other natural desires such as hunger, thirst, etc. Primarily this desire is related to the love that causes it and to the hope that is born of it. The decisive point, therefore, is to show how love of friendship—which is proper to the spiritual nature of man and is itself deepened in friendship and in love—occurs within a desire of reverent respect for God, which tends toward God as toward a higher good, but also as toward a friend. Thus this desire for God entails a spontaneous self-denial and refusal to place any claim on God in the form of a demand that would diminish God's freedom in the gift of vision—just as a friend loves and respects the freedom and intimate life of his friend. Such is the natural desire for God which serves as the basis of the action of grace and which is perfected through the arousal of hope by means of the promises of God who calls the faithful to vision and guarantees the spiritual help necessary to attain that vision. This natural desire does not disappear when the theological virtues are formed in us; on the contrary, it unfolds, is strengthened, and is enlivened to the extent that the supernatural virtues come to invade the conscience and dominate the other desires of nature—though the manner of this dominion is gentle and discreet, and respectful of the freedom granted to us.

A certain sensitivity to experiences both Christian and human seems therefore necessary to arrive at the association and complementarity integral to the natural desire for God, which is at once born of the love of friendship we have for God and born of the charity into which we are caught up by God. There is therefore a double movement of complementarity within natural desire—a complementarity that will of course seem contradictory to the logic of abstract reason: the more vigorous the desire for happiness, the more it refuses to impose itself in the form of an exigency on God, who is the object of this desire. In this way, man's natural desire to see God is more natural in its origin (in the sense that "natural" signifies above all for St. Thomas spontaneity and harmony), while at the same time it is more supernatural in its object. The gratuity of the divine gift is guaranteed not only from the side of God by his transcendence, but also from the side of man, by his "friendly" nature, his capacity to love God in and for himself.

Response to a Last Objection

We will perhaps be reproached for having made as the basis of our response a domain that could be described as "psychological," or that yields to the order of affectivity and feelings, or again, for rooting our response in terms that are moral. Theologians, it is supposed, ought rather to seek to ground their observations in the order of metaphysics (or whatever takes the place of metaphysics in the thought of their time).

This criticism is, however, in our view, too much influenced by a rationalism that would separate metaphysics (the order of reason), from affectivity, morality, etc. If, following the scholastic adage, *agere sequitur esse*, then the being of man reveals itself in his acts as the tree is known by its fruit. But the principle of action is constituted in us by the interior acts of love, desire, hope, knowledge, etc., which are not feelings, but rather manifestations of the commitments of our innermost being. So it is in moral action, jointly governed by knowledge and affectivity, that we see at work and discern what might be called the metaphysics of man, the spiritual nature proper to him.

In particular, it is advisable to take into account the new sense of friendship that is operative as a key theme of philosophy and theology from the time of the Greeks to St. Thomas. This new sense of friendship was unfortunately neglected by subsequent modern theologians. Friendship, taken as a superior form of love, reveals the proper nature of man: his capacity to know and love the other as himself and for himself, and so to establish between himself and the other an equilibrium, a union of mutual reciprocity of desire and sentiment, which cannot be found elsewhere. This leads us to define man as a being capable of friendship (which equally makes him capable of enmity and hatred). This is also, beneath and beyond desire, the primordial sentiment that unites man with God and makes him a being capable of entering into friendship with God, thus giving charity its natural foundation.

When Understanding Seeks Faith: Does Religion Offer Resources for the Renewal of Contemporary Rationality?

ANSELM RAMELOW, O.P.
Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology
Berkeley, California

I

CAN FAITH be reasonable? Can reason be faith-full? The question of faith and reason and how they are related is a question that is fundamental to Christianity throughout its history. It emerges within each epoch in new forms and shapes. One could write an entire history of Christianity merely along these lines.

A prominent debate in our own times illustrates this well: the debate between evolutionary theory on the one hand,[1] and the various theories of intelligent design[2] or "creationism" on the other. Secular reason in the form of modern science seems at odds with Christian faith with regard to the origin of the world, especially within the realm of biology, but also within anthropology, that is, in the understanding of our very selves, our bodies, brains, and behaviors. It remains to be seen whether both sides are mortal enemies or whether bridges can be built. Where the fight is fiercest, we can hear the age-old themes of the irreconcilability of faith and reason re-emerge: there is the secularist rejection of faith by reason as "superstition," as well as the fundamentalist rejection of reason by faith as "work of the devil." Most Christians, though, might have settled for the

[1] Prominently and polemically represented by the "new atheism" of Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), and Daniel Dennett, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (New York: Viking Press, 2006).

[2] For intelligent design, cf. especially Michael J. Behe, *The Edge of Evolution* (New York: Free Press, 2007).

idea of "double truth": one thing as true within science, the contrary as true within faith. This kind of schizophrenia or compartmentalization is itself irrational, a form of thoughtlessness. It is only plausible until we reflect on the relationship between these two allegedly separate realms of truth and acknowledge that we cannot rationally understand how they can coexist.

How, then, *do* we understand their relationship? In the reflections that follow, I would like to suggest a brief answer to this problem, for I believe that understanding the relationship between faith and reason can also provide us with a deeper understanding of reason itself and how it is intrinsically open to faith.

Generally speaking, the debate between evolutionary theory and intelligent design is framed by the question of whether there are features within the world of biology that cannot be the work of chance, but must be the outcome of an intelligent source that has intentionally designed them. There seem to be cases in which a process of random mutation and survival of the fittest could not possibly account for the arrangement of features in certain organisms. But evolutionary theory appeals to a course of development that is completed only over a long period of time (millions of years), a time in which any necessary mutations could plausibly occur. In addition, proponents of a pure evolution theory rightly object that intelligent design can never be proven, for tomorrow science may discover unexpected mechanisms responsible for these features.[3] Framed in this way, the debate can indeed lead nowhere, since it would depend on empirical research that is potentially never ending.

This picture changes if we widen its frame to include the hidden presupposition on both sides of the issue: evolution theory as well as intelligent design theory focus almost exclusively on the laws of biology, yet biological laws presuppose those of *physics*. The laws of physics, like those of gravity, of the acceleration of objects in a free fall, or even of the merely statistical probabilities in quantum mechanics, are universal laws that are applicable everywhere in the universe at all times; they can be formulated with mathematical certainty and allow for the prediction of certain events. When evolutionary biology speaks about random mutations, characterizing biological features as the outcome of mere chance, they do not intend to question the laws of physics in the name of chance

[3] We might say with Cardinal Avery Dulles ("God and Evolution," *First Things*, October 2007: 19–24): "As a matter of policy, it is imprudent to build one's case for faith on what science has not yet explained, because tomorrow it may be able to explain what it cannot explain today. History teaches us that the 'God of the gaps' often proves to be an illusion."

as well. Even the purportedly random mutations in the genome are the result of physical causalities. To question the laws of physics would be considered unscientific and irrational by virtually anyone. They are the most advanced expression of secular rationality we have; our modern technology is based on them.

But where do these laws come from? Laws, including physical laws, are forms of order and regularity. They render reality intelligible and rationally comprehensible rather than irrational and chaotic. While theories of intelligent design claim to see the hand of God in certain biological features, these theories commonly miss the fact that the much more unquestioned feature of *physical* regularity needs an explanation as well. This explanation cannot also be the outcome of randomness or chance. Regularity must be presupposed by chance; chance as such is possible only on the background of a regularity which it interrupts, otherwise the very term "chance" would be meaningless.[4] We are left, then, with a pressing question: Who told nature to behave this way? Why does nature "obey" the laws of physics? Is not *this* the primary feature that cries out for an intelligent designer? Order itself cannot be the outcome of chance, for chance requires order, and order requires a cause, while chance and chaos do not, since they are just the absence of order.[5]

We all know this instinctively. Let us consider a simple example:

Imagine you are hiking somewhere in the mountains. At some point, you see to the right of the trail two bottles of beer, three cigarette butts, and an old suitcase. Your first reaction would likely be: "How disgusting! Who would litter this beautiful mountainside!" But you continue on your hike. A mile later, you come across a similar scene: two bottles of beer, three cigarette butts, and an old suitcase. At this point, you might say: "What a coincidence that the same kinds of things should appear again in the same configuration! What are the chances of that?" Another mile later, you look to the right, and—lo and behold!—once again there are two bottles of beer, three cigarette butts, and an old suitcase. By now you are likely to think, "This cannot be an accident! Someone must be doing this *intentionally*!"

So you progress from disgust to a sense of wonderment over mere chance to an assumption of intentional arrangement. And this assumption

[4] Chance is the privation of regularity. Exceptions *as such* prove the rule. Furthermore, chance is not a positive reality in its own right, hence it does not cause anything. Chance can be a "cause" only in the sense that other causalities intersect "by chance" (which is itself a metaphorical expression). But for there to be chance, there must already be intelligible structures of causality having a certain regularity, which make possible the intersection of causes occurring "by chance."

[5] Nothing can come from nothing; but nothing (absence) *can* come from nothing.

of intentional arrangement will increase with every time you come across the scenario. Why? Because there is increasing regularity, and we instinctively know that regularity requires a cause. We do not, for instance, look for a cause for the way trees are arranged along the trail on the mountainside, precisely because they are standing there irregularly; it would not occur to us to ask for a cause in such a case, since irregularity and chaos do not require a cause; they indicate, rather, the absence of a cause. But if there were trees standing in a perfect row, we would naturally assume that someone arranged them.

If we take this to the level of a regularity that applies to the whole of reality, the entire cosmos, then the cause of this regularity cannot again be *in* the cosmos. It cannot be just one cause among others, since such a cause orders all inner-worldly causes among one another. Only an ultimate cause could account for the regularity among causes, and that is what we call God.[6]

If this is so, then it is precisely the science that, since the time of Galileo, seemed to undermine faith with its mathematical laws of nature, which implies a God who orders the universe. Without God, science would lose its subject matter: an intelligible structure of the universe that can be investigated through observation and experiment. Without God there would be nothing to know, no laws to discover, no cosmos, only chaos. The early physicists understood this. Newton, Leibniz, Kepler, and almost every other physicist of note in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries believed in intelligent design in this sense. Even many modern-day physicists, unlike many biologists, still marvel at the order of the universe, even though they might not ask further questions about the ultimate origin of this order. Without intelligent design, therefore, there is no intelligibility to reality. It is something that can merely be assumed, but without any reasonable foundation.

Another assumption surrounding modern science is that the simplest and most economical explanation of nature is the best. When Galileo

[6] This argument does not reproduce "Paley's watch." It does not argue from purposivity but from regularity, albeit any kind of regularity may ultimately imply purposivity, as Thomas Aquinas holds in his *Fifth Way*. In this strong sense, even efficient causality would not be intelligible without final causality. Similarly, E. Stein and E. Husserl find mechanical causality intelligible only as an abstraction from motivation, from which it would remain derivative (for example, R. Bernet/I. Kern/E. Marbach, *Edmund Husserl* [Hamburg: Meiner, 1996], 153). Hobbes, Spinoza, and others had proposed inertia as a non-teleological principle, but also as a form of self-preservation (which is a teleological principle). See Hobbes, *De Corpore*, VIII, 19 and *Leviathan*, II.

proposed his new system, for instance, it promised to explain the movements of the heavens by laws that were simpler than those of the old Ptolemaic system used during the middle ages. The old explanation seemed outdated, because it was uneconomic. But why should economy be an argument for or against a scientific theory? The old Aristotelian system accounted for the movements of the heavens just as much as the new one did. It made reasonably accurate predictions. Why would we assume that the simpler explanation is the truer or better one? This is merely an assumption, as Immanuel Kant acknowledged.[7] But this assumption is rooted in the idea of an *intelligent design* in the universe. We instinctively believe that there is not only someone who designed the universe, but also one who is supremely knowing and wise, arranging things in the best possible and most efficient manner. As we have said, philosophers and scientists in the seventeenth century still actively held this belief and explained Newton's laws of mechanics accordingly.[8] It is only on the basis of such a belief that the assumption that the simpler explanation is the better, that is, truer, explanation can be justified.[9]

In fact, the very idea that the universe is governed by a universal set of physical laws *in its entirety* is also an assumption. Newton did not intend

[7] Cf. Kant on the regulative use of the ideas of pure reason (*Vernunft*) in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, B670/A642–B696/A668. For "Ockham's razor" cf. B680/A652; teleological principles and the systematic unity of the whole of reality are also discussed in B704/A676–B732/A704. Similarly, R. Swinburne has pointed out that this is a metaphysical presupposition of science; cf. R. Swinburne, *Simplicity as Evidence of Truth* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1997).

[8] For example, N. Malebranche, *Recherches de la Verité, Eclaircissement sur chap. IV de la 2e partie de la Méthode*. Cf. also L. Scheffczyk, *Schöpfung und Vorsehung* (= Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte III, 2a) (Freiburg: Herder, 1963), 190.

[9] This argument does not apply to those scientists who actually *deny* that there is any order in the universe. Nietzsche had done so, indicating (as Rorty would later do) that the belief in the intelligibility of the universe presupposes the existence of God (which was indeed the way Descartes had argued for the intelligibility of the universe, as we will see), rather than the other way around, thus making the same point in reverse. If there is no intelligible structure to reality, however, then scientists would not explore and *discover* an order to the universe, only *impose* one on it; in such a case, the use of simpler hypotheses could be justified only for *pragmatic* reasons (that is, they are easier to manipulate). My argument here is not with this position. It should be noted, however, that this pragmatist approach cannot explain the success of some hypotheses and the failure of others. In fact, *all* hypotheses are errors, some being useful and others not—why is this the case? An unorganized reality would have no structure that could agree or disagree with a scientist's construction. Purely pragmatic premises could support no intelligible notion of truth as agreement of theory and reality. After all, the very notion of a mind-independent reality, a "thing in itself" (even if unknowable) or a "true

his laws to explain only what might occur in London, or in Europe, or even on the earth as a whole, but the movement of all the stars (including those stars that cannot even be seen), that is, to account for movement universally. But how could one ever prove a theory's universal applicability? We might say, of course, that we now know that everything began with the big bang. Since everything comes from one source, everything must behave uniformly. But how can we be sure of that? If the big bang is true, it is something we know of only because we have already presupposed that everything behaves uniformly and in the same way, in obedience to the same set of physical laws (for instance, that there is a constant rate of expansion of the universe away from a central point in an intelligible pattern), so that we are able to extrapolate back to this big bang. This is the *only* possible access we have to such an event.

But more fundamentally, any claim that reality is governed by universal laws of motion must remain simply a claim. No laboratory experiment can prove it; no empirical observation of reality can provide evidence for it. *As a matter of principle*, experiment and observation only provide *samples* of reality, never reality as a whole. A leap from examples to universal laws remains to be made. It is a leap of *faith*.

It is evident, then, that secular reason and science depend on a faith of some sort. This faith need not be of a revealed sort, nor a faith in God's self-communication through Jesus of Nazareth, nor a faith in the divine inspiration of the Bible. But there must be some kind of faith in the source of the universe as intelligent, almighty, and eternally reliable. Richard Dawkins and the new atheists will cringe at this. But there can be no escape from the conclusion.

Even if scientific inquiry entails a kind of faith, it is a faith reason can discover on its own; no special revelation is required, for it is implicated in reason's own procedures. This discovery, in fact, is tantamount to a liberation of reason from the limits imposed by modern secularist ideology. Modern distortions of reason have their root particularly in the eighteenth-

world," presupposes or anticipates a view from nowhere, that is, God's view. The purely logical consequence of this view is solipsism. It is no coincidence that Hume not only denies strict laws of nature, but claims that "we really never advance a step beyond ourselves." *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: 1987), bk. I, part II, sect. VI. Conversely, Descartes must prove the existence of God in order to show that there is something more than the *cogito*; the very thought of ourselves as finite is only intelligible against the horizon of the infinite (that is, solipsism cannot even be thought without God). These arguments have been developed especially by R. Spaemann; cf., for example, R. Spaemann, "Gottesbeweise nach Nietzsche," in *Das unsterbliche Gerücht* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2007), 37–53.

century Enlightenment, which denied that the world beyond the senses was open to rational investigation. Though it was possible to formulate laws for observable nature, no meaningful inquiry could be made into their origin or the reason for their applicability to the material world. This use of reason was driven in many ways by polemics against the Church or revealed religion of any kind. Belief in revealed religion was often caricatured as fanaticism or superstition (not unlike today); political consequences during this time (that is, during the French Revolution) therefore included not only the king and aristocracy being sent to the block, but clergy and religious as well.[10]

What becomes evident politically is the oppressive aspect of this severely limited Enlightenment reasoning, that is, its one-sidedness. Other cultural expressions of the time (for example, the rebellion of the darkness within the human subconscious) witness to this: Francisco Goya's drawings of the *Dream of Reason Which Gives Birth to Monsters* or his drawings from the terrors of the war in Spain, or Sarastro's relationship with the "Queen of the Night" in Mozart's *Magic Flute*.[11] In excluding its other half, Enlightenment reason itself becomes irrational. Adorno and Horkheimer see this as the very logic of totalitarianism, which they have called the "Dialectic of the Enlightenment": Enlightenment reason, in its attempt to subject nature to human control and thereby liberate the human person, becomes a merely *instrumental* reason. Such reason is driven by the very powers of nature it attempted to subject, namely fear, power, and the anxiety over prospects for survival. Progress thus becomes destructive and oppressive of its very subject.[12]

The one-sidedness of enlightenment reason is revealed not only in the political exclusion of certain segments of the population, or of contributions of certain "non-rational" parts of the human psyche in human life, but above all in the exclusion of *faith* from the realm of reason—as if it were an enemy rather than an ally.

As a further consequence, faith is consistently seen as irrational. In this light, conversion seems arbitrary. As Alasdair MacIntyre tells it, St. Edith Stein hoped that her philosopher colleagues would understand that her

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[10] The development of this form of thought has been described in Jonathan Israel's *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[11] Robert Spaemann once suggested that the best resolution to the *Magic Flute* would be for Sarastro to marry the Queen of the Night. Cf. R. Spaemann, "Ende der Modernität?" in *Philosophische Essays* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1994), 259–60.

[12] M. Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (1947) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

conversion to Catholicism was not a move toward the irrational.[13] Embracing God's revelation in Jesus Christ is certainly an act of faith. The content of faith cannot be deduced from reason, that is, demonstrated like 2 + 2 = 4, but involves the decision or free assent of a believer. It also involves a freely given grace, which reason cannot presume to receive, and a revelation which God freely chooses to give, for on its own reason could never have predicted that God would take up our human nature in the Incarnation.[14] God's free decision to do so could not have been deduced or predicted by reason. These three decisions, God's decision to reveal himself and save us, his decision to give us the grace to believe in this revelation, and our decision to assent to this grace of faith, are beyond human rationality's ability to foresee.

But this does not make conversion irrational. Such a position would necessarily imply that any manifestation of free will would be essentially irrational and unreasonable. Stein was able to point out that faith, although it cannot be deduced from reason, is *not outside* the boundaries of reason, nor contrary to it. Faith itself can and should be a philosophical topic. Reason in fact would be unreasonable if it should exclude anything from possible consideration. "If faith makes accessible truth unattainable by any other means, philosophy . . . cannot forego them without renouncing its universal claim to truth."[15] As rational, philosophy is universal and all-encompassing. It is the form of thought that explores the ultimate and universal intelligibility of all reality. But faith, too, is an exploration of reality's intelligibility, for faith likewise proposes an explanation of the ultimate ground of all reality, for example, when it speaks of the creation of the cosmos. It gives an account of the intelligibility of the world, even of rationality itself! Without replacing reason's principles, it suggests to reason something about its own origins. How could philosophy remain true to itself while ignoring what faith has to say? And how could reason exclude faith if it is part of the reality it proposes to explain?

Edith Stein has made the astute observation that Enlightenment reason commits itself to a paradox if, with Kant, it seeks to determine its

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[13] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue: 1913–1922* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 179–81.

[14] Whether the Incarnation would have happened even without Adam's sin depends on God's will, and therefore can be known only by revelation: "Ea enim quae ex sola Dei voluntate proveniunt, supra omne debitum creaturae, nobis innotescere non possunt nisi quatenus in sacra Scriptura traduntur, per quam divina voluntas innotescit." Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* III, q. 1, a. 3.

[15] MacIntyre, *Edith Stein*, 180 (MacIntyre quoting Stein).

own limitations *a priori*. In order to know a limit, we must already be on both sides of a boundary; that is, we must have already exceeded it. Reason transgresses its own limits in the very act of determining them. Though this had already been argued by Hegel, Stein's counterargument is not a Hegelian absolutizing of reason, but the suggestion that reason needs an Other with which it can dialogue. This is faith. Only in the light of faith can reason know its limits, since it is, at the same time, being elevated to further horizons.[16]

Our considerations of intelligent design have shown how reason becomes narrow, superficial, and ultimately unreasonable if it is isolated from questions of faith. Nothing in evolutionary theory as such need exclude the idea of an intelligent ordering of the world; in fact, this theory must presuppose such an order, at least on the physical level. Biological thinking, then, is intrinsically susceptible to a religious interpretation insofar as it is concerned with articulating an order within reality, an order that does not rule out chance occurrence on the biological level. Scientific reason is by its own nature geared towards these questions. Reason itself demands liberation from the self-imposed shackles of the Enlightenment. The struggle, therefore, is not between faith and reason, but between two understandings of reason: one that is open to faith, and another which has narrowed itself so as to become hostile to faith. Such narrowness ultimately makes reason irrational, since it lacks any understanding of its own nature.

II

Obviously, a rationalistic opposition to faith will not only have problems with Christianity, but with any kind of faith. It excludes the possibility of any rational discussion about God, should he exist at all. Nations and secular institutions based on this exclusion will naturally have difficulty finding a place for the faiths and religions espoused by members of their own populations. God and religion would necessarily be relegated to a purely private sphere or the sacristy. If reason does not apply to matters of religion, then religion must be merely a matter of sentiment or a matter of the heart. And it had better stay there, and not venture to shape speech or action. Reason, after all, is the sphere of universality, of public discourse, and something common to all human beings, while feelings are private and particular, like personal taste. And, as we know, it is useless to argue about taste—whether spinach tastes good or not, for example. So likewise religion has to be kept out of the realm of public reasoning. Were

[16] Ibid., 179.

faith to really answer to such a description, it would either evaporate into nothing, or it would indeed be a blind, emotionally-driven fanaticism. This, the Enlightenment's understanding of faith, produces a split between the modern secular state and religion, giving rise to an antagonism marked by persecution and terrorism. The culmination of such thinking is the violent, anti-clerical acts of the French Revolution, or the modern secularist tendency to eliminate all trace of religion from the public sphere. It will in turn push religions out of the sphere of public reasoning that would allow them to develop an appropriate reasonable self-understanding, thus provoking non-rational reactions of violence.

Since more substantial commitments fall outside of its field of vision, the only common denominator for this narrow kind of reason is modern technology. As Carl Schmitt put it at the beginning of the 1920s, Lenin and the capitalist actually have a common goal: the electrification of the planet.[17] They can both agree on technology. What was true then is true now: Al Qaeda and the C.I.A. can both agree on the importance of computer technology. It is the lowest common denominator, the means to mutually assured destruction.[18]

But just as purely secularist reason is not neutral, but itself a position among others (that is, a particular form of one-sided reason or ideology), so too the expulsion of religion from the public sphere is not a neutral position. Allowing no hint of God in the public sphere is tantamount to declaring God dead. An atheist faith is proclaimed through silence and absence. If, on the other hand, God exists, it would be shown by the lives of believing peoples. Atheism is not a neutral position, nor is religious fanaticism the only alternative; rather, a public square is needed in which religious discourse and symbolism are permitted, so that belief might be tested and purified by reason and dialogue.[19] As it is, however, the modern secular West has no way of speaking with the great religious

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[17] Without endorsing C. Schmitt's later political aberrations, one can appreciate this insight in his earlier work, *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form* (1925) (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), 22.

[18] I am using the "C.I.A." as a *chiffre* for the military power of the secular West. It is meant to highlight a constellation of issues, not to morally evaluate what otherwise might be a legitimate set of concerns and strategies.

[19] Here Habermas's demand that religion should translate its beliefs into the public realm of reason is legitimate, closely paralleling the emphasis that J. Ratzinger has placed on the inherent rationality of Christianity. Cf. J. Ratzinger and J. Habermas, *The Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006). The limit to this translation would be the "life-worldly" roots of faith (Habermas) and the contingent premises of faith-statements which, although not *contra rationem*, remain *supra rationem*.

traditions or of facilitating their conversations among each other. But if there is no rational way of communicating about what most deeply moves us, then relationships among different communities of belief will increasingly move from questions of truth to questions of power, to mere rhetoric and, ultimately, violence.[20] Only a form of reason that has not degenerated into mere technological thinking can help to prevent this.

III

This, however, is not just a challenge to the secularist West, but also to the world's great religions, Muslims, Jews, and Christians alike. If religions refuse to engage the state and each other in rational dialogue, then they are as responsible for the developing disaster as purely secularist distortions of reason.

Whether Muslims are ready to participate in thoughtful dialogue, however, is a controversial question. Pope Benedict XVI was attacked for referring to the dialogue between the Emperor Emmanuel and a Muslim from the fourteenth century, and for quoting a French Islamologist who presented Islam as a belief in a God who is beyond rationality and even free from obligations to his own promises.[21] That the Holy Father had also pointed to similar developments within Christianity (not just in modern day fundamentalism, but much earlier, within the Catholic Christianity of the late medieval period) had been lost on most of his listeners. These developments actually *preceded* the emergence of modern secularist thought: before reason excluded faith from itself in the period of the Enlightenment, faith had excluded reason from itself in late medieval Nominalism.

Fourteenth-century thinkers like Duns Scotus or William of Ockham limited reason's access to God, deriving human knowledge of God increasingly from revealed matters of faith alone. Though there is still a rational knowledge of God for Scotus, it is severely limited: by reason alone we cannot know God's omnipresence, justice, omnipotence, or providence.[22] Ockham denied that reason could really manifest God in any genuine sense. As a Nominalist, he denied the existence of universal structures that make reality intelligible and indicate an intelligent designer; there are no ideas in God to correspond to what he has created. There is no teleological principle in the structure of the cosmos to reveal God as its ultimate goal;[23] not even the principle of causality can give the world any

[20] Nietzsche said it first and perhaps most clearly; modern versions, such as Rorty's, are less forceful and do not acknowledge the inherent potential for violence.

[21] Cf. Pope Benedict XVI's Regensburg address.

[22] Cf., for example, Scotus, *De primo principio* 4, 86.

[23] Ockham, *Quodlibet* IV, 1 and 2.

predictability or general order.[24] God only creates individual things, and his omnipotence and choice are only limited by the principle of non-contradiction—which, in Ockham's analyses, is not much of a limitation at all. Everything is viewed by Ockham through the lens of God's omnipotence; and curiously, even this omnipotence can be known only by faith, not by unaided reason.[25] Thus human reason cannot reach God, but can only know what is found empirically before it. By its factual existence, we know that the world was made by God in this particular and contingent way, but this alone tells us nothing about God himself. Our only access to God is through faith, not reason, since reason is limited to factual observance of particular individuals as God has made them. In this respect the Enlightenment's position (in the form that Kant gave it, for instance) existed long before the Enlightenment. The position of the late medieval Nominalists, however, was not motivated by a secularist rejection of faith, but by a pious theological consideration: God is completely free and omnipotent, able to create and change the order of all that exists as he wishes.

This includes not only the laws of nature, but also the laws of morality. For Scotus, for instance, everything other than God is good only because God has willed it so, and not vice versa.[26] In his *potentia absoluta* God could have made the second tablet of the Decalogue entirely different, although he could not change the first tablet that commands us to love him.[27] For Ockham, however, God could even have written a moral law into our hearts that commands us to hate him—and could still do so today.[28] He is not bound by his own commandments, promises, or covenants. This position indeed resembles that kind of Islamic theology that has been quoted by Pope Benedict XVI in his Regensburg address.

Thus, whatever we encounter in observable reality—or even in our hearts—could have been otherwise. It therefore can reveal nothing to us

[24] Ockham, II *Quaestiones in librum secundum sententiarum*, qq. 4 and 5. The articles of faith will appear false especially to people of wisdom: "[A]rticuli fidei nec sunt principia demonstrationis nec conclusiones, nec sunt probabiles, quia omnibus uel pluribus uel maxime sapientibus apparent falsi. Et hoc accipiendo sapientes pro sapientibus mundi et praecise innitentibus rationi naturali, quia illo modo accipitur 'sapiens' in descriptione probabilis." *Summa Logicae*, 3–1.01 *De divisionibus et definitionibus syllogismorum*. For Ockham, even the unicity of God, his infinity, eternity, his power to create *creatio ex nihilo*, and his knowledge of things other than himself are mere matters of faith, not knowledge and reason.

[25] Ockham, II *Quaestiones in librum secundum sententiarum*, d. 1, q. 4 and *Quodlibet*. I, 1; VI, 6.

[26] Scotus, *Ordinatio* III, d. 19, q. un. n. 7.

[27] Scotus, *Ordinatio* I, d. 44, n. 6 and *Reportatio* IV, d. 46, q. 4.

[28] Ockham, IV *Quaestiones in librum secundum sententiarum*, d. 1, qq. 10–11 and 16.

about God himself, except that he has decided that things should be thus and so. It shows us God's decision, but not God himself. God becomes a *Deus absconditus*, a hidden God who disappears behind purely arbitrary decisions.[29] God begins to resemble an absolutist ruler or tyrant who does not appear in public, whose unpredictable or arbitrary whims paralyze his subjects with fear and trembling.[30]

This kind of thinking is still active in the seventeenth-century philosophy of René Descartes and, with him, all of early modern science and secular humanism.[31] For Descartes, mathematical models of nature correspond to God's arbitrary choice of this particular order for nature and for reason itself. God could have wired our minds and ordered nature in a completely different way.[32] He could have made it possible for us to think 2 + 2 = 5 clearly and distinctly, that is, in such a way that it would be true.[33] For Descartes, as for Ockham, nature and reason cannot tell us

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[29] While early Christianity had understood itself as *vera philosophia*, displaying an optimistic understanding of the use of reason, it has now arrived at the very opposite end of the spectrum; both sides, however, can claim roots in the very essence of Christianity.

[30] Not untypically these kinds of theologies tend to unite with authoritarian forms of government.

[31] Cf. A. Ramelow, "Truth Makers: On Robert Miner's Genealogy of the Genealogists," *Nova et Vetera* 5:3 (2007): 647–706, esp. 658–62 and 682–89. If the Protestant Reformation is skeptical about the use of philosophy and human reason, then this may stem from the same late medieval roots. While these roots are controverted (cf., for example, Thomas M. Osborne, "Faith, Philosophy, and the Nominalist Background to Luther's Defense of the Real Presence," *The Journal of the History of Ideas* 63 [2002]: 63–82), it might be possible to show that modern day fundamentalism's creationism and the science that it is rejecting share the same Nominalist roots.

[32] Generally speaking, God's will is immutable (this might not be the case for Ockham), God choosing once and for all from eternity. He is, however, completely indifferent regarding what he chooses. (Cf. C. Cunning, "Descartes on the Immutability of the Divine Will," *Religious Studies* 39:1 [2003]: 79–92). "And even if God has willed that some truths should be necessary, this does not mean that he willed them necessarily; for it is one thing to will that they be necessary, and quite another to will this necessarily, or to be necessitated to will it." Descartes, letter to Mesland, 2 May 1644, in *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. Ch. Adam and P. Tannery (Paris: J. Vrin, 1904), 4:118–19; *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. J. Cottingham, ed. R. Stoothoff and D. Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 235.

[33] "You ask me by what kind of causality God established the eternal truths. I reply: by the same kind of causality as he created all things, that is to say, as their efficient and total cause." Descartes, letter to Mersenne, 27 May 1630, *Oeuvres* 1:152, *Philosophical Writings*, 25. "You ask what necessitated God to create these truths; and I reply that he was free to make it not true that all the radii of the circle are

much about God. At the most, we know only the infinite perfection of a God who is not a deceiver (*genius malignus*). This knowledge, of course, depends on our having "clear and distinct ideas," while the truth of these ideas is derived from God's decisions. This is sufficient for Descartes's purposes, however, for in his philosophy God's only role is to bridge the gap between subject and object: he guarantees that we are wired with the same mathematical ideas as those which truly apply to actual objects in nature.[34] But neither kind of "wiring" tells us anything more about God than that he chose this particular "program." Our reasoning is shut off from God, who is then given no further thought.

In other words, a God who is an arbitrary tyrant eliminates himself from the picture. Nevertheless, as soon as this kind of reasoning grasps its full implications and its own operative motives, it will become aware that at the root of its thought is this deep seated belief: God is an arbitrary tyrant, not a trustworthy father. This way of thinking, in the words of Descartes (although he himself does not want this to be his last word on God), holds God to be something like a *genius malignus*, an evil spirit, and that this is the truth about reality at large. We are, therefore, and will always be like slaves who do not know what their master is doing, rather than children in communion with their loving father. This distorted image is the deepest root of an underlying despair in our age.[35] It moti-

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equal—just as free as he was not to create the world. And it is certain that these truths are no more necessarily attached to his essence than are other created things." Ibid. "God cannot have been determined to make it true that contradictories cannot be true together, and therefore . . . he could have done the opposite." Descartes, letter to Mesland, 2 May 1644, *Oeuvres* 4:118, *Philosophical Writings*, 235. "I do not think that we should ever say of anything that it cannot be brought about by God. For since every basis of truth and goodness depends on his omnipotence, I would not dare to say that God cannot make a mountain without a valley, or bring it about that 1 and 2 are not 3." Descartes, letter to Arnauld, 29 July 1648, *Oeuvres* 5:224, *Philosophical Writings*, 358–59. Cf. also M. Osler, "Eternal Truths and the Laws of Nature: The Theological Foundations of Descartes' Philosophy of Nature," *The Journal of the History of Ideas* 46 (1985): 349–62.

[34] This is the function of the proof for the existence of God, which then guarantees (in a somewhat circular fashion) that our clear and distinct ideas correspond to reality. The paradigm for these ideas is the innate ideas of mathematics and geometry, which is our "hard wiring" as well as the form of modern science. Cf. Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, esp. Meditations 3–5.

[35] A similar observation has been made by the psychologist Horst Eberhard Richter; the subsequent emphasis on the root of religion in a feeling of "absolute dependency" (Schleiermacher) might then appear to be an overcompensation of this outlook; cf. M. Frank, *Der kommende Gott: Vorlesungen über die neue Mythologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982), 45–72.

vates the technologies designed to control all the contingencies of life, making reliance on God unnecessary; it takes the preservation and direction of life into our own hands alone, and precisely because God seems absent. This is behind all attempts at "playing God" in the creation and preservation of human life. It underlies a life dominated by the *conatus sese preservandi*,[36] willing not only to shed moral scruples and sanctify any means to its desired end, but also to lose such ends themselves for the sake of the technological means. The more ultimate ends of human existence will narrow to the mere satisfaction of sensual needs, aggravated by an underlying lack of trust fostering anger and greed.[37] J. Pieper has hinted at this hidden connection between intemperance and despair.[38] Without a genuine understanding of the despair over a "hidden God" an understanding of the contemporary ethical and cultural problems will fail to rise above the level of mere moralistic complaints.

But we do not have to believe in this kind of God. Faith in this kind of God is itself a choice.[39] It is a belief in its own right, but not a good one. To make God into a demon is itself demonic. Christianity is, by contrast, a faith in God as Logos, Reason itself, a Reason that has assumed our own human nature in Jesus Christ. While the three monotheistic religions believe that God is supremely free in his decision making (rather than being ruled by necessity or fate), he is, for Christians, also the God who is Love. Hegel understood this better, when he argued against certain agnostic theologians of his time: he emphasized that Plato and Aristotle had already insisted that God cannot be envious, that is, that he is not a God who would begrudge us a share in his divine knowledge. How much more should this be true for the Christian God who is just

[36] Spinoza, *Ethics* III, 6, 7.

[37] In the domination of ends by means, even sensual ends are often secondary: means and products for their satisfaction are often developed before there is a need to satisfy. It is the *raison d'être* of advertisement, for instance, to produce the needs and the market for such means.

[38] J. Pieper, *Zucht und Maß* (Munich: Kösel, 1949), 110f. Cf. also Aquinas, *ST* II–II, q. 153, a. 4, obj. 3: "Praeterea, luxuria causatur ex desperatione, secundum illud Ephes. IV, *qui, desperantes, seipsos tradiderunt impudicitiae*." And the response: "[D]icendum quod a delectationibus luxuriae praecipue aliqui abstinent propter spem futurae gloriae, quam desperatio subtrahit. Et ideo causat luxuriam sicut removens prohibens, non sicut per se causa . . ." (ibid., ad 3). For an account of nihilism as the fruit of this development of mistrust, see John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, §§45–47. What he says about knowledge, trust, and faith in human friendship (§§31–33) also applies to friendship with God.

[39] As we have seen, Ockham himself says that the omnipotence of God, to which he constantly appeals, is a matter of *sola fide*. To believe in this kind of God, therefore, is itself an arbitrary choice, not an insight of reason or a matter of wisdom.

this: self-communication.[40] Without following Hegel into the extreme conclusion of dissolving faith into reason, this observation should resonate with any faith in the self-revelation of a divine Logos.

IV

This last understanding of the relationship between faith and reason is better captured in other forms of medieval thought, which offer attractive alternatives to Ockham and Scotus. In the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, the relationship between faith and reason, philosophy and theology, and reason and free will is carefully balanced. For St. Thomas, faith and reason cannot contradict each other, because both proceed from God.[41] God is not only the one who reveals himself in the light and content of faith; he is also perceptible to us in the very principles of reason we find in ourselves.[42] These principles are a communication of God's own wisdom. St. Thomas likens God to a wise teacher: if a teacher were to teach a student something contrary to or different from what he knew to be true, that is, his own knowledge, he would be a deceiver or liar. If God therefore equips human nature with principles of rationality that are not his own, he would be subject to this charge. To assume this about God is tantamount to blasphemy, St. Thomas says.[43]

Nevertheless, it is certainly true that some things do proceed not only from God's wisdom, but also from his free will, a sovereign will that, although it is based in his wisdom, is still supremely free to choose. This choice concerns creation and revelation. That is why we cannot, by

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[40] Hegel makes this point repeatedly; cf., for example, G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, vol. 3 (Hamburg: Meiner, 1983), 279; he seems to have Plato's *Timaeus*, 29 through 30, in mind here.

[41] For example, Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* I, c. 7. Thomas's position was confirmed by the Church at the First Vatican Council: "Even if faith is superior to reason there can never be a true divergence between faith and reason, since the same God who reveals the mysteries and bestows the gift of faith has also placed in the human spirit the light of reason. This God could not deny himself, nor could the truth ever contradict the truth." Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, *Dei Filius*, §4, DS 3017. Cf. John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* (§§9, 53, and 43), who sees their union confirmed by biblical Wisdom literature, which draws from pagan sources (ibid., §16).

[42] "Principiorum autem naturaliter notorum cognitio nobis divinitus est indita: cum ipse Deus sit nostrae auctor naturae. Haec ergo principia etiam divina sapientia continet. Quicquid igitur principiis huiusmodi contrarium est, divinae sapientiae contrariatur. Non igitur a Deo esse potest." Aquinas, *ScG* I, c. 7.

[43] Cf. Aquinas, *ScG* I, c. 7: "Illud idem quod inducitur in animam discipuli a docente, doctoris scientia continet: nisi doceat ficte, quod de Deo nefas est dicere." This might amount to a strong indictment of Descartes.

reason alone, arrive at the contents of faith.[44] These contents are acts of God's love, acts which, though not irrational, are a free, unforced communication by God. Reason and faith, therefore, have two different sources: the principles of reason (logic, mathematics, and the like, originating in God's wisdom) on the one hand, and God's free choices as they are revealed to us, on the other. Some things, such as the Incarnation, we know by revelation alone, while other things we can know simply through the use of reason, like biology and mathematics. (There is, consequently, no Catholic mathematics.) And then there are those things we know from *both* sources, such as the existence of God. In those cases, faith helps the weakness of our reason to arrive more safely at conclusions that we could have reached by reason alone. But faith never replaces reason. Rather, reason is the source of understanding faith, that is, of making intelligible what otherwise might remain opaque or inapplicable in our life. Without an understanding of faith by reason, revelation would not enter our hearts; it would not really be revelation at all. We cannot simply accept the contents of faith by an act of the will, but must appropriate them by the use of our reason as well. Only then can we grasp what our will is assenting to and what the consequences of this assent will be.

A proper understanding of the correlation between faith and reason will likewise make possible a relationship between the Church built on faith and a secular state based on reason; they are not mutually exclusive or essentially antagonistic, but open to one another. Furthermore, a proper sense of the relation between faith and reason will allow conversations between religious traditions to take place. Most religions share a belief in a God who can be known by reason. Reason can discern that he must be omnipotent, free, reasonable, wise, and good. Although what

[44] "There exists a twofold order of knowledge, distinct not only as regards their source, but also as regards their object. With regard to the source, because we know one by natural reason, the other by divine faith. With regard to the object, because besides those things which natural reason can attain, there are proposed for our belief mysteries hidden in God which, unless they are divinely revealed, cannot be known." *Dei Filius*, §3, DS 3008, and §4, DS 3015; cf. also *Gaudium et Spes*, §59. Aquinas gives as a further reason why this is actually helpful: "Alia etiam utilitas inde provenit, scilicet praesumptionis repressio, quae est mater erroris. Sunt enim quidam tantum de suo ingenio praesumentes ut totam rerum naturam se reputent suo intellectu posse metiri, aestimantes scilicet totum esse verum quod eis videtur et falsum quod eis non videtur. Ut ergo ab hac praesumptione humanus animus liberatus ad modestam inquisitionem veritatis perveniat, necessarium fuit homini proponi quaedam divinitus quae omnino intellectum eius excederent." *ScG* I, c. 5, n. 4. Trying to argue for revealed truths with unbelievers, however, opens us up to ridicule, since they might think that we believe because of such arguments (ibid. I, c. 9).

he has decided on the basis of his freedom, that is, revelation, may be something upon which we do not agree, even these decisions are not outside the reach of reason, and can enter into the conversation as well.

This is the perennial wisdom of the Catholic tradition. It should be our task to appeal to similar traditions in the Islamic world, as well as to seek to liberate the secular West from the narrowness of its self-imposed limitations on rationality. Against these limitations we have to rediscover an understanding of reason which is not arbitrarily curtailed, but reflective of its own nature and use, ultimately grounded in God himself. It is, in other words, our task to rediscover a reason which seeks faith.[45] N V

[45] I would like to thank Br. Justin Gable, O.P. for his helpful editing of this essay.

The Application of Christ's One Oblation: Charles Journet on the Mass, the Real Presence, and the Sacrifice of the Cross

Roger Nutt
Ave Maria University
Ave Maria, Florida

IN the concluding remarks of a programmatic essay on the theology of the Sacraments in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, of the Second Vatican Council, Fr. Romanus Cessario offers "a brief survey of the present state of sacramental theology."[1] One of Cessario's observations is that "[i]n the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the study of sacramental theology remains almost exclusively subordinated to the programs in liturgical studies."[2] The effect that this has had on students of theology, especially seminarians, in Cessario's assessment is manifest, not so much in what is learned within the context of liturgical studies, but rather in what is no longer treated. As a result of this shift in focus from sacramental to liturgical theology, "the majority of the seminarians enrolled in programs of formation in the United States are able to air views on sacramental symbolism," Cessario admits, but nevertheless "very few [seminarians or students of theology] are trained to give accounts of sacramental causality or even efficacy."[3] As a response to these challenges, Cessario recommends "a new kind of ressourcement, one that draws heavily on the *tertia pars* of St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* and the commentatorial tradition

[1] Romanus Cessario, O.P., "The Sacraments of the Church," in *Vatican II: Renewal Within Tradition*, ed. Matthew Lamb and Matthew Levering (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 129–46, 140.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

(including the authors of the Baroque period) that follows upon it."[4] Enter Charles Journet. It is difficult to imagine a single volume that meets Cessario's call for "a new kind of ressourcement" in spirit or material execution more forcefully than Journet's *La Messe—Présence du Sacrifice de la Croix*. Thanks to the translator, Victor Szczurek, O. Praem., and St. Augustine's Press, *La Messe* is now available for the first time in English under the title *The Mass: The Presence of the Sacrifice of the Cross* (2008). Originally published in French a half-century ago, this book mines the biblical and patristic sources advocated by the Council, the architectonic wisdom of Aquinas (also commended by the Council), and, as longed for by Cessario, the contributions of the most noteworthy of the Thomist Commentators.[5] Like all of Journet's writings, *The Mass* is animated by a prayerfully attuned reading of Aquinas such that it is as vital and relevant today as when it was first penned.

The primary purpose of this essay is to present the contents of *The Mass* for the sake of setting into relief the many insights to be reaped from its appearance in English. First, however, by way of contextualization, a brief introduction to Charles Journet and his work is provided.

The Life and Legacy of Charles Journet[6]

Charles Journet was born in Geneva, Switzerland in 1891. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1917. Fr. Journet spent his entire fifty-six year academic career teaching dogmatic theology at the major seminary of the Diocese of Fribourg in Switzerland, while also sustaining a prodigious diet of writing and pastoral work. Theology in the English language has been somewhat slow in recognizing the significance of Journet's accomplishments.[7] During his life Journet held the respect and friend-

[4] Ibid., 141.

[5] The list of Thomist commentators and Baroque thinkers that Journet treats, some of whose insights are dealt with repeatedly and at length, includes John of St. Thomas, Cajetan, Bellarmine, Suarez, Bossuet, and Cano. Journet also draws heavily on noted twentieth-century thinkers like Vonier, Lepin, Garrigou-Lagrange, Gilson, de la Taille, Gardeil, and Maritain.

[6] For a thorough biography (600+ pages) on the life of Journet, see Guy Boissard, *Charles Journet: 1891–1975* (Paris: Salvator, 2008).

[7] To cite just two examples, which could be greatly multiplied, Alister McGrath, in his *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997) provides a broad sketch of the history of Christian theology including the most distinguished thinkers of each period of Church history. In his presentation of the major Roman Catholic theologians of the twentieth century, McGrath includes de Lubac, Congar, Küng, Schoonenberg, Schillebeeckx, von Balthasar, and Rahner. Similarly and more recently, in *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians: From Neoscholasticism to Nuptial Mysticism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers,

ship of many of the greatest Catholic figures, including an intimate rapport with Jacques and Raïssa Maritain. The staggering five volumes of letters covering over 4000 pages now published as *Journet-Maritain Correspondance* document the intimate friendship and vivacious exchange of ideas between Journet and Maritain from 1920 to 1964.[8]

Journet wrote on a wide variety of theological topics including book-length treatments of the Church, evil, the Eucharist, grace, Mary, and the nature of dogma, to name just a few. Among these, his multi-volume tome in ecclesiology, *L'Église du Verbe incarné* (*The Church of the Word Incarnate*), is considered his most significant work; indeed, *L'Église du Verbe incarné* was once described by Yves Congar, O.P. as the greatest ecclesiological work of the first half of the twentieth century.

Journet's theological accomplishments gained such a degree of recognition that Pope Paul VI elevated him to the episcopacy and College of Cardinals in February of 1965. Cardinal Journet then took an active role in the final session of the Second Vatican Council, making important contributions to the Council's treatment of religious freedom, the indissoluble character of the Sacrament of Matrimony that is elaborated in the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, and the nature of the priesthood treated in the Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests, *Presbyterum Ordinis*.[9]

A generation has now passed since Journet's death at the age of 84 in 1975 and uniquely, as time goes by, appreciation and recognition of his work and legacy continue to increase. A number of his books, sometimes fifty years after their original appearance in French, such as *The Mass*, are

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2007), Fergus Kerr devotes chapters to all of the theologians treated by McGrath less Schoonenberg, and additionally (and justifiably) treats Chenu, Ratzinger, Lonergan, and Wojtyla—but not Journet. It would of course be unfair to criticize either McGrath or Kerr simply on the material grounds that Journet, among many others who could ostensibly have been included in a discussion about twentieth-century Catholic theology, was not. Nevertheless, the absence of discussion about Journet does demonstrate a wider failure within the Anglophone world to appreciate the degree to which Journet was recognized by his own twentieth-century contemporaries as a unique and influential figure.

[8] The volumes are jointly published with the permission of the *Foundation du Cardinal Journet* by Éditions Universitaires (Fribourg) and Éditions Saint-Paul (Paris).

[9] For a detailed presentation—perhaps the only one of its kind—of Journet's presence and interventions at the Council in 1965 see Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., "Présence de Journet à Vatican II," in *Charles Journet (1891–1975): Un Théologien en son siècle; Actes du Colloque de Genéve 1991*, 2nd ed., ed. Philippe Chenaux (Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1994), 41–68.

being translated into English for the first time.[10] The important journal that Journet co-founded in 1926, *Nova et Vetera*, still flourishes today as well, including this English edition, whose first printed volume was released in 2003.

The Eucharist and the Redemptive Plan of God

Similar to all of his major theological writings, Journet does not begin this book by isolating his topic and narrowing his focus. Rather, sensitive to the sapiential and contemplative nature of sacred theology—especially in the Thomist tradition—Journet first situates his topic in relation to the other major revealed doctrines that are organically connected to the one under consideration. As the title of this book betrays, Journet here treats the Mass from the two inter-related Eucharistic perspectives of the Real Presence and sacrifice. In the first chapter, he highlights how, as a result of the Fall, man actually lives in a universe that is in need of redemption, and not, as the Enlightenment proposed, a universe of radical autonomy. Journet welcomes the fact that many of the Enlightenment's discoveries contain some true data, yet he also warns that such a vision left to itself "would never cease to err . . . nor would it ever obtain its proper significance or become truly instructive, until it is transposed into a far more mysterious vision of the origins of humanity" (8). "In place of the idea of the *universe of nature*, which would have been possible," Journet argues, "one must substitute the idea of a *universe of redemption*, it alone being real and existential" (8).

The reason, and it is an important reason, that Journet offers this set of reflections on the existential state of man and the universe at the beginning of his book on the Eucharist is because following divine revelation, especially the teaching of St. Paul, "the concrete and existential state of humanity in no way represents a natural and normal state, but rather a catastrophe of a privileged state, where man had been in grace and outside the reaches of death" (9). God could have, hypothetically, saved (or not) the human race in any number of ways. Journet concedes that God "could have . . . pretended to forget the offense of sin" (12). Such forgetfulness would indeed be a form of salvation. Had God saved man in this way, "it would have been forever true that the insult rendered to God by His creation was on a whole greater than the love He received

[10] Besides *The Mass*, a new, first time translation is available of *The Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), and republications of *What is Dogma?* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), *The Meaning of Evil* (Leesburg, VA: Alethes Press, forthcoming), and *The Meaning of Grace* (New York: Scepter Publishers, 1997) are also in print.

from it" (12). Christians, though, do not believe that the world is merely saved: salvation in Christ is salvation by way of redemption. The redemptive nature of God's plan to become man explains and makes sense out of Christ's incomprehensible sufferings and death, which he offered to God as a priestly sacrifice to redeem man and the fallen world. For Journet, the sacrificial, and hence redemptive, aspect of Christ's work, is the foundation and key for understanding the sacrificial (and soteriological) nature of the Christian liturgy, especially the Mass. Christ's death was not only a cultic sacrifice on his part, but the very foundation of the efficacy and meaning of the Christian cult. By becoming incarnate and offering himself to God, Christ, Journet explains, "would then be able to raise from the earth toward heaven an adoration and a love . . . of extraordinary intensity" (12). It is the intensity of this human love and adoration, united to the Person of the Word, that infuses Christ's life, death, and suffering with a redemptive character—"an honor," Journet explains, "incomparably greater than the offense it caused" (12).

Equally important and foundational, moreover, for understanding how Journet views the Mass in relation to Christ's work, is the reason why his death was received by God as sacrificially efficacious. The reason is not, as some would assume, that God in the order of justice needed to exact a sinful "pound of flesh" from humanity to assuage his anger over sin. "The Passion of Christ which saved the world—lost as it was since the first sin—that same Passion which also established a universe of redemption, is indissolubly a *sacrifice* and an *act of love*," Journet explains (19). This indissoluble relation between sacrifice and love reveals why the Cross is liturgical-sacramental, and therefore the foundation of the inner meaning of the Mass as well. The Cross "is a sacrifice, an exterior cultic act, a liturgy," Journet teaches, "but insofar as it envelops the purest and most intense love which would ever come forth from a human heart. It is an act of love, but insofar as it is enveloped in a voluntary sacrifice, an exterior cultic act, a liturgy" (19). This correspondence between the external cultic act and the internal love that animated it enables Christ's death to accomplish all of the ends that man needs (and hopes) to obtain through sacrifice—hence its redemptive value. Christ's death is (1) a perfect form of worship; (2) it is propitiatory, thus atoning for all of man's sins; (3) it is a perfect "*act of thanksgiving*"; (4) it is "*impetratory*. . . . It is the greatest supplication, a supreme appeal to the largess of the divine goodness" (21–22).

In his theology of the Eucharist, Journet does not back away or hide from the clear biblical affirmation, underscored several times in the Letter to the Hebrews (cf. Heb 8:12, 9:26, 9:27, 10:12, and 10:14), that Christ's sacrificial death is a "once and for all" offering. It is, in fact, the historical

singularity and unrepeatability of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross that gives the Eucharist its sacrificial import and intensity. "There is not *another* oblation for sin," Journet professes, "but a *presence*, an *application*, *an actualization of that one oblation*. In such a way is proclaimed the death of the Lord, until He comes again" (23).

The Last Supper, the Cross, and the Eucharist

Here is the point at which Journet's understanding of Christ's work on the Cross intersects with his presentation of the Eucharist as a Sacrament of the New Law. The "universe of redemption," the fallen universe, not simply saved, but redeemed, redeemed by means of Christ's sacrificial death on the Cross, is the backdrop and foundation for Journet's explication of the Sacrifice of the Mass. As the last quote in the above paragraph hints at, Journet understands the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, to provide the participatory connection between the singular "once and for all" historical reality of Christ's life and death and the on-going mission of the Church throughout the ages. The idea that the Eucharist links the Church with Christ's offering is derived from the bond that Christ himself establishes between the rite that he institutes at the Last Supper and the offering that he makes on the Cross. Journet spells this relationship out very clearly: "The sacrifice of the Cross is a unique event; the sacrifice of the Last Supper is a permanent institution" (29). He then rhetorically asks, "Is it necessary to choose between the Cross and the Last Supper, between the *event* and the *institution*?" (29) Journet thus carefully weaves together two important biblical tenets: (1) that Christ's sacrificial death is not repeatable, on the one hand; and, on the other, (2) that Christ commands the Church to continue offering the rite that he instituted at the Last Supper. The distinction between the "once and for all" event and the command to continue celebrating the Eucharistic rite is precisely the distinction that Journet develops to explain the sacrificial aspect of the Mass. There is a reciprocal and hermeneutical relationship between the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper and the event of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. Journet underscores this by demonstrating how Christ joins together the Last Supper and the Cross in the very language of the Eucharist's institution. The Last Supper itself, Journet notes, "is a sacrifice: it contains under a sacramental and unbloody envelopment *Christ insofar as He is actually offered and immolated*. And it is as such that *it is necessary to reproduce it*" (30). Following the words of the Lukan-Pauline institution narrative, "Do this in memory of me," especially the word "do," Journet points out: "In memory of Jesus, then, something must not only be *said*, but *done*" (30). The sacramental insight

operative here is that Christ gives the Apostles a rite to perform, a rite which renders something present. It is worth quoting Journet's summary of this point at length:

> Therefore, in memory of Christ and in commemoration of Him, the disciples would have to render present in the Eucharist His Body *insofar as it was given for us*, His Blood *insofar as it was poured out for many*. St. Matthew adds here that this Blood is poured out *for the remission of sins*, which accentuates all the more the sacrificial and propitiatory character of the Last Supper. In short, they would have to render present in the Eucharist Christ *insofar as He offers Himself and immolates Himself for the remission of sins*. (31)

Journet is very aware of the ecumenical tensions over this issue and takes great pains to articulate, from within St. Thomas's theology and the teaching of the Council of Trent, why Martin Luther's objections in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* and John Calvin's objections in book IV of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, chapter 18, "On the Popish Mass," do not follow. Journet rightly recognizes the fact that the Reformers and subsequent Lutheran and Reformed theologians, in objecting to the sacrificial character of the Mass are not, as they assume, simply defending the unique dignity of Christ's "once and for all" death from a Catholic denial of this central truth; instead, they are making a serious and unnecessary sacramental error. Following the Catholic tradition, the late Swiss theologian is wholly committed to protecting the irreplaceable nature of Christ's death on the Cross. However, in virtue of the relationship between the rite instituted by Christ at the Last Supper and the unique event of the Cross, Journet is able to distinguish the repetition of one, without compromising the singularity of the other. "There would be multiplied, then," Journet recognizes, "according to the will of Christ, sacramental and unbloody offerings and immolations, unbloody sacrifices, containing the one bloody sacrifice" (31). As a result, "This would happen certainly not by the impossible reiteration of the unique sacrifice, but by the reiteration of the presence of the unique sacrifice under the unbloody rite" (31). This distinction, between the sacrament as a sign, and the reality itself that is signified in its proper and singular nature, is what leads Catholic theology to affirm both the sacrificial nature of the Mass and the singular uniqueness and import of the Cross—indeed, this distinction is precisely what makes the Mass itself a necessary and integral part of the life of the Church. "We do not choose," Journet adds, "between the sacrifice of the Cross and that of the Last Supper, between the *sacrifice event* and the *sacrifice institution*; we preserve all of Scripture" (32). As a result, the Sacrifice of

the Mass, "does not multiply the sacrifice-event; *it multiplies the real presences of the sacrifice-event*" (32). The Protestant error, as Journet explains it, is the "juxtaposition" of the Last Supper and the Cross, such that they "rival" each other in a way that one is forced "to choose between the bloody sacrifice and the unbloody sacrifices" (33).

The Catholic Church indeed affirms that both the Mass and the Cross are true sacrificial offerings. Nevertheless, the Catholic position on the Mass does not fall prey to the Protestant objection because, like the Last Supper, "the Mass is not *another* sacrifice than that of the Cross. The sacrifice, in both cases, is substantially identical; the Victim is identical. It differs only accidentally, modally, that is with respect to the mode of presentation" (35–36). This modal difference, the difference between Christ's "once and for all" sacrifice and the continued celebration of the Last Supper by the Church in offering the Eucharist, thus perpetuates and applies the benefits of the "once and for all" offering to successive generations. "It is impossible," Journet proclaims, "for the sacrifice of the Mass to be in rivalry with the Cross; for the entire work of the Mass represents to us, makes present to us the bloody sacrifice, and applies its saving power for the remission of sins which we commit each day" (36). And so the Eucharist, as a sacrament, as an unbloody offering, representing the bloody offering, is the means by which "the fruits of the bloody oblation are abundantly received" (36).

Journet then compliments these observations with further reflections on how the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is related to the sacramental rite. "At the moment when the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ through transubstantiation," he argues, "that is to say through a change affecting not Christ but only the substance of bread and wine . . . it is not Christ who is made two but rather the presence of Christ" (48). The Real Presence, therefore, understood as the substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist, by way of transubstantiation, is and always remains sacramental. There is a distinction between the sacramental mode of presence and the non-sacramental, or proper, mode. Discussing the one Christ, present in heaven according to the proper mode and in the Eucharist sacramentally, Journet speaks of "two distinct presences of the same unique Christ: on the one hand there is the natural presence under its proper and normal appearances; on the other hand there is the sacramental presence under its foreign and borrowed or assumed appearances" (48).

This same sacramental logic applies as well to the sacrificial aspect of the Mass. "There are not two *sacrifices* juxtaposed at the Last Supper," Journet clarifies, "but two distinct *presences* of one unique sacrifice" (48). The two

modes of presence constitute not two diverse sacrifices, but two presences of a sacrifice that is "numerically one" (48). It is not the offering or sacrifice that is diverse, but the mode of its presence. "To speak formally," Journet declares, "the notion of *presence* is analogous: first a natural presence, then a sacramental presence of the one sacrifice; the notion of Christ's *sacrifice* is not analogous but rather univocal" (49). As a result, Journet concludes: "We ought to speak of the Mass as we do of the Last Supper: it is a true and proper sacrifice if it is a real presence of Christ and his one sacrifice" (49). As such, then, the notions of Real Presence and sacrifice walk hand-in-hand. If the body and blood that Christ offered are really, truly, and substantially present in the Eucharist and Christ commanded that they continue to be offered in his memory, the sacramental rite instituted at the Last Supper and the "once and for all" offering of the Cross make up two analogous presences of one univocal offering.

Sacramental Soteriology

Journet is not content with simply explaining how the Eucharist multiplies the presences of Christ's sacrifice without multiplying the sacrifice itself. Following a key insight developed by Aquinas in the *tertia pars* of the *Summa theologiae*, Journet sees the theology of the Eucharist as an extension of the redemptive work of Christ's priesthood. Journet identifies two key insights provided by Aquinas about the Mass: firstly, that it represents Christ's passion; and, secondly, that it applies to us the fruits of Christ's passion. Just as Christ's historical presence on earth, especially his sacrifice on the Cross, worked operatively or efficiently in the order of salvation, so too the Eucharist, by means of the Real Presence of Christ's sacrifice, operates effectively. Along with the Real Presence of Christ, "there is under the same appearances," Journet adds, "the *efficient*, *operative* presence of His one redemptive sacrifice" (61). Indeed, the Risen Christ is present substantially by the power of transubstantiation. "But He signifies to us," Journet adds,

> by the sacramental appearances of His Body given and His Blood poured out, that He comes only by means of His Cross to touch us and to apply to us the very power of His bloody sacrifice, as He did to the Apostles at the Last Supper. Such that at each Mass He brings to us, really and truly, under the unbloody species, the *substantial presence of the glorious Christ* and the *efficient presence of His bloody sacrifice*. (71)

The Mass (and all the sacraments), then, is appropriated by God as an extension of the instrumental efficiency of Christ's human nature united to the Word making present the power of his sacrifice throughout the

ages. Sensitive to the ecumenical significance of this issue as well, Journet again raises the question about exactly what the Catholic Church believes regarding the Mass as a sacrifice. Carefully interpreting Aquinas's position, Journet argues that "Christ is sacrificed at the Mass because the Mass brings us the effects of his Passion; it actualizes for us his passion; it makes us partakers of the fruits of his passion; it accomplishes each time the work of our redemption" (80). This position is deeply connected with the relation that the Mass has to the doctrine of the Real Presence. "Where Christ's Passion is really present," Journet explains, "Christ's sacrifice is really present" (81). And therefore, since the Mass makes Christ's passion present, it "is the *vehicle* of the remission of sins brought about by Christ on the Cross; it brings us this remission and no other" (86).

Nevertheless, it could be asked: were not the sins of the whole world remitted at the time of Christ's death? The answer, of course, is yes. But affirming that Christ's death is indeed the cause of the remission of sin does not explain how that remission is applied to people throughout the ages. "The Passion of Christ brings the remission of sins in the manner of a universal cause, *ut causa quaedam universalis remissionis peccatorum*. This universal cause of salvation, however, must be applied to each individual person for the destruction of his own sins" (117). In support of this position, Journet presents Aquinas's argument which identifies a two-fold application to individual believers of the New Law and saving work of Christ. The first application of salvation in Christ comes "through living *faith*, vivified by charity" (117). The second form of application, which perfects the first, is "through the *sacraments* of the New Law" (117). This second application by means of the Sacraments is the way that the Church participates in the saving benefits of Christ's sacrifice and extends his mediation through time. "[I]f each new Mass is a new presence among us of the unique sacrifice of the Cross," then, Journet explains,

> it would be necessary to speak of the Mass as one speaks of the Cross, and to say that in the lines of ascending and descending mediation, *the power of the Mass is infinite, but that it is participated in by the Church only in a finite manner*, according to the intensity of her love at a given moment in time, and that it is applied to each generation through the mediation of faith and the sacraments—in the present case through the sacrament of the Eucharist, instituted by Christ for this end. Such, in fact, is the teaching of St. Thomas. (118)

Journet spends a great deal of time parsing out the differences between the universal efficiency of the Cross and the finite participation of the Church in Christ's sacrifice, carefully explaining the differences between

the *ex opere operato* efficacy of the sacraments and the finite *ex opere operantis* participation of any particular individual. Nevertheless, his central point is clear: The conclusions made about the redemptive value of Christ's work have analogous applications to the salvific and mediatorial value of the sacramental life of the Church—especially the Mass.

Transubstantiation

It would indeed be futile to speak about the multiplication and application of Christ's one sacrifice through the Eucharist without offering an argument as to how that presence is possible. The doctrine of transubstantiation provides the answer; Journet offers an exposition of this doctrine that knows of few rivals in recent history. He begins his treatment by commenting thoroughly on the Bread of Life discourse in John 6 and the Synoptic-Pauline presentations of the Institution Narrative. From the primary biblical sources Journet identifies the core tenets of the Church's "Eucharistic faith" and then works through an analysis of how the doctrine of the Real Presence has developed through the ages. Pressing toward the formal definition of transubstantiation in 1215 at Lateran IV, Aquinas's insights, and the teaching of Trent, Journet pauses to gather the insights of Ignatius of Antioch, Justin, Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa, and Cyril of Alexandria, and takes longer accounts of the Eucharistic doctrine of Ambrose and Augustine. For the sake of brevity, this treatment will only examine Journet's systematic presentation of the doctrine.

Well aware of the philosophical challenges to transubstantiation posed by post-Cartesian philosophy, especially regarding the idea of substance, Journet dives headlong into the debate over the proper meaning of this tenet of faith. "When the physicist speaks of matter (or mass) and energy and declares that matter can be transformed into energy and vice versa," Journet argues (citing the words of his friend Jacques Maritain), "he is in no way thinking of what the philosopher calls the substance of material things—this substance, considered in itself (abstracted from its accidents) is purely intelligible and cannot be known by sense or any means of observation and measurement" (157). Physicists treat individual material substances from the perspective of what the Western philosophico-theological tradition terms "proper accidents" such as quantity. According to their proper accidents, therefore, Journet explains (still following Maritain) that material substances possess a "certain *organization in space*" as well as "a *specific activity*" (157). Accordingly, as a real change in the material order, transubstantiation bears several unique and miraculous characteristics. The first of these, unique among things that change, is that Christ "preexists transubstantiation and is unchanged by it" (159). The change

terminates in the substance of the sacramental signs, the bread and wine, while the species, or accidents (for example, the quantity, mass, and sensibly verifiable aspects) of those substances remain after the change. "The entire change," Journet notes, "of the bread and wine will take place by Him without affecting Him in any way" (159). This means, additionally, that besides the unique fact that transubstantiation brings about a sacramental presence of a preexisting reality (Christ), the remaining species of bread and wine continue in existence without existing in the substances of bread and wine, which are changed into the Body of Christ. Journet unpacks this aspect of transubstantiation accordingly: "The substance of bread being totally changed and converted, disappearing into the substance of the Savior's Body, has left the accidents without the subject of inherence which they had, and the most fundamental of which is expanse" (160). These remaining accidents are no longer sustained in reality by the substance of bread, nor do they become the accidents of Christ's body. Rather, after the change, the accidents of bread and wine are sustained in existence "immediately" by the "divine power."

Describing transubstantiation as the change of the substance of bread into the substance of Christ's body does not resolve the further issue of just how Christ is present in the Eucharist after the change takes place. The difficulty stems from the obvious fact that the dimensional accidents of a single host containing Christ are not proportionate to the dimensions of his body. How then is Christ said, with any level of real intelligibility, to be present in the Eucharist? This question is the contemplative apex of Eucharistic theology, and Journet explains the mode of Christ's presence with rare clarity and acumen. Journet unveils the profundity and rational cogency for transubstantiation and the manner of Christ's presence by drawing on the distinction between substance and accidents, especially measurable and locative accidents such as quantity and place, as well as the distinction between the proper mode of presence and the sacramental mode. Christ, Journet argues, "becomes present where He was not, without changing locally, without losing His proper quantity, and yet not by the mediation of this quantity, but by a pure change of the substance of bread into the substance of His Body" (161). The new presence of Christ resulting from this unique change, the sacramental presence, is "not local but sacramental, not by way of quantity and according to quality, but by way of substance and according to substance" (161). There are, therefore, two presences of Christ: The first, whether on earth or as he is now in heaven, is according to "nature, by mode of quantity." The second is "under the sacramental species, according to transubstantiation, by mode of substance. There is no other case of such a corporal but non-local substance" (161).

Journet is careful to point out that such distinctions are not the result of external impositions onto the reality of the Eucharist by theologians with overzealous philosophical aspirations. Rather, such distinctions, developed over time, are contained implicitly in the Lord's own words at the Last Supper and are the logical conclusions of those words. The words "This is my Body," Journet emphasizes, already require the belief in two forms of presence, the one by which Christ himself sits at the table according to his proper species, and the other being the mode by which he gives himself to those gathered at table with him under the forms of bread and wine declared to be his very Body and Blood. "*This*, that is to say the thing, the existing substance, which before the act was bread, is now, after the action, a *Body*, the *Body of Christ*," Journet comments.

On this matter yet again, Journet takes up a number of important ecumenical points. He challenges, for example, the objections of Zwingli and Calvin, which oppose the doctrine of the Real Presence on the grounds that it requires a local presence of Christ, and Luther's argument that the substance of bread remains unchanged while Christ's body is joined to its location. "We must add also," Journet notes in his response to the objections, "that, if Christ is present *under the dimensions of the host*, it is assuredly not this local presence that we know and according to which each part of a body is co-extensive with each part of the place it occupies" (162). Because the substance of bread is changed into the preexisting substance of Christ's body, the dimensional accidents of the bread that remain "contain" and "circumscribe" Christ's presence, but the object adored and received by Catholics in the Eucharist is Christ, and only Christ, present according to the mode of his substance. Following St. Thomas's exposition closely, Journet plumbs this profound doctrine in the following lengthy quotation:

> After the consecration the substance of *the Body of Christ*, along with the Word who is united to it personally, is contained under the species or appearances of bread *in an essentially different manner*. Now it no longer sustains these appearances and thus enters into *direct* contact with the place; but rather, it assumes the veil of these borrowed appearances in order to enter thus into *indirect* contact with the place—now no longer *by manner of place*, of dimension, of co-extension of each of the parts of its proper expanse with the corresponding part of the surrounding body, but in a more secret manner, the entire undivided Body of Christ (and consequently Christ Himself, the Word made Flesh) being present under each divided piece of species or appearance, and each divided piece of species or appearance containing the entire undivided Body of Christ. (163–64)

The distinction made here by Journet is crucial for an integral understanding of the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist. Transubstantiation does not hinge solely on the traditional distinction between substance and the accident of quantity, in contrast to the conflation of those two modes of being in modern science and philosophy. The Catholic doctrine maintains that the whole Christ is present. The quantity of a thing, of a body, locates it or situates it in a place—hence Journet's use of the term "co-extension" in the above quotation. This means that the distinction between quantity and place, or location, is also very important for understanding how Christ can be wholly present in the Eucharist. Transubstantiation does not, Journet underscores, separate Christ's Body "from its proper dimensions" (165). Drawing on the doctrine of concomitance, Journet further adds that in the sacrament "these dimensions of Christ's Body are not able to enter into contact with the place where the sacrament is primarily, directly, and immediately and according to their proper mode and the mode which they have in heaven; but only secondarily, indirectly, mediately and according to the mode which is proper to the substance" (165). To say that Jesus is not present in the Eucharist according to place is not to say that he does not have contact with the place in which the Eucharist is located. He does, for his presence is real. Jesus is not, therefore, present in the Eucharist by bi-location or ubiquity; he is present in multiple places according to the diverse modes. One mode is immediate and proper according to the location of his quantitative dimensions inhering in his substance, while the other mode gives him contact with many places without affecting his proper location. Here Journet is at his speculative best: "*[T]o enter into contact with the place* affects one only *extrinsically*: it is not contradictory for some thing, endowed with its own proper dimensions, to have simultaneously different contacts with different places" (166). The doctrine of a real presence of Christ in the Eucharist together with the affirmation that Christ is "seated at the right hand of the Father" would only be contradictory if it maintained that he was present in both places locally. The doctrine of Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist makes no such claim, for Christ's presence in the Eucharist is always as a sacrament and according to the mode of substance, and not by way of his localizing accidents.

The Eucharist, Communion, and the Church

Immediately following his formidable exposition of the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, the doctrine of the Real Presence, and transubstantiation, Journet ponders the effects communicated by the Blessed Sacrament. The Eucharistic title "Communion" entered into Christian theology

through St. Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 10. Paul asks rhetorically about the cup and the bread: are they not communion (*koinonia*) with the body and blood of Christ? Communion is an effect of the sacrifice of Christ's blood and his body. "The blood of Christ is a unifier. It grants us, who enter into communion with Him, to enter into communion with each other," Journet explains (185). Resisting the temptation of numerous contemporary theologians who posit Eucharistic communion as an effect of the assembly gathered together, Journet clearly sees the order properly: "The sacramental Body of Christ is the cause of the unity of Christ's Mystical Body" (185). Drawing on the classical distinction between the *sacramentum tantum*, the *res et sacramentum*, and *res tantum*, Journet articulates how Christ's presence par excellence, namely his Eucharistic presence, brings about the unity of the Church. "[T]he sacramental Body of Christ," he teaches, "creates around Him the Mystical Body or ecclesial Body of Christ" (186). As a result, the fallen universe is reclaimed and reunited in the one sacrifice of his body contained and offered in the Eucharist by the Church in the Mass. Even though Christians are all buried with Christ in Baptism, Journet is quick to point out that Baptism was not meant to stand alone. "What Baptism begins," Journet illustrates, "the Eucharist seeks to consummate; what has been planted tends of itself toward full blossom. The Eucharist is a new moment destined to make one enter more into the Savior's Passion, to incorporate one more intimately into His redemptive sacrifice" (193).

Moreover, the unity or communion caused by the presence of Christ and his sacrifice in the Eucharist reveals the eschatological nature of the Church and her sacraments. The Eucharistic bread, Christ teaches, gives life to the world, and he will raise up on the last day those who receive it: "The eschatological character of our sacraments culminates in the Eucharist," Journet declares (193). He further notes, "The first Christians spontaneously saw in the Eucharistic presence of the glorious Christ an anticipation of His appearance at the end of time" (193).

The Mass and Liturgical Studies

Mirroring the order of Aquinas's treatment of the Eucharist in the *tertia pars* of the *Summa theologiae*, Journet does not treat the Rite of the Mass as such until the final chapter, "The Settings of the Mass," after the full nature of the Sacrament has been thoroughly investigated. Journet's speculative-sapiential approach to theology does not allow liturgical theology, as distinct from formal sacramental theology, to dictate the ordo of his treatment of the Eucharist. This methodological decision offers the contemporary reader an important, though under-appreciated, insight:

there is not a stand-alone liturgical theology in Journet's approach to the Eucharist. Rather, his presentation of the Rite of the Mass, its history and parts, and the forms of worship that accompany the Eucharist are natural outgrowths of the nature of the Sacrament. Journet does not study liturgy as an end in itself distinct from sacramental theology, but thoroughly studies the Sacrament, from whence comes an integral understanding of its liturgical form. This is not to say that Journet turns a blind eye to formal liturgical studies: he is conversant and appreciative of the major contributors to the liturgical renewal of the twentieth century, such as J. A. Jungmann and Dom Odo Casel, but always in a balanced way that gives primacy to the nature of the Sacrament. For example, Journet quotes Jungmann's argument in favor of understanding the Eucharist as the sacrifice of the Church, as opposed to Christ's sacrifice. The primary evidence that Jungmann provides in his argument is the ecclesial-communal language in the Canon of the Mass. Jungmann deems the evidence to be so clear on the point that his interpretation can be given "pride of place" (93, n. 2). Journet introduces his quotation of Jungmann's argument with the following words: "It is from a purely external and non-theological point of view which Joseph-André Jungmann writes," and he follows up the quotation with this: "We respond by saying that this is blatantly contrary to the words of consecration." And so we come full circle with the topic of the introduction: namely, Fr. Cessario's longing for a renewal of sacramental theology proper, aided by the insights and distinctions of St. Thomas and his commentators.

Conclusion

There is much more to be learned from *The Mass* than what these brief reflections hint at, reflections which hope only to give a small sample of the flavor of the whole. Charles Journet's *The Mass: The Presence of the Sacrifice of the Cross* is a special book of timeless value. Not because it is old, reflecting the glory and theological style of days gone by; rather, it is special because Journet, master teacher that he was, was able to grasp and communicate the speculative treasures of the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist as the Real Presence of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. In some ways this book could be said to be a prolonged meditation on what the Eucharist *qua* sacrament is (and is not): how it causes its effects, what its purpose is within God's plan of salvation, and what its relationship is to Christ and his Cross. And yet, like Journet's whole body of work, it is more than a prolonged meditation on the sacramentality of the Eucharist. This book, along with the many other recent publications mentioned above, may be an indication of the arrival of a renaissance of

interest in the work of Charles Cardinal Journet—hopefully. Journet would be quick to point out, though, that his books (like the Eucharist) are meant to lead us into participation with the topics that he treats, not their noble author. To that end, the publication of this book initiates more than just another opportunity for theologians to enjoy Journet's warm insights; it opens another avenue for us to come to know and love the Lord in the Eucharist, the same Lord whom Journet spent his life serving and contemplating—and for that we can be glad indeed. NV

Predestination in America

EDWARD T. OAKES, S.J.
Mundelein Seminary
Mundelein, Illinois

I

FROM its first emergence in colonial Massachusetts, American civilization has been massively affected—indeed, irrevocably determined—by the Christian doctrine of predestination. As Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter* so brilliantly illustrates, American culture can never be understood unless one first takes into account the determining influence that Puritanism has had on the American psyche (which would include, of course, the rejection of Puritanism by so many in later generations). And Puritanism *means* predestination. For, as an offshoot of Calvinism, it defined itself against other Protestant denominations by its adoption of Calvin's strict and unsparing version of predestination.

Hawthorne's novel recounts the sad tale of a Puritan pastor in seventeenth-century Boston, the aptly named Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, who collapses at the end of the story from guilt at having committed adultery. On the day of his death, he preaches his most effective sermon ever on the predestining grace of God, to the great edification of his congregation. But then on leaving church he climbs a different pulpit, the town scaffold. There, attended by the adulterous Hester Prynne and their daughter Pearl, he confesses his sin to the townsfolk while exposing the Scarlet *A* psychosomatically seared into his chest by his gnawing guilt, and falls dead just after Pearl kisses him.

From the distance of two centuries, Hawthorne made his novel a mordant commentary on Dimmesdale's theology of predestination as the source of his torment. As a "five-point Calvinist," this clergyman subscribed to five core doctrines of strict Calvinism, usefully captured in the famous acronym TULIP: Total depravity, Unmerited election,

Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, and Perseverance of the saints. Because Dimmesdale had failed to persevere, he recognizes that, despite his zeal for winning Boston souls, he had never been numbered among the elect to begin with, and therefore Christ had never atoned for *his* sins, only for the elect. Doom was thus his foreordained end, decided in the eternal counsels of God, even before he had committed any sins, indeed before creation itself.

Among its other implications, the universally recognized status of *The Scarlet Letter* as a classic of American literature shows that we have long needed an account of the career of the doctrine of predestination in America, a gap now amply and brilliantly filled in Peter Thuesen's monograph *Predestination: The American Career of a Contentious Doctrine*.[1] Oddly, though, Thuesen does not mention Hawthorne's novel, although he makes good use of John Updike and Flannery O'Connor, both keen students of American Protestantism (and, not incidentally, of Hawthorne). At all events, Thuesen's monograph on its own terms almost reads like a novel, so fascinating is the history he tells.

The story of course begins with St. Augustine, whose battles against the Pelagian doctrine of man's moral self-sufficiency forced him to the logic of predestination, his account of which would prove so determinative for all of later Western theology. In his summary of Augustine's theology, however, Thuesen, I think, goes too far. For example, he holds—without any supporting evidence from Augustine's own writings—that the bishop of Hippo held to a theory of double predestination, that is, that God determined whom to redeem and whom to damn even before the fall of Adam. (The technical name for this position is called supralapsarianism, but that distinction did not arise until the Reformation.) More startling, Thuesen claims that Augustine thought that even some *baptized* infants would be damned if they were not already counted among the predestined elect, even if they died with baptismal grace on their souls before reaching the age of reason, a bizarre position that again the author does not back up with any passage from Augustine's pen.

Aside from these flaws, Thuesen has a sharp eye for recurring patterns in the history of this somber doctrine. In his telling, debates about predestination have a habit of beginning with a theologian's innocent-seeming prayer asking for God's help, which some contemporary will hear as implying that God might command something that the Christian could not fulfill using

[1] Peter J. Thuesen, *Predestination: The American Career of a Contentious Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). To avoid excessive clutter, page numbers for all quotations from this book will be given in the body of the text.

his own power of free will. At this point, the first theologian will feel called upon to defend the need for grace; and as the debate gets ever more elaborate, a full doctrine of predestination emerges fully developed.

Thus in book X of the *Confessions* Augustine prayed to God (uncontroversially enough, it would seem): "Give what you command, and command what you will."[2] When he read that prayer, however, the British lay monk Pelagius objected on the grounds that God would never command something antecedently incapable of being obeyed, and therefore our ability to fulfill divine commands must have remained intact, even after the sin of Adam.

Not so, said Augustine, and the ensuing debate would last the rest of his life, bequeathing to Western Christianity his doctrine of predestination, which says this: Since we are saved without any merit on our part but only by grace, then that grace must be freely given independently of merit, as St. Paul clearly teaches: "For it is by grace that you have been saved; through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Eph 2:8–9). Thus there is nothing we can really do to "earn" our salvation. Yet that same grace of election is simultaneously required in order to be able to obey the moral law, which remains a command quite apart from the grace given to fulfill it, as again Paul clearly teaches:

> God "will give to each person according to what he has done" [Ps 62:12; Prov 24:12]. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. (Rom 2:6–8).

And given the wide variance in the human race between those who strive to do good and those who throw themselves into evil deeds, God therefore not only foresaw but predetermined who would receive this grace gratuitously and who would not: "For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the stench of death; to the other, the fragrance of life" (2 Cor 2:15–16). For if God only foresaw moral conduct and *on that basis* chose his elect, then he would not only be choosing the elect based on

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[2] Augustine, *Confessions*, bk. X, chap. 37: "da quod jubes et jube quod vis." This prayer of course is a direct outcome of Augustine's psychology of sin: "Where I am able not to sin, I don't want to avoid it; and where I want not to sin, I can't help but sin, and am miserable in both conditions" ("hic esse valeo nec volo, illic volo nec valeo, miser utrubique") (bk. X, chap. 40).

their merit but would also be determined by a future event, which Augustine held to be an impossibility. On the contrary, as Paul says: "Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden" (Rom 9:18).

So too with John Calvin, the same pattern occurs as with Augustine earlier: first an aside confessing utter reliance on grace, followed by contemporary objections, and finally leading to a full doctrine of predestination. As is well known, Calvin spoke of predestination only twice in the first edition of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, and then only in passing. Inevitably, objections were raised about the fairness of God and the meaning of human free will, which prompted Calvin to expand on the matter in later editions until Calvinism and predestination became almost synonymous terms. After his death the controversy lived on (no surprise there), in the course of which one second-generation Calvinist, Jacob Arminius, attributed an independent power of man to accept or reject grace outside of the offer of that grace. His opponents saw this position as contradicting Augustine's view that the prayer for grace itself comes from grace, just as the decision to believe is itself the outcome of God's grace. The debate raged on and remained unresolved until the famous Synod of Dort in the Netherlands (1619), which insisted on what became known thereafter as the acronymic TULIP rule, "an appropriately Dutch flower" for this synod that met in Holland, Thuesen drolly notes.

To bring the story now to America, Jonathan Edwards, whom Thuesen rightly calls the last great theologian in the American Puritan tradition, preached a fiercely uncompromising version of predestination during the Great Awakening revival of 1734–1735, prompting one upset listener, the elderly Bernard Bartlett, to call Edwards "as great an instrument as the devil had on this side of hell to bring souls to hell," an accusation that Augustine also had to face from his fellow-bishop Julian of Eclanum because of Augustine's conclusion that infants who die before baptism will suffer in hellfire eternally, which Julian saw as the greatest weak spot in Augustine's theology, and subsequent history would prove him right.

Since the Bible teaches that Satan prowls the world "seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet 5:8), so Julian reasoned, nothing would please the devil more than to get to keep all these dead babies for his own kingdom. Eternal destiny to hell in effect means, said the bishop of Eclanum, that God already concedes to Satan what has been predetermined to be his from the beginning, the very same conclusion of the dualist Manicheans, who also left good and evil equipoised. Augustine had supposedly abandoned the Manichaeism of his youth, but, Julian claimed,

it lingered on in his theology of predestination and an infantile hell.[3] Edwards, too, found himself caught in this same bind in his ever-more elaborate defense of predestination against Bartlett; for, in his ringing defense of the servility of human will and its need for God's predestined grace, Edwards, authentic son of Calvin that he was, spoke of predestination applying to infants no less than to adults.[4]

Although Calvinists did not have as strong a view on the efficacy of infant baptism as did Augustine, their Westminster Confession (1647) nonetheless spoke openly of elect infants (X.3), leaving open the question of their number. When it was conceded, in essential harmony with Augustine, that the number of elect infants was finite, one Arminian theologian with a taste for sarcasm charged these "hard-shell Calvinists" with advocating the eschatology of "Fried Baby." (Similarly, when Augustinians in the Middle Ages objected to the Thomist hypothesis of a painless limbo for unbaptized infants, Thomists in turn called these Augustinians *tortores infantium*, baby-torturers, an objection that has put all predestinarians in the Augustinian tradition in the acutest rhetorical bind.)

Such patterns, as we have seen, played themselves out on both continents, Europe and America. In Thuesen's account, though, two aspects of the debate on predestination hit Americans with special force: the suicidal torment the doctrine caused to some sensitive souls and the divisive effect it had on American denominationalism.

First of all, predestination in the Calvinist rubric often brought on genuine emotional distress in some parishioners' lives, so often in fact that the syndrome soon earned its own moniker: *tentatio praedestinationis*, the temptation to despair at one's future salvation (think Dimmesdale again). "Hell was, of course, a person's default destination under the Augustinian doctrine of original sin," Thuesen notes (61). Nor was this position uniquely Reformed, for Augustine was the common touchstone for both sides of the Reformation debate. Thus Catholic theologians like the medieval Thomas Aquinas and the counter-Reformation Jesuit Robert

[3] On this point see further Paul Rhodes Eddy, "*Can* a leopard change its spots? Augustine and the crypto-Manichaeism question," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 62 (2009): 316–46.

[4] Despite Edwards's reputation for fire-and-brimstone sermons, Michael Allen argues that Edwards was, at best, a cautious supralapsarian; see Michael Allen, "Jonathan Edwards and the lapsarian debate," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 62 (2009): 299–315. However, since Edwards clearly countenanced the idea of infant reprobation, and since infants can hardly be said to have any choice in their early death, the conclusion of supralapsarian logic seems unavoidable in Edwards, even if he was diffident in expressing it, given its essential grimness.

Cardinal Bellarmine freely admitted that the number of the saved would be few in comparison to the damned.

Not a very hopeful doctrine for anyone, to be sure. But Puritan divines seemed to have been especially concerned with the latent despair many of their flock drew from the doctrine. One not terribly helpful strategy would be to say, as one Puritan theologian actually did, that "[i]f among a thousand capital offenders, it were published that one of them should have a pardon, would not everyone hope to be the man?"[5] Obviously that ploy can only offer the hope of desperation. Anyone with the slightest sense of unworthiness, or even a delicate conscience, would easily assume he belonged among the vast number of the reprobate.

So it could hardly have come as much of a surprise when Increase Mather (the Puritan clergyman involved in the Salem witch trials) announced, in a sermon specifically devoted to his congregation's collective temptation to suicide, that "within the space of but five weeks, there had been five self-murders" in his own congregation.[6] Thus a doctrine that Calvin had meant to give hope to his persecuted followers in fact became the occasion for their despair.

This ironic outcome brings up the second feature of the doctrine of predestination that played such a prominent role in the history of American Protestantism: its inherent divisiveness *inside* congregations. Usually those denominations that took their identity from their *rejection* of the TULIP rule, such as John Wesley's Methodism, never felt tempted to return to a strict Calvinist understanding of predestination. Wesley, for example, when he arrived in the American colonies, excised fifteen of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England in which he had been raised that treated of justification by faith alone and the condemnation of works-righteousness. Obviously, a Methodist stress on the need for good works must equally imply a robust free will, hence Wesley's hostility to Calvinism. As Susanna Wesley wrote to her brother John in 1725: "The doctrine of predestination, as maintained by the rigid Calvinists, is very shocking and ought utterly to be abhorred, because it charges the most holy God with being the author of sin."[7]

But whenever a congregation or denomination *adopted* either five-point Calvinism or its equivalent, such a doctrinal subscription to strict predesti-

[5] Samuel Willard, *Compleat Body of Divinity in Two Hundred and Fifty Expository Lectures on the Assembly's Shorter Catechism* (Boston, 1726), 248–49; cited in Thuesen, *Predestination*, 60.

[6] Increase Mather, *A Call to the Tempted: A Sermon on the Horrid Crime of Self-Murder* (Boston, 1724), 1; cited in Thuesen, *Predestination*, 65.

[7] Cited in Thuesen, *Predestination*, 73.

nationism invariably served as a catalyst for internal dissent from the doctrine—and a breakup of that denomination into another church formation. The reason why predestination proved so perennially discordant stems, not surprisingly, from the very *tentatio praedestinationis* that so dominated the lives of the devout in Puritan New England, as Thuesen explains here:

> First, [anxiety over one's predestined salvation] entailed something of a Catch-22. If you were not anxious about your eternal election, you were obviously not elect. But continuous (or at least cyclical) anxiety about election denied you the very comfort that predestination was supposed to bring. Comfort, in other words, could be notoriously elusive in this system. Predestinarian anxiety . . . all too easily passed from salutary struggle to genuine distress. The second problem . . . was its sheer intensity. . . . Not everyone was a spiritual marathon runner like Edwards or an accomplished soliloquist like Hamlet. Many Americans, including many Puritan laypeople, were happy simply muddling through. They looked to religion for the sort of automatic and tangible comforts that medieval laypeople once sought in merely watching the Mass. But such a view of the sacrament was the very thing Puritan clerics were bent on dispelling. (69)

Such paradoxes abound in the world where predestination is seen as operative, paradoxical both on its own doctrinal terms and in its historical effects on Christianity. After all, the doctrine must affirm human free will, lest predestination turn into outright fatalism or philosophical determinism. Yet the doctrine must also assume as one of its basic premises the servility of the will and its inability to carry out God's commands without efficacious grace. The juxtaposition of these two seemingly irreconcilable principles can lead to the impression that while one is free to choose evil (and thus responsible before the bars of justice for that evil), yet whatever good one does is not one's own doing but must be credited to God—in other words, "damned if you do [evil], damned if you don't [have grace]." Such a position prompted much predictable scoffing both from anti-Calvinist Christians and from those Enlightened skeptics who scorned the Christian religion in its entirety. To believe in predestination while still maintaining that reprobates sin of their own accord, one sociologist quips, "is almost like saying that a man who finds himself falling from a tree will decide on the way down that this is what he really planned to do anyway."[8] Ludwig Wittgenstein says something similar in his posthumously published notebooks:

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[8] Kai T. Erikson, *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: Wiley, 1966), 191.

> [The Calvinist axiom] "Out of his goodness he has chosen them and he will punish you" makes no sense. The two halves of the proposition belong to different ways of looking at things. The second is ethical, the first not. And taken together with the first, the second is absurd.[9]

The Catholic poet Alexander Pope said something similar in his 1734 poem *Essay on Man*:

> But still this world (so fitted for the knave)
> Contents us not. A better shall we have?
> A kingdom of the Just then let it be:
> But first consider how those Just agree.
> The good must merit God's peculiar care!
> But who but God can tell us who they are?
> One thinks, on Calvin Heaven's own spirit fell,
> Another deems him instrument of hell;
> If Calvin feel Heaven's blessing, or its rod,
> This cries there is, and that, there is no God.
> What shocks one part will edify the rest,
> Nor with one system can they all be blest.[10]

These painful implications are part of what should properly be called the dogmatic paradox of predestination. But there are other, more historical paradoxes too. For example, predestination as a doctrine has been on the defensive in America from its first enunciation in Edwards's own time, through the Declaration of Independence (hardly a Calvinist document with its solemn claim that all men are created equal), and down to the present day. Yet the only two American theologians who can plausibly claim first rank with the theologians of Europe (in any age) are Jonathan Edwards and Reinhold Niebuhr, both Augustinians (albeit each in his own fashion of course). Niebuhr even managed to make Augustine's thought sound sensible to, of all people, secularists. (One recalls here the informal club called "Atheists for Niebuhr.")

On the other hand, and to compound the paradoxes, a convincing case can be made that without Calvinism there would be no Declaration of Independence. True, Thomas Jefferson wrote to his close friend John

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[9] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, trans. Peter Winch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 81e: " 'Er hat sie, in seiner Güte, erwählt und er wird Dich strafen' hat ja keinen Sinn. Die beiden Hälften gehören zu verschiedenen Betrachtungen. Die zweite Hälfte ist ethisch und die erste ist es nicht. Und mit der ersten zusammen ist die zweite absurd" (81).

[10] Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man*, Epistle IV.5 in Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man and Other Poems*, ed. Stanley Appelbaum (New York: Dover, 1994), 72–73.

Adams decrying Calvin as the real atheist: "If ever man worshipped a false god, he did. The being described in his five points is not the God whom you and I acknowledge and adore, the Creator and benevolent governor of the world; but a demon of malignant spirit." Adams clearly agreed, for he expressed the same sentiment to his son, John Quincy Adams: "The Calvinist and the Atheists differ in nothing but this; the former believe in eternal misery; the latter not."[11]

Nonetheless, the Calvinist version of predestination had a role (an ironic one, to be sure) in promoting democracy because, unlike Augustine's version, it downplayed the efficacy and meaning of the sacraments, thereby undermining an ordained hierarchy as well. This democracy-promoting effect can be seen in the negative case, in those who opposed Calvinist doctrine, as Thuesen ably explains here:

> Despite their rhetoric about human freedom, Anglicans at their core believed in absolute obedience to God, king, lords, and bishops—a traditional hierarchy they regarded as the only divinely instituted safeguard of social stability. The seventeenth-century Puritan revolution had upset that order and had revived a strong predestinarianism that theoretically transcended all class distinctions. As historian John Woolverton has aptly put it, "anyone could call himself God's chosen vessel and persevere in endless and stubborn independence." From an Anglican perspective, an overemphasis on predestination threatened to undermine the laity's patriotic allegiance to the royal heads of state and church. (79–80)

Another historical paradox comes from Max Weber's famous thesis in his controversial book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1903), which claimed that Puritan anxiety over salvation and its correlative denial of works-righteousness found relief *through* hard work. Even on its own terms, this thesis is, in the words of one critic, "just as hard to demolish . . . as to substantiate."[12] Then there are counterexamples, such as Mormonism, which denies the doctrine of original sin entirely, to no apparent detriment to Mormons' industriousness.

Yet there are counterexamples to the counterexamples. Take the case of Abraham Lincoln, whose parents were raised in a hard-shell sect (called

[11] Thomas Jefferson, letter to John Adams, 11 April 1823, and John Adams, letter to John Quincy Adams, 6 June 1816, in *The Founders on Religion: A Book of Quotations*, ed. James H. Hutson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 117; cited in Thuesen, *Predestination*, 106.

[12] Alastair Hamilton, "Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Max Weber*, ed. Stephen Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 169.

Primitive Baptists) so extreme that it denied the efficacy of revivals or any missionary effort whatever, since altar calls and even conversions presuppose a response on the part of the potential convert. Although Lincoln never joined a church himself, based on his early realization of discrepancies in the Bible (something that caused considerable difficulties for him at the outset of his political career), "his early exposure to 'hard-shell' Calvinism contributed to his lifelong belief in fate and necessity," Thuesen notes (197). Yet such a worldview, so redolent of the fatalism of Marcus Aurelius, did nothing to keep him from vigorously prosecuting the Civil War, at least to the extent that his feckless generals would allow.

Lincoln's own unchurched status points out another feature of the predestinarian debate in America: strict views on predestination by no means go hand in hand with fundamentalism, as can be seen in Thuesen's penultimate chapter on the Southern Baptist Convention. In 1979 the Convention elected an inerrantist party to its governing board, which resulted in the ouster of about eighty percent of the faculty at the Convention's six seminaries, all of whom belonged to the so-called moderate wing. Fascinatingly, however, such a victory of the inerrantist party only exposed how a simple appeal to Scripture could not resolve the debate over predestination, resulting in what Thuesen calls a pyrrhic victory for the fundamentalists: "In making the SBC safe for inerrancy, conservatives exposed seemingly irreconcilable differences within their own ranks. The new struggle was not between fundamentalists and moderates (as the two parties of 1979 have been styled) but between an outspoken cadre of five-point Calvinists and their equally resolute non-Calvinist opponents" (201).

This heated intra-Baptist debate played itself out in Dallas between the pastors of two megachurches, W. A. Criswell and John R. Rice. Upon assuming the pastorate at the First Baptist Church of Dallas in 1944, Criswell announced he would preach through the entire Bible, a project that took seventeen years. When he got to the verse in which God proclaims through Isaiah "I will do all my pleasure" (Is 46:11), Criswell declared: "That's what you call predestination. That's Calvinism. And I am a Calvinist." Take away predestination, he said, and "there would be nothing left of the Bible."[13]

Rice, though, was having none of that. Most well known for his fiercely anti-secular and anti-ecumenical newsletter *Sword of the Lord*, Rice also penned a less famous work with the openly defiant title *Predestined for Hell? No!*—in which he compared five-point Calvinism to the fatalism he claimed was the essence of Islam. Above all, he said, Calvin-

[13] Cited in Thuesen, *Predestination*, 206. Criswell's sermons are available online at the Criswell Sermon Library, www.wacriswell.org.

ists were wrong in teaching God's absolute sovereignty: "God is love and love limits absolute sovereignty."[14] Thus God's saving promises in the Bible actually prevented God from preemptively damning sinners to hell apart from any consideration of their conduct. Rice even notoriously criticized Billy Graham in 1957, mostly because of his nondenominational altar-calls (pure syncretistic modernism to Rice) but also because Graham had been reared in a strict Calvinist Presbyterian church before becoming a Southern Baptist, and he, Rice claimed, still harbored crypto-predestinarian views. The charge "could not have been more ironic," Thuesen notes, since "Graham was in reality the forerunner of contemporary figures such as Rick Warren, for whom doctrinal specificity gets in the way of winning souls for Christ" (203).

This fudging infuriates the hard core on either side, abetted by internet blogsites and chatrooms with accusations from the anti-predestinarians of a "Calvinist jihad" being waged by the followers of Criswell, to which the hard-shell Calvinists reply with accusations of a relapse into works-righteousness in the soft-shell party. To which Thuesen adds this outsider's friendly observation: "One might fault Rick Warren for doctrinal fuzziness but one can hardly blame him for steering clear of such poisonous rhetoric" (216).

Not that Warren's own theology is without its problems. Thuesen concludes his book with an account of a visit he paid (as an historian, not as a prospective convert) to Warren's Saddleback Church in northern California, where he had the opportunity to listen to one of Warren's sermons. "As I listened to his sermon, though," observes Thuesen, "I could not shake the feeling that I was looking at Jonathan Edwards in the guise of a huggable, high school coach of a man" (211).

Although he was denied an interview with Warren himself, Thuesen cannot help noting that Warren's hugely popular book *The Purpose-Driven Life* (which has by now sold over 30 million copies) relies on key predestinarian themes. Indeed the epigram on the dedication page comes from one of only six verses in the New Testament that uses the verb usually translated "predestinate" or "predestine," all, not surprisingly, from Paul: "In him [Christ] we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will" (Eph 1:11). Tellingly, though, Warren used a paraphrase translation[15] which fudges the issue by speaking only of God's "designs on us."

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[14] John R. Rice, *Predestined to Hell? No!* (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord, 1958), 81; cited in Thuesen, *Predestination*, 202.

[15] Eugene Peterson, *The Message* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress; New Testament edition, 1997).

But the message inside Warren's book certainly sounds predestinarian enough: "Nothing in your life is arbitrary," Warren says. "God prescribed every single detail of your body. He deliberately chose your race, your hair, and every other feature."[16] Taken in isolation, these passages (and others like them) reflect the wider Christian doctrine of God's providence (not to be isomorphically identified, strictly speaking, with divine predestination). But in a gloss on the most famous proof text for predestination in the whole New Testament, Romans 8:29 ("For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son"), Warren says that the promise of salvation is "only for God's children,"[17] which seems to get as close to classical predestinarian doctrine as he is willing to go.

Lacking a chance to interview Warren himself, Thuesen did manage to interview another pastor at Saddleback, Tom Holladay, Warren's brother-in-law. When pressed on where Saddleback stood in the ongoing conflict in the SBC (Warren's church is Southern Baptist, although it does not advertise itself as such), Holladay said this:

> When Calvinism gets to that point where I don't have this urge to share my faith with somebody else, that's clearly outside the bounds of the Bible" [Holladay said]. . . . He added that Saddleback's pastors were in general agreement that "both Arminianism and Calvinism are true [he continued]. It's not that truth is in the middle. They just both have truth in them. . . . God's foreknowledge and election do not prohibit our choice, nor does our choice inhibit God's election. Now I know that's doublespeak. I've wrestled with it for years and years. But to me that's the best way to honor the choice that God has given us while we live on this earth. (213–14)

Thuesen is a historian, and his method is rigorously descriptive, although he concludes the book with the wider (and specifically theological) claim that excessive obsession with predestination robs Christianity of its deeply mysterious revelation when it tries to figure out God's ultimate intentions for the world; and he quotes both Martin Luther and Flannery O'Connor in support of this contention. In a remark from his *Table-Talk* Luther said: "I have been baptized. I believe in Jesus Christ. I have received the sacraments. What do I care if I have been predestined or not?" And Thuesen interprets O'Connor's short story "Parker's Back" as an allegory on the folly of seeking assurance of one's salvation in God's

[16] Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 22–23.

[17] Ibid., 196.

foreordained decrees. The story recounts the attempts of one O. E. Parker to please his Puritan wife by having a stern-looking image of Christ tattooed on his back. When he finally reveals the tattoo to his wife, she beats him senseless with a broom handle, "leaving him broken, like the scourged Christ of the passion," says Thuesen (218). As O'Connor herself said in a letter written in 1959, "Dogma is the guardian of mystery. The doctrines are spiritually significant in ways that we cannot fathom."[18]

II

Thuesen's book of course will be of interest not just to historians of American religion but to theologians, on account of which I feel bound to make a few remarks as a member of that latter guild. For Christian theology has in fact made noticeable strides, from both the Catholic and Protestant side, to move away from the presuppositions that led both to Augustine's infantile hell and to the Puritans' inability to offer true hope and consolation in their reliance on five-point Calvinism.

On the Catholic side, the key word missing from the debate on predestination from Augustine up to today is *solidarity*. In his book *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Mankind*, the Jesuit theologian Henri de Lubac shows how deep go the roots of the concept of solidarity in both the Bible and in patristic literature. He opens this influential, indeed epochal, book with an approving citation from a French author who insists, "My joy will not be lasting unless it is the joy of all."[19]

As presumably everyone knows, Pope Benedict XVI draws on de Lubac's book in his 2007 encyclical *Spe Salvi* and makes his own its conclusion: "Against this [individualism], drawing upon the vast range of patristic theology, de Lubac was able to demonstrate that salvation has always been considered a 'social' reality" (§14). Which of course prompts the inevitable question from the pope: "How could the idea have developed that Jesus' message is narrowly individualistic and aimed only at each person singly?" (§16) A large portion of the encyclical is devoted to a genealogical account of this declension from solidarity to individualism, but in terms of predestination the genealogy is not as important as

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[18] Flannery O'Connor, letter to Cecil Dawkins, 23 December 1959, in *The Habit of Being: The Letters of Flannery O'Connor*, ed. Sally Fitzgerald (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979), 365.

[19] Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Mankind*, forward by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, trans. Lancelot C. Sheppard and Sister Elizabeth Englund, O.C.D. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 13, quoting Jean Giono, *Les vrais richesses*.

the dogmatic conclusion reached by this magisterial document: "No one lives alone. No one sins alone. No one is saved alone" (§48).[20]

From this conclusion comes the correlate entailment (enunciated two paragraphs earlier), one that marks the final official, magisterial break with Augustine's thesis of the *massa damnata*: "For the great majority of people—we may suppose—there remains in the depths of their being an ultimate interior openness to truth, to love, to God" (§46). True, for Benedict these depths are occluded with the dross of sin, which must first be purged and burned away, by a fire which he suggests is Christ himself:

> Some recent theologians are of the opinion that the fire which both burns and saves is Christ himself, the Judge and Savior. The encounter with him is the decisive act of judgment. Before his gaze all falsehood melts away. This encounter with him, as it burns us, transforms and frees us, allowing us to become truly ourselves. All that we build during our lives can prove to be mere straw, pure bluster, and it collapses. Yet in the pain of this encounter, when the impurity and sickness of our lives become evident to us, there lies salvation. His gaze, the touch of his heart, heals us through an undeniably painful transformation "as through fire." But it is a blessed pain, in which the holy power of his

[20] Ironically, there are abundant resources in Augustine's own thought that could have led him in that same direction, but for his polemic against the Pelagians: "Consider our species, our human race. . . . One man begot us to sin and to death, and yet as one race. . . . One man [Christ] came against one man [Adam]: against the one man who *scattered* came one who *gathered*. In the same way, against one man who killed came one man who made alive. For 'just as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive' [1 Cor 15:22]." St. Augustine, *Sermon 90.7*, in *The Works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, part 3: Sermons, vol. 3: *Sermons 51–94*, trans. Edmund Hill, O.P. (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1991), 452; emphases added. Augustine even more strongly emphasizes Adam's representative role standing in for all humanity in his *Commentary on Psalm 94*: "Now Adam's name, as I have said more than once, means in Greek the whole world. For there are four letters in his name A, D, A, and M; and with the Greeks the four quarters of the world have these initial letters. . . . Adam is thus scattered throughout the globe. Set in one place, he fell and, as it were, now broken small, he has filled the whole world. But the Divine Mercy gathered up the fragments from every side, forged them in the fire of love and welded into one what had been broken. That was a work which this Artist knew how to do! Let no one therefore give way to despair! An immense task it was indeed! But think who the Artist was! He who remade [us] was himself the Maker. He who refashioned [us] was himself the Fashioner." Cited in Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Mankind*, 376. How ironic that Augustine's counsel not to despair later became the occasion for so much despair from the neglect of this motif of solidarity in Augustine's own thought!

> love sears through us like a flame, enabling us to become totally ourselves and thus totally of God. (§47)[21]

In another recent work, his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, Benedict advances the idea, also advocated most famously by Hans Urs von Balthasar, that Christ can be that purging and saving fire precisely because he has first endured that same fire in his atoning love during his descent into hell.[22] Drawing on

[21] Benedict is of course no Origenist, anticipating an Eschaton in which all will be reconciled. That said, he seems to envision a kind of Bell's Curve operating before the end of time, with roughly equal (but small) numbers of souls going straight to heaven or, as the case may be, to hell, with the vast majority having some form of purgatory to endure: "With death, our life-choice becomes definitive—our life stands before the judge. Our choice, which in the course of an entire life takes on a certain shape, can have a variety of forms. There can be people who have totally destroyed their desire for truth and readiness to love, people for whom everything has become a lie, people who have lived for hatred and have suppressed all love within themselves. This is a terrifying thought, but alarming profiles of this type can be seen in certain figures of our own history. In such people all would be beyond remedy and the destruction of good would be irrevocable: this is what we mean by the word *Hell*. On the other hand there can be people who are utterly pure, completely permeated by God, and thus fully open to their neighbors—people for whom communion with God even now gives direction to their entire being and whose journey toward God only brings to fulfillment what they already are. Yet we know from experience that neither case is normal in human life. For *the great majority of people*—we may suppose—there remains in the depths of their being an ultimate interior openness to truth, to love, to God. In the concrete choices of life, however, it is covered over by ever new compromises with evil—much filth covers purity, but the thirst for purity remains and it still constantly re-emerges from all that is base and remains present in the soul. . . . [Thus] it is . . . evident that our salvation can take different forms, that some of what is built may be burned down, that in order to be saved we personally have to pass through 'fire' so as to become fully open to receiving God and able to take our place at the table of the eternal marriage-feast" (*Spe Salvi*, §46–47, emphasis added).

[22] Ratzinger's debt to Balthasar's eschatology began early in his career, as can be seen in this review written in 1961, of two early volumes of Balthasar's *Explorations in Theology*: "In several places Balthasar expresses the opinion that the closed brackets of predestination, which had been firmly shut with Augustine, and by which he had set an absolute limit to the Church's capacity for carrying sinners to redemption, are today ever so gradually and slowly starting to open up again. Not of course that Balthasar, the great scholar and translator of Origen, wants to align himself with Origenism in the sense of a doctrine of inevitable universal redemption. He fully realizes the danger entailed in the sense of election, in whatever guise, and decisively rejects 'a certain exhilaration at feeling part of the elect of God, which is just as extreme as was the correlative Reformed despondency resulting from an obsession with guilt.' But he also teaches us even more clearly that what belongs to God we should leave to God and not fix the

a patristic motif that sees Jesus' descent into the River Jordan at his baptism as an anticipation of his descent into hell after his death, Benedict explains the saving effects of this descent to the underworld this way:

> Jesus' Baptism, then, is understood as a repetition of the whole of history, which both recapitulates the past and anticipates the future. His entering into the sin of others is a descent into the "inferno." But he does not descend merely in the role of a spectator, as in Dante's *Inferno*. Rather, *he goes down in the role of one whose suffering-with-others is a transforming suffering that turns the underworld around, knocking down and flinging open the gates of the abyss*. His Baptism is a descent into the house of the evil one, combat with the "strong man" (cf. Lk 11:22) who holds men captive (and the truth is that we are all very much captive to powers that anonymously manipulate us!). Throughout all its history, the world is powerless to defeat the "strong man": he is overcome and bound by one yet stronger, who, because of his equality with God, can take upon himself all the sin of the world and then *suffers it through to the end—omitting nothing on the downward path into identity with the fallen*. This struggle is the "conversion" of being that brings it into a new condition, that prepares a new heaven and a new earth. Looked at from this angle, the sacrament of Baptism appears as the gift of participation in Jesus' world-transforming struggle in the conversion of life that took place in his descent and ascent.[23]

This motif has long been a part of Joseph Ratzinger's theology: among its other implications, the doctrine of Christ's descent into hell *means* solidarity. As he said in his last book before becoming archbishop of

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decision ahead of time in either direction—either toward the Origenist or the extreme Augustinian side. Above all he reminds us that when Holy Scripture narrates God's *historical* acts of reprobation and election—when, for example, it recounts God's election of Isaac over Ishmael, of Jacob over Esau, of Moses over Pharaoh, and finally of Israel as a whole—it is not speaking of eternal salvation and damnation but instead, and unambiguously, of God's historical dealings with mankind in world history and salvation-history." Joseph Ratzinger, "Christlicher Universalismus: Zum Aufsatzwerk Hans Urs v. Balthasars," *Hochland* 54 (1961): 68–76, here 72, my translation. The internal quotation comes from Balthasar's essay "Christian Universalism," *Explorations in Theology*, vol. 1: *The Word Made Flesh*, trans. A. V. Littledale with Alexander Dru (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989): 241–54, here 250.

[23] Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, trans. Adrian J. Walker (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 20, emphasis added. At a minimum, this passage undercuts the idea that baptism is of relevance to the individual alone but is in fact a plunge into the Body of Christ, his Church, as Paul so clearly teaches (Rom 6:3).

Munich, *Eschatology*, Christ becomes Judge of sinners by first enacting his solidarity with them in the realm of the dead:

> While the real quality of evil and its consequences become quite palpable here, the question also arises . . . whether in this event we are not in touch with a divine response able to draw freedom precisely as freedom to itself. The answer lies hidden in Jesus' descent into Sheol, in the night of the soul which he suffered, a night which no one can observe except by entering this darkness in suffering faith. Thus, in the history of holiness which hagiology offers us, and notable in the course of recent centuries, in John of the Cross, in Carmelite piety in general, and in that of Thérèse of Lisieux in particular, "Hell" has taken on a completely new meaning and form. For the saints, "Hell" is not so much a threat to be hurled at other people but a challenge to oneself. It is a challenge to suffer in the dark night of faith, to experience communion with Christ in solidarity with his descent into the Night. One draws near to the Lord's radiance by sharing his darkness. One serves the salvation of the world by leaving one's own salvation behind for the sake of others.[24]

This mention of Thérèse of Lisieux was no mere gesture in her direction by this future pope, for this too was a motif in her own writings. Indeed, there are passages in the writings of this most recently named Doctor of the Church which capture this theologoumenon of Christ's solidarity with sinners in the underworld with astonishing force. In one of the most remarkable and daring statements ever penned from the writings of the saints, Thérèse writes in her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*:

> One night, not knowing how to tell Jesus that I loved Him and how much I desired that He be everywhere loved and glorified, I was thinking with sorrow that He could never receive in hell a single act of love. So I told God that to please Him I would willingly consent to find myself plunged into hell, so that He might be eternally loved in that place of blasphemy.[25]

The foregoing passages might seem to speak only to Catholics; or at least five-point Calvinists would probably find them unimpressive. After all, the

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[24] Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, trans. Michael Waldstein, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988/2007), 217–18.

[25] Thérèse de Lisieux, *The Story of a Soul*, trans. Robert J. Edmonson (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2006), 122. For those unsettled by this daring (but entirely *evangelical*) "folly," her generous gesture has ample biblical warrant: "For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren, those of my own race, the people of Israel" (Rom 9:3–4a).

L of TULIP means *Limited* atonement, which would seem to undercut any appeal to solidarity, especially one made by a pope influenced by Balthasar or by a pious, bourgeois adolescent who had been raised in the hothouse atmosphere of nineteenth-century French Catholicism. But Protestant theology, too, has moved beyond Calvin, especially in that most famous Calvinist theologian of the twentieth century, Karl Barth.

Ironically, Barth is so Calvinist that he even affirms supralapsarianism, the doctrine that says God determined the outcome of salvation prior to Adam's sin, prior even to creation. But basing himself on Paul's line that "no matter how many promises God has made, they are Yes in Christ" (2 Cor 1:20), Barth sees *Christ* as the primal object of God's predestination. Again, his reinterpretation of supralapsarianism is based on Paul, who says that "all things were created through him and for him" (Col 1:16b). Giving these passages their proper due, Barth can then quite transform Calvin's (and, *a fortiori*, Augustine's) version of predestination:

> The truth which must now occupy us, the truth of the doctrine of predestination, is first and last and in all circumstances the sum of the Gospel, no matter how it may be understood in detail, no matter what apparently contradictory aspects or moments it may present to us. . . . It is not a mixed message of joy and terror, salvation and damnation. Originally and finally it is not dialectical but non-dialectical. It does not proclaim in the same breath both good and evil, both help and destruction, both life and death. It does, of course, throw a shadow. We cannot overlook or ignore this aspect of the matter. In itself, however, it is light and not darkness. We cannot, therefore, speak of the latter aspect in the same breath. In any case, even under this aspect, the final word is never that of warning, of judgment, of punishment, of a barrier erected, of a grave opened. We cannot speak of it without mention of all these things. The Yes cannot be heard unless the No is also heard. But the No is said for the sake of the Yes and not for its own sake. In substance, therefore, the first and last word is Yes and not No.[26]

The outworkings of this vivid passage will occupy all of the 806 pages of this volume (II.2) of the *Church Dogmatics*, obviously too long to summarize here. Fortunately, the central thesis of this large tome has been neatly summarized in Balthasar's seminal work on Barth, a book that did so much to bring these insights into Catholic theology, not least Pope Benedict's:

> The source and beginning of all election, behind and over which there is no earlier, no higher, and next to which there is no other election, is

[26] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II.2: *The Doctrine of God*, trans. G. W. Bromiley et al. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957), 13.

> Jesus Christ alone. In him God chooses himself, but in the form of a creature. On him, the gracious Mediator and Redeemer, all creation is founded "from before the foundation of the world." He alone is the primal object of the Father's election. It is in him that the family of man is summoned to election. And the individual is summoned to his own personal and private relationship with God only as a part of this family. This primal election of Christ is the foundation for the whole epic of divine providence, so that the doctrine of providence must be unconditionally regarded as part of the more comprehensive doctrine of election, but not the reverse.[27]

Balthasar will of course want to ask the same question posed in *Spe Salvi*: how did these obviously biblical perspectives get occluded by later history? But again, that genealogical question recedes, and almost dissipates, once the Bible's own Christocentrism is made the governing principle of predestination:

> The flaw in most of the previous doctrines of election was a failure to contextualize election as part of God's relationship to Christ. Previous theories misconstrued the christological basis that is so clearly witnessed to in the Bible. Instead, they regarded election as a purely individual happening between an abstract (and therefore terrifying) absolute God and the isolated creature viewed atomistically. But it is the Son of God who is the object of God's election from all eternity. He is the one who has been elected and chosen to lead the as-yet uncreated world back to God. He will stand up for it and plead its case, take its guilt upon his shoulders, atoning for this guilt in place of all those who are to become sinners; and thus he will become in this sense the object of divine "reprobation" and rejection.[28]

The perspective opened up by this move, one that sees the doctrine of predestination as the Father's decision to create the world both through and *for* his Son, solves, in a stroke, the problem of the *tentatio praedestinationis* bequeathed to the Church by Augustine and Calvin. Finally, the believer finds true grounds for trust and sees why Paul could say that nothing in creation can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ

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[27] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation*, trans. Edward T. Oakes, S.J. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 175. This passage occurs in the chapter called "Praedestinatio Gemina" ("double predestination"), which again shows how Barth can take accepted Calvinist motifs and revolutionize them by centering them on Christ.

[28] Ibid., 175–76. It should be stressed that this passage comes from the "exposition" part of Balthasar's Barth book; for his own Catholic interpretation of Christ as simultaneously elect and "reprobate," see 326–78.

(Rom 8:39). For now God, through Christ, no longer sees the *necessity* of condemning mankind to hell. The traditional understanding of supralapsarianism had insisted that the decree of predestination meant inevitable and unavoidable doom or redemption, all depending on God's decree prior to creation; but Barth's version of supralapsarianism upends that conclusion, as he explains in this powerful passage:

> It is a serious matter to be threatened by hell, sentenced to hell, worthy of hell, and already on the road to hell. On the other hand, we must not minimize the fact that we actually know of only one certain triumph of hell—the handing-over of Jesus—and that this triumph of hell took place in order that it would never again be able to triumph over anyone. We must not deny that Jesus gave Himself up into the depths of hell not only with many others but on their behalf, in the place of all who believe in Him.[29]

As Wittgenstein, himself an acute critic of the philosophical incoherence of predestination as traditionally understood, put it so well: "Within Christianity, it's as though God says to men: Don't act out a tragedy, don't enact heaven and hell on earth. Heaven and hell are *my* affair."[30] Exactly. NV

[29] Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II.2, 496.

[30] Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 14e: "Im Christentum sagt der liebe Gott gleichsam zu den Menschen: Spielt nicht Tragödie, das heißt Himmel auf Erden. Himmel und Hölle habe ich mir vorbehalten."

Book Reviews

Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation by James K. A. Smith (*Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009*), 238 pp.

ARE CHRISTIAN Universities distinct enough from their secular counterparts? What would it take for Christian education to be distinctive *as* Christian? These two questions are the central concerns of this book, which is the first volume of a planned three-volume series entitled "Cultural Liturgies." The author, James K. A. Smith, is a professor of philosophy at Calvin College, and is well known in evangelical circles for his popular-level writing on postmodernism and the "Radical Orthodoxy" movement. Recently he has turned to thinking about the relationship between liturgy and philosophy. This book is one of the fruits of this project, and is written to explore the link between liturgical formation and Christian education.

The book is written more for pastors and general educators than as part of a theological debate, but there are extensive footnotes that point to sources of an extended academic conversation behind Smith's book. Smith draws together a Reformed theology of worship, recent work on "practices" in contemporary philosophy and theological ethics, and ideas of "liturgical anthropology" found in Orthodox figures like Alexander Schmemann. This material is presented in a very clear and introductory way, giving this book a wide potential readership. Overall the book is very reader-friendly, employing diagrams and boxes with talking points set off from the regular text. One "side box" for instance asks, "what cultural practices and institutions are bent on forming in you sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?" The structure of the book itself mirrors Smith's concern to connect academic life with lived Christian faith.

There are also several short subsections in Smith's chapters that engage with a particular literary work or film. These add an extra dimension to Smith's presentation and come from a wide range of sources from Walker Percy's *Love in the Ruins* to Baz Luhrmann's movie *Moulin Rouge*. Smith's

reading of the configuration of "embodiment" in Tom Wolfe's *I am Charlotte Simmons* is the standout example of this for the way it connects to Smith's ideas about education and the formation of desire.

The driving concern of the book is the observation that Christian education today emphasizes the teaching of a particular "worldview" rather than the shaping of desire towards the worship of God. Smith uses the word "liturgy" beyond its usual ecclesial sense to describe a set of practices that form people into desiring or loving certain things. The book proposes that Christian colleges and universities are allowing their students to be formed by "secular liturgies," enacted in places like the shopping mall, rather than being shaped by Christian worship. Are places of Christian education merely giving students *ideas*, in the form of a particular worldview, rather than forming them to be disciples?

The presentation of this question and the offer of a solution form roughly the two halves of the book. The first shows how "liturgies" and practices form human behavior, and the second shows how Christian worship can fit into this context for the formation of students. In the first part Smith brings together philosophical and theological reasons for calling human beings "liturgical animals." Drawing on Augustine through the lens of Heidegger (pointing to some of Smith's previous academic work), Smith notes that humans are defined and shaped, for good or for bad, by what they love (50). He helpfully describes practices as "love's formation," and shows concern that university students are being shaped by practices that may be inimical to the Gospel. In other words, university students are being formed in various good and bad ways by "secular liturgies."

University life from freshman initiation rituals to academic testing is a powerful "liturgical" setting that shapes lives in particular ways. Smith laments that Christian schools, even of a conservative kind, tend to form students "liturgically" in essentially the same ways as secular schools. Smith asks not only what vision of the "good life" a Christian university teaches, but also "what rituals and practices are present in the university to teach students to desire this vision?" He places a special focus on student life, noting that the "information" taught at even Christian schools is "not nearly as potent as the formation we've received in the dorm and frat house, or the stadium and dance club" (117). Christian educators or ministers must learn how these "secular liturgies" shape people. Two concrete examples Smith gives are Victoria's Secret stores at the mall (they know how to form desire) and the saying of the Pledge of Allegiance in elementary schools. Both of these examples "liturgically" form persons into having particular desires or identities. The idea is that the people composing "secular liturgies," such as the layout of a shopping

mall or the cadence of patriotic events, know how to form human wants and desires better than Christian educators do. They know humans are embodied. They know how ritual and repeated "practice" cause habits or desires. They know how to play on the affective dimension of human choice and cognition. Those who try to intellectually form Christian students into a particular "Christian worldview" while neglecting affective and liturgical formation have missed the point. Smith diagnoses Christian universities and colleges with a lingering Cartesianism that separates the teaching of Christian convictions from their embodiment in Christian worship and ritual practice.

The second half of the book is a "practical" reading of Christian worship itself. Mirroring his anthropological work on practice, liturgy, and love in the first half, he places a special focus on symbolic and ritualistic aspects of Christian worship. For example, he describes the impression made on his young children by the use of darkness at a Good Friday service, children who could otherwise understand very little in terms of theological *ideas* (137). He uses examples like a Tenebrae service not only to shore up his point on education, but also as part of a more general concern of the book to further convince Protestants of the importance of these aspects of worship. Smith rightly notes that the Protestant emphasis on message, cognition, and worldview in their worship services tends to pass over children and mentally challenged adults. It is interesting to think with Smith that a thicker, more "sacramental" worship may be a significant part of the effort by churches to make themselves accessible for those with cognitive disabilities.

To provide some further concreteness to his idea that liturgy forms our love, Smith reads each of the various practices in a worship service through this lens. Smith goes through all the various parts of a worship service from greeting, to prayer, to confession, scripture reading, baptism and Eucharist, up to even giving a rather profound account of the taking up of offering. His account of the worship service deals more explicitly with Christian theological concepts than previous chapters, and lays out some of the theology that has been in the background of the book. Smith's account of the Image of God is particularly important. The Image of God in human beings means that humans are God's representatives and agents in the world, and the word that best summarizes this agency and representation is "culture" (163). "Culture" here is meant to connote both "cultivation" and "cultic" worship. Gathering for worship is a fulfillment of this Image and a participation in Jesus' work of reconciling the world to himself.

Smith says that Christian universities should not only focus more on the wealth within Christian ritual and liturgy, but additionally calls for

creative thinking on how to imagine how to enact the "social imaginaries" contained in Christian worship practices beyond Sunday. He gives a few examples of this, like noonday communion offered by urban churches, or his own weekly gathering with Christian friends as a kind of "shadow" extension of the Lord's Supper. He mentions university chapel briefly but wants to more strongly emphasize students being a part of a local church. It seems to me that some creative thinking involving ways a university chapel could be more involved in university life would be a useful "practical" addition to the book.

There are things in the book theologians from different confessional perspectives may quibble with (like Smith's understanding of "Sacramentality," 141–43), but these may be tempered upon recognizing Smith's own understanding of *Desiring the Kingdom* as a "précis" or "abstract" to a longer project (12). One could indeed read this book as, among other things, an engagement in Evangelical-Catholic dialogue specifically on issues of liturgy and the Church-world relationship. Although he nowhere cites this text, Smith's reading of "secular" and "Christian" liturgies and his focus on embodiment finds a clear parallel in one of Aquinas's arguments for the necessity of the Sacraments, in which he says that the Sacraments were necessary in order that human beings might be offered "bodily exercise" whereby they might be "trained to avoid superstitious practices, consisting in the worship of demons, and all manner of harmful action, consisting in sinful deeds" (*Summa theologiae*, III, q. 61, a. 1).

While the book is mostly written for those involved in education, Smith's reflections on the power of "secular liturgies" to shape desire would make useful bible study or sermon material. His recommendation of a more "embodied" and "sacramental" pattern of worship also may be useful to Pastors and others wanting to think about how to live out the things they do and say in worship "beyond Sunday." Smith's book successfully forces the question of Christian education outside the box of the "worldview model." The first half of the book suggests that this model is failing to form students as disciples of Jesus Christ. The second half of the book provides enough theological material and concrete examples to start several conversations about how Christian educators or parish workers can better form students to be worshippers of God and witnesses to the Kingdom. NV

Matthew Archer
University of Dayton
Dayton, Ohio

The Specification of Human Actions in St Thomas Aquinas by Joseph Pilsner (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006*), xi + 273 pp.

AQUINAS'S account of the specification of human actions, what it is that makes this particular action an action of this kind rather than of some other kind, is notoriously confusing and yet indispensible for all of his later claims about the good and bad actions of human life. We have good reason, then, to be grateful for Joseph Pilsner's fine new study of specification in Aquinas, whose purpose is to show that, "in spite of apparent difficulties, Thomas's teaching on how end, object, circumstance, matter, and motive contribute to a human action's specification possesses a fundamental coherence" (6).

This is a careful and thorough study, and Fr. Pilsner draws on Thomas's entire corpus to present the reader with all the various puzzles and difficulties that face those of us who wish to draw a coherent account of specification out of Aquinas. Fr. Pilsner eschews all controversy over anything but strict interpretative questions, commenting only that if he succeeds in his study, this will bring some "clarity" to the debate between proportionalism and Thomism.

After an introductory chapter, chapter two gives an overview of Aquinas's moral theory, and chapter three some background into two related types of specification, that of natural corporeal beings and of natural actions. Then chapters four through eight take up the five elements of specification in turn: end, object, matter, circumstance, and motive. Chapter nine returns to a problem about proximate versus remote ends, and the concluding chapter draws things together. I will focus here on the most important elements of specification: end, object, and matter.

Chapter four opens with a persistent trope in Aquinas's writings: "Moral acts properly receive their species from ends" (47). In the case of natural corporeal creatures, their substantial form determines what they are—if they are to be anything at all, they must possess a particular form which places them in a particular species. Likewise, "unless people conceive of some end—to run, to pray, to embezzle, or something—and bestir themselves to pursue this end, they will do nothing at all. Consequently, the very existence and character of every action depends on that end which the agent determines" (51). So the role of (substantial) *form* with respect to a corporeal species is analogous to the role of *end* with respect to a human action, and the end is as it were the (substantial) form of human action.

Fr. Pilsner returns to ends in chapter nine with a puzzle about proximate and remote ends. "On some occasions, Aquinas seems to contend that the proximate end is crucial for specification, while the remote end is inconsequential. On other occasions, however, he appears to assert just the

opposite: he holds not only that a remote end gives a species to a human action, but also that this species has greater formal influence than the species from a proximate end" (218–19). If ends as such specify actions, and any one action is typically performed for more than one end, which end specifies?

Fr. Pilsner's solution is that we can consider what happens from two perspectives. When we consider an action in itself, in abstraction from the concrete circumstances of a lived human life, we consider it "*secumdem suam speciem*" (234) and as such we do not consider its relationship to any remote ends or other circumstances of the agent. So what I am doing now is an act of purgation, simply speaking, or an act of picking up a straw, or borrowing, and so on. But in every human life, every particular action is in fact linked together with a series of remote ends that eventually leads to one's final end. For this reason, the end of charity "endows [the] proximate end with a certain formal quality" (237). *What* I am doing, when I purge, is in part "making possible my charitable activity," and so when we take the larger perspective of the agent, remote ends can specify insofar as they are joined with the proximate end in an overall unified pursuit of the final end.

I suspect there's less of a difficulty here than Fr. Pilsner seems to think. He works to solve the puzzle of how one action can possess two specifying forms (one from the proximate end and one from the remote end), but I see no reason not to admit that there are two actions here: an act of purging, specified by the end of purging and taking as its matter the various tools, body parts, and activities required for purging, and an act of charity, specified by the end of union with God and taking as its matter, among other things, the intentional action of purging. A remote end as such never specifies; it can specify only insofar as it imparts its own formal character to what I am up to, and as such it becomes a proximate end and form of a new action that includes in its matter the previous action (or series of actions). So "purging" is considered formal in one sense but material in another.

But if Aquinas often refers to the specifying role of the "end," he even more frequently refers to the specifying role of the "object" (and does so more often and in more of his writings than any other single moral determinant [71]). The "object" of an action is that thing towards which the power of acting is directed, as the object of sight is "a colored thing." With respect to sight, we can consider two aspects of its object: there is a material aspect, the "something" which is colored, and a formal aspect, the color. It is the formal aspect, the color, that most properly specifies "sight." Sight is what it is because it is directed towards color. Likewise, a will act, like an act of seeing, is specified most properly by the formal aspect of its object; the will is directed towards the rational good, and so the "formal

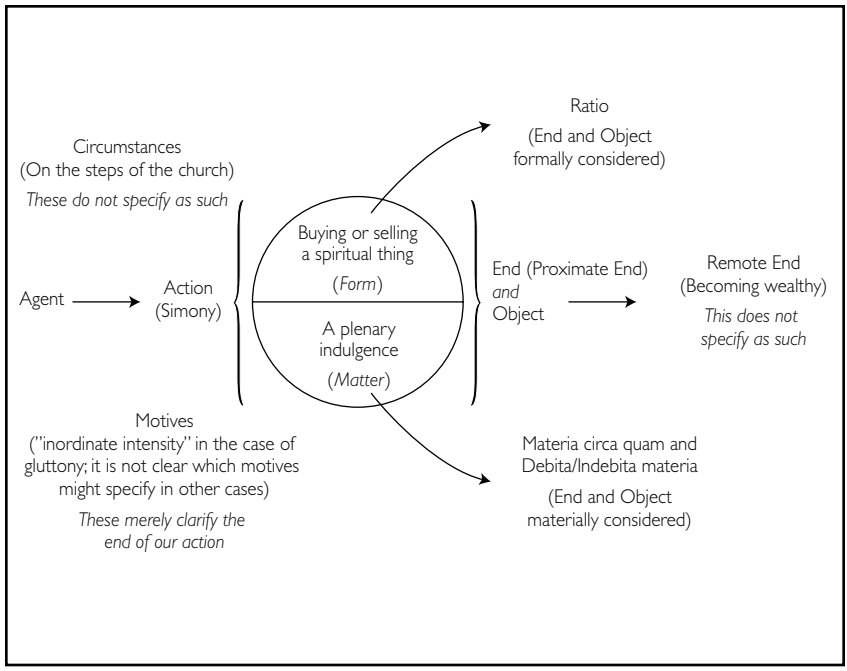
aspect" (Fr. Pilsner's translation of *ratio*) of an activity is the activity's relation to right reason. The formal aspect, and therefore what specifies, of the act of intercourse with this woman is that she is "not one's own wife" (104); this specifies the act as one of adultery. So "object" specifies what I am doing by picking out the formal aspect of the end for which I am acting, the end I am related to as an intentionally acting agent.

The treatment of "end" and "object" both emphasized the formal aspect of our action, but sometimes Aquinas also claims that *matter* specifies. The matter of an action that specifies is either the "matter about which" (*materia circa quam*), or else "due" or "undue matter" (*debita or indebita materia*). Both the end and the object of an action have both formal and material aspects; the formal aspect is the *ratio*, but the material aspect is the *materia circa quam*, "that reality to which an action is specially related" (147). Just as the object of sight is a colored thing, which requires the formal aspect of color and the material contribution of something that can be colored, so any particular action has both a formal character and matter that can bear that character. So the *materia circa quam* of fire burning is the wood, and that of "buying and selling" is "one's own thing," or "a spiritual thing," or "someone else's thing," and the like. Aquinas sometimes refers to this very same material reality as due or undue matter when he means to "suggest that a certain kind of matter is 'suitable' or 'unsuitable' . . . for a certain kind of action from a moral point of view" (152). So the combination of "buying and selling" with the undue matter of "a spiritual thing" results in an act immoral in its species: simony. But since both the formal and material elements of a thing, abstractly considered, determine species (so the species "man" is determined both by "rational soul" and "flesh and bones"), Aquinas can say, as he frequently does, that the *materia circa quam* or the *debita* or *indebita materia* specifies an act. We know what kind of act we have when, already knowing that it is an act of buying or selling, we discover that it was an act of buying or selling a spiritual thing.

Of circumstances, Aquinas says both that "a circumstance, as such, does not give the species to a moral act" and that "every circumstance is capable of changing the species of sin" (173). Fr. Pilsner's explanation of this is surely the only way out: "Thomas, on some occasions, speaks about properties of actions strictly and, on other occasions, loosely. When he is speaking strictly, circumstances do not specify human actions. . . . But when Aquinas is speaking loosely, however, circumstances can (after a fashion) be said to specify. Certain properties which are circumstances when actions are considered apart from reason provide critical differences when this comparison is engaged" (197). Likewise, although Aquinas remarks that "wherever a different motive for sinning is present, there is another species

of sin" (199), "motive," as specifying, refers to the final cause of the action, which is the end, and so motive specifies an action as its end; a "motive" is what "moves," and in voluntary action, it is the end that moves. So when the glutton eats too quickly, consuming his food with "inordinate intensity" (209), he acts from the too intense desire for food, and in doing so reveals that his end is "consuming this food as quickly as possible."

I have tried above to bring things together in the simplest possible fashion, but it is no idle remark that specification in Aquinas is confusing. I am not altogether sure that Fr. Pilsner's own final account draws things together as I have done, and I waited in vain for a helpful picture relating the various elements. Nevertheless, here is the picture that seems right:



I have little to add in the way of criticism besides the obligatory nitpicking. The complexity of the subject matter is sometimes further burdened by cumbersome language; why not simply "Aquinas's approach is more cogent and defensible than at first appears," instead of "Aquinas's approach can be shown to be more cogent and defensible than may first appear to be the case" (7)? The introductory account of human action is straightforward, but includes some odd claims that are surely false; he reminds us that for Aquinas *intentio* consists in "the willing of an end as acquired by means," but then concludes from this that "an end cannot be intended unless a means has been found. . . . Intention can only begin,

then, once a viable means has first been found" (12). But certainly I can form the intention this instant to throw a party, even if I haven't yet thought about ways to do it; what is required is a reasonable belief that a means can indeed be found (I cannot intend the impossible), and that I know how to look for the means, not that I have already found one. To *intend* in this way is to aim at something knowing that it must be achieved by means of something else without necessarily having deliberated yet about the something else.

But I have not done justice to Fr. Pilsner's patient work in thinking through Aquinas on the problem of specification. *The Specification of Human Actions in St Thomas Aquinas* will be an excellent resource for some time to come, and for that we must indeed be grateful. NV

Raymond Hain
The Catholic University of America
Washington, DC

Sacred Attunement: A Jewish Theology by Michael Fishbane (*Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008*), xiv + 238 pp.

MICHAEL FISHBANE'S *Sacred Attunement: A Jewish Theology* is a personal memoir of what theology and life might mean in the face of the onrushing current of everlasting annihilation. Fishbane, now in his late sixties, describes the book as his effort to pass on a "spiritual testament" to his descendants: "A certain urgency has now claimed me: to make my thoughts clear to myself, for honesty's sake in due season; and to provide my family with a spiritual testament of my values and worldview" (211).

In his preface, Fishbane depicts modern Jewish theology as a Kafkaesque nightmare: "Like Kafka, we prowl aimlessly around the debris of old Sinais, in a wasteland of thought. The tablets of despair are strewn everywhere. Old beginnings do not work; they are a dead end" (ix). In the midst of this spiritual darkness, however, Fishbane thinks that he has discovered in "natality" (a term he adapts from Hannah Arendt) the "route to transcendence—to the many forms of otherness, ever present and ever beckoning, all around" (x). What is natality? It is awareness of "the spring of beginnings," awakening to the beauty, fragility, vastness, and mystery of existence (ix). Attunement to this "spring" enables us to glimpse the transcendent through the immanent. The task of theology is to attune us in this fashion.

Like the world, the Bible should be interpreted with the goal of attaining such glimpses. When one reads biblical stories as "paradigms of perennial matters bearing on divine presence," their transcendent truth can be unveiled (xi). Similarly, modes of biblical interpretation should be evaluated

not primarily for how they retrieve information but for how they attune to reader to attend to transcendent truth: "Textual study thus becomes a discipline of ethical and spiritual self-cultivation" (xii). It is not the text itself, but the experience that becomes possible through practicing attunement via the text, that is primary. Our reading of the text and of the world must be performed in alertness and attentiveness to the inbreaking of transcendence. Fishbane comments: "The call of God (through all expressions of reality) may everywhere break the veil of our daily stupor, and then natality overcomes mortality. This is an ecstatic transcendence of mortality in a (specific) fullness of time, without denying the finality of death and dying" (xiii).

On this view, the fact that death ends human existence does not give death the power to stamp out "transcendence of mortality." On the contrary, we transcend mortality in our experiences of natality, which we can cultivate by means of attunement or "vigilant attentiveness" to the transcendent resonances that pierce through the immanent realm (xiii). The key is continually re-fashioning the self so as to find, in oneself, the self-transcendence figured by Sinai. Fishbane describes his blending of interiority and exteriority by noting that in our moments of natality or self-transcendence through attunement to the source, "Sinai is reborn in the mind, and one must humble oneself to oneself—all ears" (xiv).

In humbling oneself to oneself so as to listen for transcendence, can one rely upon any tradition-formulated truth? For Fishbane, the answer is no. The formulations that we receive from others cannot meet our needs, because reality is new at every moment. Indebted to Friedrich Schleiermacher, Fishbane holds that we have to break through the temptation to rely upon others' words. Instead we must focus on our own experience or lack thereof, at the present moment, of "God" (2). Yet this does not mean that we simply get rid of old texts. On the contrary, adapting them to our purpose and our experience, we bridge opposed discourses (such as Greek philosophy, or medieval Kabbalah or Kant, and Scripture) and build a living theology by "the alembic of hermeneutics" (6).

Yet the modern Jewish theologian faces the difficulty of what contemporary discourse to bridge with Scripture, as well as why to privilege Scripture. If truth is simply a cultural construction, why choose one contemporary discourse rather than another? And why privilege Scripture, when most humans today do not live in a biblically formed worldview? Moreover, why bother to do "theology" at all?

As noted above, Fishbane's answer lies in the quest for self-transcendence; theology at its best attunes us the moments when the veil of ordinary life is ruptured and "the pervasive superflux of existence" is revealed (19). Such theology is prefigured by the impact of the natural world and

by the creations of the aesthetic imagination, and indeed theology integrates the two in search of "the numinous qualities of unsayable origin inhering in every moment of existence" (34). This "unsayable origin" is what Fishbane means by "God." God is "the heart and breath of all existence"; the theological life is attuned at all times to this primordial reality beneath the real, transcending everything (35). Every existent manifests and actualizes God, and the human person's task is "to become a fit vessel for modes of God's realizations on earth" (38).

Engaging both words and persons, theology promotes this task by an ever-new attunement to natality in the present moment and by a corresponding reinterpretation of past tradition in ways that enable self-transcendence. This work is redemptive to the degree that it attunes us to the "effectivity" of God and expands the experience of others (43). Jewish theology does this work by particularly engaging Jewish traditions, sacred writings, and practices, which means attending to God through the hermeneutical lens of Sinai, approached via the various senses of Scripture—*peshet, derash, remez,* and *sod*—which Fishbane treats at length.

Fishbane finds particularly significant the name that God gives to Moses in Exodus 3:14, which he renders as "I shall be as I shall be," an indication of God's transcendence of every name. He goes on to describe "God's Absolute Transcendence" (53–55). Here the de-personalization of Israel's God becomes particularly noticeable. Throughout the book Fishbane scatters references to God that suggest an impersonal divine agency: "God, the ultimate effectivity of all world-being and a modality of its actualization" (98); "the pulsations of God throughout world-being" (113); "The divine pulse of giving and care is the eternal truth of Sinai" (129); "this Torah [*torah kelulah*] bespeaks God's absolute gift and giving of world-reality" (158); "The divine 'Let there Be' is the vital impulse in all existent Being" (159); "Everywhere, it seems, there is a coming forth of Godly presence—a vast and voluminous advent of color, and texture, and sound, and rhythm" (200); "the vast Mystery of Being, which shatters every pretension to a transcendent human comprehension" (202). A properly awakened "God-consciousness" (97) will both find God in everything and refuse to reduce God to any finite thing.

It is clearly one thing to be the Creator, and quite another to be an "effectivity" or a "modality." It is one thing to be the covenantal God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose glorious deeds liberate Israel from Egyptian slavery, and quite another thing to be a "pulse" or an "impulse." Despite Fishbane's effort to insist upon radical divine transcendence, his "God" appears to be circumscribed by immanence, as a pulsation is circumscribed by that in which it pulses.

It does not come as a surprise, then, to find Fishbane depicting covenant theology as "a heroic theology" that has more to do with confronting the void than with a living, personal, covenanting God (175). Covenant theology "strives to transcend the amoral vastness" (175); covenant theology is a way of overcoming, in our lives, the "howling emptiness all around" (173). On this view, Jewish theological experience is lived out within this howling emptiness and amoral vastness—east of Eden—despite the pulsing of God's presence in the world. God gives the Torah "in the desert—in a place where darkness and the demonic predominate, where emptiness and terror prevail" (175). Fishbane identifies home, synagogue, and homeland as forms of building up precarious areas of safety within the howling emptiness, but his lack of personal names for God makes these realities, good as they are, seem hardly up to the task.

On the one hand, Fishbane affirms that "[w]hat fills the world is God's Glory, in all its infinite world-being" (193). Yet on the other hand, when he describes how we live in the world, there seems to be little space for God's providential and redemptive activity. Rather, he emphasizes the ways in which "moral space is humanly constructed: it is a realized or transfigured space, rising up out of the primariness of human settlement, threat, or sustenance" (190). When he describes the prophetic "word of *shalom*," for example, he mentions human activity but not God's.

Does Fishbane hold out any hope for life after death? Given his portrait of God as a life-force rather than as a free Creator and Redeemer, Fishbane has few resources for envisioning death as anything but annihilation. The diminishment of God's ability to act personally in our lives is reflected in Fishbane's view that "death cannot be overcome" (204). Love neither diminishes nor erases death; no human can evade the permanent grip of death, "not now; not ever" (204). When we die, we simply replenish the earth by our bodily decay.

Fishbane does propose, however, that our "souls" in some sense live after us, or "ascend" as "memorials of values achieved through spiritual travail" (191). Thus we live on in the memories of others and in the impact we have had on others. For Fishbane, our "spiritual travail" consists preeminently in an imitation of God's giving: we must "become a giver in every sense" (197). Our attainment of values requires that we give help rather than ask for God's help. Fishbane carefully delimits any appeal to a redemptive God: "One must not call upon God's aid and mercy, but must oneself be merciful and kind" (198).

Fishbane attempts to recognize death as inextricable from the beauty of life, like the autumn leaves. Indeed he goes so far as to praise death as

"the truth of each breath and silence, of each disruption and break, and the completion of each act of joy and love" (198). If death is linked with truth, joy, and love, is everlasting death a good? Fishbane deeply grieves the death of others (see 212), and he has a strong sense of the futility and emptiness that seem to go hand-in-hand with everlasting death. Yet he calls upon us to recognize in the "final caesura" of death the presence of the divine pulsation of Being, which requires the giving and the taking of life, and which demands our praise (204). Although death may seem to be linked with futility and emptiness, Fishbane suggests that closer inspection reveals death's unity with life. Only the combination of life and death expresses finitude's participation in infinity. As Fishbane puts it, "Life and death are one—dual portions of God's truth" (204). When we recognize this, we attune ourselves to God's truth and thereby "effectuate divine reality" by "bringing God to a human presence through ourselves, just here in the midst of the vastness" (209).

Fishbane argues that those practiced in attuning themselves to the mystery of being that underlies ordinary experience can attain God-consciousness or God-mindedness in the here and now, and that this attunement to Being's pulse suffices. Two problems seem particularly difficult for Fishbane's position. First, although Fishbane associates God with giving and he calls upon us to imitate God by giving, God's giving here is the "giving" of a force of nature rather than a covenantal, historical, and personal God. If we were to give to other persons in this way, we would seem callous. It is no wonder that we cannot petition this impersonal deity for help (by contrast to our friends, whose help we often request). Could such a God truly be loved by us? The only personal being who receives significant attention in Fishbane's narrative is the self.

Second, Fishbane's argument regarding the ultimate unity of life and death presses too far his point about covenantal theology being "heroic." Fishbane is deeply aware of what he calls "the vapors of futility" or "the dissonances which rupture our sense of significance" (xiii). In his effort to affirm the significance of human life, he argues that we take part in making God present in the world when we attune ourselves to the unfathomable gift that all existence is. Such mystical experience enables us to live not only without despair, but indeed with real appreciation for the mystery in which our lives participate. Theology—and the religious texts, traditions, and practices upon which it relies—helps us to give particular voice, in our cultural space and time, to the wonder of existence (which transcends finite expressions). When we experience this wonder, we experience attunement to God. Yet as he recognizes, the pattern or pulsation of existence includes not only life but death. It

follows that he has to valorize death. But can the annihilation of persons actually be the "completion" of love? An impersonal God, whose pulsation includes life and death, tends toward the depersonalization of the human as well. Love for particular persons is replaced by love for a depersonalizing cosmic rhythm. NV

Matthew Levering
University of Dayton
Dayton, Ohio

Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship by Eric Gregory (*Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2008*), 417 pp.

LET ME BEGIN in the most hackneyed way possible, in a way bound to depress many: A book on Christian ethics and politics that makes no mention of, never mind stakes a position on, abortion can be neither terribly interesting nor helpful. I know many would rather talk about other things, and some get frustrated that this topic keeps getting raised, but I raise it, here, because I'm just not sure what this book is about at all. This volume is super wordy yet refuses to take a position of anything of significance. Gregory is fascinated with making distinctions, trying to show how his position doesn't collapse into that of John Milbank or isn't quite the same as John Rawls, or Nussbaum, yet avoids making substantive claims that would really enable us to know this. Of course, *Politics and the Order of Love* is a thoroughly professional book: Rich in footnotes and talking about a lot of contemporary contributors to questions in liberalism and theology, the book is a genuine product of the modern academy.

It really is a significant shortcoming of the book that no real moral and political positions are staked out. Gregory wants to show skeptics on both left and right that a rigorous theology can play an affirmational role in liberal politics. He wants to convince people on the left that Augustine can be a stern friend of liberalism. Augustine's theory of love will provide a soul craft about which liberalism is all too often indifferent (believing that social peace rests on an aloof proceduralism) and also provide a social justice sensibility that will help liberalism foster its goals of greater equality, respect for difference, and personal autonomy. Most basically then, Gregory wants to chide liberalism a little and convince liberals that theology is "safe" by saving Augustine from his reputation as illiberal, and isolating him from contemporary illiberal readings by people like Milbank. Of course, what everyone wants to know on this account is: To what am I committing myself? Liberals will want to know what they have to give

up—e.g. unlimited rights to abortion?—and conservatives want to know what they have to swallow—e.g. an affirmation of gay marriage in public education? No indications are given on any such topics because no clear theoretical commitments are made. If a book about ethics and politics is not about these sorts of things then what is its point?

If the book is not about ethics and politics, perhaps its interest lies in its theology? Though literally dozens upon dozens of thinkers are mentioned in the book, some not mentioned tell us much. Liberalism needs theology, we are assured, and while someone like Thomas Aquinas is not suitable, Augustine's probing of subjectivity and his realism about sin but affirmation of love and hope suits the liberal mood, troubled as it is by anyone overly dogmatic, institutional or bureaucratic, judgmental or harsh, normative or law-bound. Appealing to Augustine, therefore, does not mean appealing to the rich Augustinian tradition. Giles of Rome's scholasticism, Malebranche's radical passivity, Pascal's subtle abrasiveness, Scheler's objective value hierarchy, Kolnai's accusation that liberalism is totalitarian in origin and ambition, this tradition of Augustinianism is nowhere discussed, and these intellectual giants nowhere contended with. Gregory wants to rely on an *already American* version of Augustine, one deferential to Niebuhr, and even Rawls. It is a curiosity of the book that there is no real engagement with the European tradition of philosophy, theology, or political theory. True, early Arendt plays a role, and perhaps an odd Continental name amongst the many dozens of Americans is mentioned here and there, but just as the great intellectuals of the Augustinian tradition are avoided so too the giant European critics of liberalism. In fact, liberalism itself is presented as a monolith. There is no discussion of diverse strains of liberalism in Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Adam Smith—all of whom commit you to very different polities—never mind critics who have never been answered, the likes of Carl Schmitt, for instance.

I do not introduce all these strands of thought never mentioned in the book by way of simply saying more should have been done. Rather, their absence raises the question of what is the quality of the argument: How good a quality could it be if the giants of the Augustinian, liberal, and counter-liberal traditions are not seriously engaged?

The book wants to convince Christians that although not all is well inside modern liberalism, much good remains. This, of course, is Maritain's argument and I am not sure Gregory takes us any further conceptually than Maritain. At times Gregory is aware that a lot of convincing needs to be done, at other times not. Like Maritain, he thinks we all sort of agree that human rights and the extension of rights thinking and

language in law over the last half century is a good thing (384). Why would he say this? He mentions Bob Kraynak, Milbank, and MacIntyre, yet they could not have made their position more clear as to the matter of rights. It is for sure true that the greats of the Augustinian tradition never thought in terms of social order and rights, nor do the most interesting and speculative writers in theology today, people like Milbank and Rowland. Thus he is dismayed that John Milbank actually wonders aloud that liberalism is totalitarian (369, n. 14). Milbank's position is mentioned in a footnote and no reply is offered; Milbank, we are meant to believe, I suppose, is just obviously wrong. Gregory is right that Christianity can tolerate liberalism. Of course. But, as Bob Kraynak points out, it can tolerate illiberal regimes, as well. There is no sense in Gregory at all that Christianity might look on the passing of empires, even liberalism, as events worthy of note but not utterly demanding of attention. Again, no effort is made to argue with Kraynak about whether this is an accurate Christian sensibility.

These arguments are never engaged and thus we must conclude that Gregory sees Christianity as a mild corrective of certain shortcomings in liberalism which at its core is perfectly healthy. Any Christian theologian must explain how this can be true given liberalism's encouragement of abortion. I actually happen to share Gregory's sense that the illiberal critics of liberalism are somewhat churlish in their blanket criticism of liberalism. His project is not a senseless one. Something similar is attempted in the tradition of Catholic social thought but nowhere are any of the documents of this tradition mentioned: and it would be another churlishness to deny that this tradition is the most sustained, complex Christian reflection on the contemporary political order. Gregory is obviously a talented reader of texts and my basic concern is that Gregory is too diffident, theoretically and politically. Like a John Milbank, he should come out of his corner, state his case, and let the chips fall where they may. NV

G. J. McAleer
Loyola University Maryland
Baltimore, Maryland

The Word of God for the People of God: An Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture by J. Todd Billings (*Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010*), ix + 235 pp.

MOST ADVOCATES for the theological interpretation of Scripture understand that if this vision of biblical interpretation remains only a topic of academic inquiry without actually becoming embodied within churches,

the enterprise undermines its own basic conviction that scriptural interpretation is fundamentally an ecclesial practice. J. Todd Billings's *The Word of God for the People of God* helps ensure that this is not the case. This book is best understood as providing access for pastors and students into the technical discussion surrounding theological interpretation, ultimately in hopes that such interpretation will take root in church practice. In Billings's own words, he seeks to wed "theory and practice, biblical studies and theology, critical methods and practices of prayer and worship." This is not an introduction into secondary literature, like Daniel Treier's excellent *Introducing Theological Interpretation*. The term "entryway" in the subtitle is important, for Billings actually practices theological interpretation and makes claims about God and Scripture throughout his work.

In chapter 1, Billings reflects on why so many Christians yearn to hear a word from God in an environment where the Bible is readily available. The reason, he writes, is that there is more required for encountering God's word than "cognitive understanding of written or spoken words." Rather, God the Spirit is needed for the word to bear its transformative fruit, and the Bible is God's instrument of transformation. Billings sets forth on a transformative, participatory journey of reading the Bible, situating his approach between the "blueprint–building block" approach, in which the reader understands particular scriptural passages as self-contained propositions (i.e., building blocks) that are then organized into a particular system (i.e., a blueprint), and the "smorgasbord" approach, in which there is no order to Scripture—tradition thus "hides" the real meaning by providing a "map" of interpretation—and everyone is welcome to "help themselves" to whatever meets the "appetites, questions, and needs" of the reader. Billings's transformative-participatory approach uses a theological hermeneutic in which interpretation is understood as being transformed into the image of Christ as the interpreter participates in Christ the living Teacher through the Spirit. But, Billings rhetorically asks, what are we to make of a theological *hermeneutic*? Shouldn't we simply derive our theology from the Bible rather than bringing theological assumptions to the Bible? Billings counters this assumption, that "nontheological" readings more accurately engage Scripture, by arguing that there is no such thing as a "nontheological" reading. This is demonstrated not only by what one intellectually holds to be true, although theological reasoning is foundational, but also one's "functional theology," that is, how one lives in practice. The real question is: which theology should be determinative for reading Scripture? Billings's guide for his "Trinitarian-shaped journey" is the "rule of faith," which Billings explores in the face of the principle of *sola scriptura* and the authoritarian nature of a "rule."

But if the focus of reading Scripture is theocentric—and Trinitarian at that—is the proper approach to Scripture wholly unique from non-theological accounts of reading texts? In chapter 2, Billings engages general hermeneutics and biblical criticism, arguing that general hermeneutics must necessarily become theological in character, that is, understood as the special Trinitarian hermeneutic of God's redeeming work through Scripture. The Bible, then, cannot be read like any other book, and those who use only a general hermeneutic will not be able to see the Bible as truly one book with a unified message of God's work in Christ. But Billings does draw from general hermeneutics based on the broad conviction that "all truth is God's truth," so that the legitimate insights of non-Christians can be assimilated by Christians when reading Christian texts. Christians must be careful to use general hermeneutics in an "ad-hoc" fashion. Billings explores the proper hermeneutics for reading Scripture by drawing on the specialized notions of "understanding" and "explanation" in the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur. With regard to biblical criticism, Billings believes that it, too, can also play a positive role in understanding the Bible, but only if "critical methods [are] *recontextualized* within a theological framework: that is, they need to be evaluated and used according to terms that refuse to treat the Bible as nothing more than an object of historical inquiry." Billings is especially helpful when he attempts to "overcome" the Enlightenment prejudice against preunderstandings while at the same time highlighting the role that tradition plays in supposedly "no tradition allowed" interpretive locations such as the "conservative" dispensationalism and the "liberal" Jesus seminar, both of whom consider themselves as going "straight to the Bible."

If the Bible is the word *of God*, Billings believes that theological judgments must be made that will have import into the practice of scriptural interpretation. In chapter 3, Billings addresses these theological judgments but in a way that seeks to avoid "collapsing" different approaches to God's word into a "boring, shoulder-shrugging act of saying, 'I guess we come from different backgrounds.' " Instead, Billings posits two sets of "either/or's" that are "unavoidable": (1) a grounding of revelation *either* in inherent, universal human capacities *or* in the particularity of God's actions with Israel and in Jesus Christ; (2) a hermeneutic that is *either* Deistic *or* Trinitarian. The first either/or, which draws heavily on Kierkegaard and Barth, turns out not to be as dichotomous as it may seem, since Billings grants the plausibility of a "natural theology." What Billings wants to avoid, however, is a purely natural religion, one in which the totality of Christian truth is rooted in universal, natural reason along the lines of Kant and Lessing. Instead, individuals need, in the words of Jonathan Edwards, the "sixth

sense" of faith to apprehend knowledge of God in the particularities of God's interaction with Israel and in Jesus Christ. God's triune involvement with humanity further necessitates the rejection of a Deistic hermeneutic, which accounts for the inspiration and canonization of Scripture in purely immanent terms of self-projection and power, while a Trinitarian hermeneutic understands inspiration and canonization as God's noncompetitive salvific involvement within human activity; inspiration and canon are ultimately theological, not anthropocentric questions.

In chapter 4, Billings addresses the contextual nature of interpretation and strives to maintain the tension between recognizing and celebrating the variegated embodiment of God's teaching within different contexts without necessarily affirming the validity of all interpretations. Important to Billings's account is the Spirit's role in the "conversion" of cultures, since all cultures embody the marks of human sin. The Spirit both indigenizes Scripture within different cultures as well as transforms those cultures into the "bounded truth" that is in Christ. Billings presents different ways to "spiritually discern" whether scriptural interpretation is indigenizing and transforming or has bowed to its "cultural idols," including the insufficiency of direct appeals to experience, the role of communal interpretation, and suspicion toward one's own cultural situation. Billings concludes, however, that Scripture itself acts as the ultimate point of authority for discerning the Spirit's work within a particular context.

In the libraries of many modern pastors, one can regularly find commentaries from the NICOT, NICNT, Pillar, or Word commentary series, but more rarely does one find commentaries from Augustine, Chrysostom, Aquinas, or Calvin. Billings believes, however, that premodern exegesis should have a place in the modern pulpit. In chapter 5, Billings seeks to recover premodern "instincts" toward the Bible as Scripture, while also appropriating "in a discerning manner" premodern insights into particular biblical texts. Against the notion that premodern interpretation is esoteric and irrelevant, Billings argues, drawing on John Webster, that if Scripture is understood as God's word for the church, "modern critical commentaries may be more likely to be esoteric than premodern commentaries are." Billings then draws on Matthew Levering to get to the heart of uniting premodern with modern readings of Scripture: a proper understanding of history as participatory in God. Billings seeks to move beyond attempting either to construct a history accessible outside or "behind" the text that is then used to judge the text or to approach the text as but a projection of theological ideas that have no referent to a linear history outside the text; the key to avoiding these pitfalls is to understand Jesus Christ as the meaning of all history. How one understands Christ's salvific work, moreover,

affects one's reading of Scripture: whether one thinks of salvation as "getting to heaven" or becoming an ethical person or deification (Billings's preference), one's reading of Scripture will reflect this soteriology. Billings concludes his book in chapter 6 with a synthesis of the previous chapters and further reflection on concrete reading practices in the church.

In setting forth his approach to theological interpretation, Billings displays a unique sensitivity to ecclesial life (e.g., his example of a small group bible study spiritually reading Genesis 12:1) that illuminates the fact that theological interpretation is the ongoing practice for many Christians, even if they cannot articulate the technical language and theory. Billings's sensitivity also enables him to posit and answer questions unique to the minds of pastors and students. By ending each chapter with a concrete example, Billings helps clarify the theory presented within the chapter, resulting in numerous "aha" moments for the reader. I do wish, however, in light of Billings's emphasis on "functional theology," that more were said regarding the role of speculative theology in biblical interpretation, which could fit well either in Billings's section addressing the value of "preunderstanding" or the role of tradition. What does Billings make of Calvin's vision of the *Institutes* as preparation for reading Scripture? In general, what is the role of speculative knowledge for being transformed in Christ? Is there a place for the contemplative pastor? With regard to the role of tradition in interpretation, it seems significant that, for example, Baptist and Presbyterian traditions lead to different interpretations of Scripture on infant baptism and church structure. Since Billings wants to avoid a "to each his own" interpretive mentality, do we need to say one tradition is right and one is wrong, and if so how do we decide? Billings's section explicitly addressing traditions seems only to highlight (importantly) that each denomination has them and they affect interpretation, and his use of the "rule of faith" is too broad to address these sorts of questions. These caveats aside, Billings provides a tremendous service to pastors and future pastors who practice theological interpretation but may not know they do it and, on that account, likely do it haphazardly. By addressing such a wide range of topics, Billings provides a thorough account of theological interpretation that enables these individuals to be more intentional, and more accurate and edifying, with their theological interpretation. I hope this book finds its way into the hands of many teachers and future teachers of the Body of Christ. NV

Charles Raith II
Baylor University
Waco, Texas