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In Memory of Father Matthew Lamb: *Pater et Magister*

MICHAEL DAUPHINAIS
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IN HIS DOCTORAL COLLOQUIA on the ancients and the moderns, Fr. Lamb was fond of observing Socrates' final line from the *Apology*, "But now it is time to go away, I to die and you to live. Which of us goes to a better thing is unclear to everyone except to the god (*ho theos*)."¹ A lifelong devotee of the wisdom of Plato and Aristotle, Fr. Lamb never hesitated to affirm the newness of the Gospel and its promise of eternal life. We now know that death has lost its sting and has become a *dies natalis*, a day of birth, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word.

The Book of Sirach chapter 44 writes, "Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers in their generations; ... leaders of the people in their deliberations and in understanding of learning for the people, wise in their words of instruction." Such men "were the glory of their times. There are some of them who have left a name, so that men declare their praise." In a priestly vocation and theological career in which he was in Rome during the Second Vatican Council and played a significant role in many of the theological debates of his time, Fr. Matthew Lamb was indeed among the "leaders of the people in their deliberations" who were "wise in their words of instruction."

Fr. Lamb was born in 1937 to parents whom he frequently and affectionately would describe as loving and devout Catholics. He entered the Trappist monastery of Our Lady of the Holy Spirit in Conyers, Georgia just before his fifteenth birthday. He would often

say that he first went to the monastery because his mother invited him to go on a weekend retreat and he said to himself, “yes, I can get out of Saturday chores!” For many years, he immersed himself in the Trappist life of prayer and work, of silence and fasting, and of studying the Scripture, the Fathers, Aquinas, as well as some contemporary theological scholarship.

During the 1960’s, his abbot suggested that he go to Rome to earn advanced degrees in theology. There he encountered Bernard Lonergan—whose work he had previously begun reading—a scholar and teacher who inspired countless Catholic theologians who would go on to impact Catholic theology around the globe. In his later years, he would describe Lonergan’s influence especially in its relation to a deepening of his understanding of the wisdom found in Augustine and Aquinas. Studying in Rome during the council and its aftermath, Fr. Lamb witnessed firsthand many of the theological trends and conversations that would dominate the practice of Catholic theology in the subsequent decades. He would often tell stories to students about conversations with and among Karl Rahner, Henri de Lubac, Bernard Lonergan, Hans Kung as well as with notable Catholics such as Dorothy Day and Flannery O’Connor. After earning an STL from the Gregorianum in Rome, he went to study at the University of Münster, Germany under Johann Baptist Metz. He completed his Doctorate in Theology “Summa cum laude” and earned the University Prize for the best dissertation in Catholic Theology in 1974.

From that time forward, he dedicated himself to a singular task: the formation of doctoral students in the Catholic theological tradition. Already ordained a Roman Catholic priest, he was incardinated in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee to allow for dedication to teaching outside of the monastery. Fr. Lamb’s doctoral instruction would span five decades as he first taught at Marquette University, then Boston College, and finally Ave Maria University, where he founded and directed the Patrick F. Taylor Graduate Programs in Theology. Fr. Lamb’s doctoral students now teach across the United States and abroad, in seminaries, colleges, universities, and dioceses.

In 1990, Fr. Lamb published an epochal essay in *America Magazine* entitled, “Will There Be Catholic Theology in the United States?” In this essay, he went public with the beginning of what he would lightheartedly call “Lamb’s Lamentations.” He cautioned against what he termed the “Protestantization” of Catholic theology in which Catholic theologians were increasingly completing their stud-

ies at Protestant divinity schools, combined with the loss of knowledge of Latin and Greek that left students further estranged from the sources integral to the Catholic theological tradition.

Fr. Lamb continued to voice his concern over the trajectory of much of Catholic theology in a 1997 essay published in *Crisis Magazine*, “Catholic Theological Society of America: Theologians Unbound.” He began to sharpen his critique of theological dissent and became increasingly concerned that more and more Catholic theologians “no longer know what they don’t know.” He warned that over ninety percent of systematic theologians were doing dissertations focused on recent figures, with the result that real grounding in—as well as fidelity to—the dogmatic tradition was no longer being handed on to the next generation.

Fr. Lamb did much more than merely lament the state of Catholic theology. He labored many years to pass along to generations of doctoral students the intellectual patrimony he had received. During his career he would direct almost fifty doctoral dissertations, serve as a reader on almost the same number, and direct and assist with an even greater number of master theses. The combination of his teaching and directing served to help recover the study of the wisdom traditions as found especially in the writings of Augustine and Aquinas. Known early in his career for his reflections on suffering and history, as well as his insight into the necessary relationship between orthodoxy and orthopraxis, he would eventually publish over a hundred and sixty articles dealing with St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Bernard Lonergan, theological method, political theology, modernism, communication theory, and the writings of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Increasingly, he became concerned that without attention to the wells of orthodox doctrine—not mere conceptual play but our path into the creative and redemptive realities of faith—no real orthopraxy could be possible, given that what emerged was merely a shallow accommodationist attitude, indeed a betrayal of the radicality of Christian faith, separated from its true realities. In 2002, he received an honorary doctorate from the Franciscan University of Steubenville in recognition of his contributions to the renewal of Catholic theology.

In 2003, Fr. Lamb delivered the academic convocation address at the quite small and newly-founded Ave Maria College (soon after to become Ave Maria University). He challenged the young institution to strive to unite the first millenium’s quest for wisdom and holiness within the monastic traditions and the second millenium’s

search for science and scholarship within the universities, a unity that he perceived had been severed over time causing great injury to the Church and the practice of theology.

To issue such a challenge took much understanding of the Church's theological patrimony and much experience of the Church's tradition of prayer. What took greater courage, however, was that Fr. Lamb was willing to leave his established position at Boston College and join this small institution with the fixed purpose of establishing and sustaining graduate programs in theology.

Under Fr. Lamb's guidance, the graduate programs at Ave Maria University would be dedicated to the sapiential unity of theology. Theological studies requires the intellectual virtues needed for functional specializations of biblical, systematic, moral, and liturgical studies. Nonetheless, theology remains one *sapientia*. Theology should reflect a unified attempt at seeking wisdom and holiness, science and scholarship. With the acquisition of skills and speculative habits of mind as its goal, the program of studies established by Fr. Lamb would be accompanied by communal worship and prayer, so that students may deepen their graced friendship with Jesus Christ and the communion of saints. They would thus experience how the gifts of wisdom and knowledge of our Catholic faith, far from contradicting the truths and light of reason, actually both further enlighten and redeem our minds and hearts in ways only the Triune God can accomplish. Fr. Lamb was fond of saying that fidelity to revelation does not decrease but rather increases the intellectual rigor needed to be faithful to the insights of faith and reason. In his fifteen years of teaching at Ave Maria, Fr. Lamb completed his final stage in his vocation of passing on of Catholic theology. His Ave Maria doctoral students, now teaching in institutions across the county, gathered for a 2014 conference held in his honor and published a (second!) festschrift dedicated to him in 2016 entitled *Wisdom and the Renewal of Catholic Theology*.

Fr. Lamb became a champion for an authentic reception of Vatican II as a renewal within tradition. These contributions coalesced into two co-edited volumes with Matthew Levering published by Oxford University Press in 2008 and 2017. His teaching, however, remains his most powerful witness. To know his students—his spiritual and intellectual sons and daughters—is to know a bit of him. His love of truth, his knowledge of the tradition, his joy at learning and studying, and even, yes, his lamentations! His students share in his most important formulations, including “the higher does not negate the

lower,” the significance of a participatory understanding of created reality, the properly dialectical relationship of the ancients and the moderns, the effort to reach up to the mind of the great Doctors of the Church, the emphasis upon contact with the realities of faith, the refusal to accommodate the Catholic faith to the narrow limits of America and Western Europe, the need for many years of study to gain insight into the theological patrimony of the Church, the appreciation for the contributions of the monastic schools against the constant temptation toward reductive rationalisms, the centrality of a real life of prayer and sacramental grace, the rejection of Pelagianism and the utopian visions of the left and the right, abandonment to divine providence, real friendship with Christ, the insistence upon the intellectual and spiritual requisites of a true theological faculty, and so on.

In *Fides et Ratio*, Pope Saint John Paul II wrote, “It must not be forgotten that reason too needs to be sustained in all its searching by trusting dialogue and sincere friendship. A climate of suspicion and distrust, which can beset speculative research, ignores the teaching of the ancient philosophers who proposed friendship as one of the most appropriate contexts for sound philosophical inquiry.” In Christ, Fr. Lamb fostered such relationships of friendship that sustained authentic inquiry into the realities of the Catholic faith. In addition to being a father and teacher to so many students, young and old, clerical and lay, he also became a friend.

St. Paul wrote about Christ’s presence in the Apostle’s own sufferings: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9). In a state of extreme physical weakness with full awareness of his mortal (pulmonary) illness, Fr. Lamb would celebrate his final private Mass from his bed in the intensive crisis unit. To inquiring caregivers and visitors, he would slowly whisper, with deep and abiding conviction, “I’m ready to go whenever the Lord wants. You go home to your family; I’m going home to mine, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” Fr. Lamb’s first book was entitled *Solidarity with Victims*. In his final illness, he expressed that solidarity, accomplished in Christ, with all of the victims across human history as a priestly victim, offered lovingly to God.

Fr. Lamb passed through the portals of death on January 12, 2018. He died, as was providentially fitting, with two doctoral students praying and keeping vigil at his bedside throughout the night. In the many funeral Masses he had celebrated for others, he would often say that “they now see what we only believe.” He would say this with

real joy, however, not with the sighs and half-hopes that one often feels. In his daily life, he felt himself in a living communion with Christ Jesus. Let us pray that through the abundant divine mercy he is now gazing in that most loving and beatifying vision upon the most holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. N-V

From Fantasy to Contemplation: Seminarians and Formation in a Paschal Imagination¹

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See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the wilderness I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers. —Isa 43:19

IN REVELATION, we read: “Behold, I make all things new (Rev 21:5). There is a distinction to be made between God making all things new and this generation’s constant pursuit of novelty at the “click” of a computer key. The search for the “new” that God inspires is a human restlessness born of a transcendent destiny. This restlessness finally does come to rest at one point: union with God. But the pursuit of novelty in cyberspace actually unleashes an insatiable restlessness. This insatiable restlessness births a demand for more and more of what satisfies less and less. This restlessness is kept alive by a roving eye upon the screen and a

¹ Attesting to the cultural problem that it is, the social science literature on cyber activity is vast; some example studies are: S. M. Grüsser, R. Thalemann, and M. D. Griffiths, “Excessive Computer Game Playing: Evidence for Addiction and Aggression?” *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 10, no. 2 (2007): 290–92; Chih-Hung Ko “Internet Gaming Disorder,” *Current Addiction Reports* 1, no. 3 (2014): 177–85; Jungyun Kim, Robert LaRose, and Wei Peng, “Loneliness as the Cause and the Effect of Problematic Internet Use: The Relationship between Internet Use and Psychological Well-being,” *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 12, no. 4 (2009): 451–55; C. T. Wetterneck, A. J. Burgess, and M. B. Short, “The Role of Sexual Compulsivity, Impulsivity, and Experiential Avoidance in Internet Pornography Use,” *Psychological Record* 62, no. 1 (2012): 3–17.

twitching hand upon the computer mouse. Seminarians, of course, are not immune to this restlessness.

Human formation programs in the seminary do well to assume that candidates have the potential to move from self-preoccupation to embracing transcendent values and concern for the welfare of others. But for men for whom entertainment has been almost exclusively the fantasy of video gaming and other interactive computer activities, breaking through self-involvement may be harder to achieve. In such men, gaming delivers pleasure, a sense of achievement, social interaction, and an immersive experience that is so stimulating that the “ordinary” world appears flat and uninviting. Formation programs may struggle to influence those men who are so enculturated.² Many vices gather around fantasy thus making it harder for a man to receive the truth about his condition before God.

As an example, Reinhard Hütter³ has noted the connection between engaging the “wasteland” of cyberspace and the vice of acedia. Acedia communicates the futility of resting in transcendent and spiritual realities, thus creating a void within which the lies of cyberspace and gaming can speak: “Since God is not satisfying, these other things will give you pleasure.” Even more powerfully, Hütter gives voice to the origins of a pervasive clerical vice, cynicism: “The flight from sadness that begins with avoiding and resisting spiritual goods ends up attacking [these same goods].” Many a “clergy day” presenter has run into the priest who embodies this attitude toward the supernatural: “You still believe in such things?” Of course, within a cynic is a former idealist who does not know how to relate his grief to God over inevitable human suffering and finitude. Hence, this cleric, who first avoided praying and then resisted praying, now ends up attacking or mocking the power of a personal spiritual life. In the void of rectory living that now engulfs this priest, he becomes unable to do the one thing necessary: suffer the ordinary until the Presence is revealed and received. “When confronting the suspension of time and the void of boredom, the most classic strategy is to try to ‘kill time.’ . . . It is not insignificant that this idiomatic expression uses the verb ‘to kill,’ which relates boredom to hatred. Now time is

² Committee on Priestly Formation of the United States Council of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation* [PPF], 5th ed. (Washington, DC: United States Council of Catholic Bishops, 2006), §89.

³ Reinhard Hütter, “Pornography and Acedia,” *First Things*, April 2012, <http://www.firstthings.com/article/2012/04/pornography-and-acedia>.

not killed; on the contrary, it is necessary to wed it, . . . to cling to the present moment and to live it in all its spiritual intensity.”⁴ One way out of the vice of acedia, born of behaviors that coddle distraction as a good to pursue, is the choice to “go deep,” “deep” meaning the choice to suffer the ordinariness of one’s days until God moves within a man, “wedding” him to the Incarnation and shooing away fantasy from alighting upon him as temptation.

“Many young people seem to live hours each day that are almost programmatically reduced to shallow, impulsive dependencies on visual stimulation and technological chatter. The search for meaning . . . has shifted to a compulsive quest for perpetual distraction.”⁵ Instead of being locked into this quest for distraction, for fantasy, quite often the seminarian has entered seminary as a “remedy” for such. Needing a remedy does not necessarily mean that the man is pathologically attuned to cyberspace, but there are many seminarian testimonies that indicate the emptiness of their lives before seminary. This emptiness became the occasion to hear God’s voice calling to go deep and to receive a priestly vocation. However, even though such interest in cyberspace may not be pathological, it can be problematic for the seminarian. For such a vapid endeavor, escapist digital fare, he admits to have given it disproportionate attention. He is now in seminary wanting to disown fantasy and no longer resist the reception of love that is prayerful contemplation. In this new commitment, however, he finds a battle as the *residue of the culture of distraction* still clings to his affections.

The *very desire* to engage substantive occupations and leave behind superficial ones contains *within it the energy of God* directed toward his creatures.⁶ God is the One who enters nothingness and leaves in its place being. God breaks down the resistance to love by unfailingly revealing his face to us and awakening within us a longing to behold his face above all others.⁷ Part of the mission of seminary formation is to move a man from fantasy to the contemplation of God’s face. Formation is to be a time where the beauty of God comes to inform

⁴ Jean-Charles Nault, O.S.B., *The Noonday Devil* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015), 126.

⁵ Donald Haggerty, *The Contemplative Hunger* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2016), 31.

⁶ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone is Credible*, trans. D. C. Schindler (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 83.

⁷ Balthasar, *Love Alone is Credible*, 76.

a seminarian's knowledge and to have this beauty progressively order the man's desires.⁸ Then—Cardinal Ratzinger spoke about allowing ourselves to be wounded by this beauty, which is the crucified One, and to resist the “dazzling” beauty of false attraction.

“[There] is a dazzling beauty that does not bring human beings out of themselves into the ecstasy of starting off toward the heights but instead immures them completely within themselves. Such beauty does not awaken a longing for the ineffable, a willingness to sacrifice and lose oneself, but instead stirs up the desire, the will for power, possession and pleasure.”⁹

Such false beauty would be luxury or lust, and it arises within persons so that it can take and possess its object. This is in contradistinction to engaging authentic beauty, which invites one to make a gift of himself. One way seminaries can assist in moving the masculine mind and heart out of the clutches of fantasy is to make formation seriously ordered toward contemplation of the Beautiful.

Contemplation

“Contemplation is given or achieved,” says our faith tradition; it comes about through an interior vulnerability to being loved, to being beheld by God. In this beholding, one is awakened¹⁰ to God's mercy and his offer for loving union. “Contemplation is a gaze of faith, fixed on Jesus. . . . This focus on Jesus is a renunciation of self. His gaze purifies our heart; the light of the countenance of Jesus illumines the eyes of our heart. . . . Contemplation . . . turns its gaze on the mysteries of the life of Christ. Thus, it learns the ‘interior knowledge of our Lord,’ the more to love him and follow him” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] §2715). As Adrian Walker noted about Hans Urs von Balthasar's theology, Christ is the ontological key *to all of reality*.¹¹ On the other hand, video fantasy is a participation in images that are disconnected from reality. The man who fantasizes orders the hunger of his heart toward

⁸ Romanus Cessario, *Theology and Sanctity* (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2014), 29–30.

⁹ Joseph Ratzinger, *On the Way to Jesus Christ*, trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 40.

¹⁰ Ratzinger, *On the Way to Jesus Christ*, 76.

¹¹ Adrian Walker, “Love Alone: Hans Urs von Balthasar as Master of Theological Renewal,” in *Love Alone is Credible: Hans Urs von Balthasar as Interpreter of the Catholic Tradition*, vol. 1, ed. David Schindler (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 21n13.

food that simply returns more and more of what satisfies less and less.¹² If the satisfaction derived is so poor, why is it difficult for a man to move from fantasy to contemplation?

This resistance to move from fantasy to contemplation is tied up in a man's refusal to suffer the inculcation of patience, allowing the ego to cling to the habit of immediacy. "The superficial will is usually at the service of egoism. It listens to all its conflicting impulses and lets itself be led by the notorious couple: 'I like—I don't like.' The deep will . . . is at the service of love; it coincides with the innate desire for God. The deep will . . . finds satisfaction . . . in God."¹³

The need to placate immediacy indicates the seminarian is only at the very early stages of affective maturity and needs the rigor seminary provides to facilitate the death of self-involvement. "The identity to be fostered in the candidate is that he becomes a man of communion, that is, someone who makes a gift of himself and is able to receive the gift of others. He needs integrity and self-possession in order to make such a gift."¹⁴ The "rigor" needed to bring such selflessness to life is engagement with the transcendent, an engagement one suffers in order to defeat the habit of returning to escapist distractions. *To suffer the coming of God* is the crux of seminary formation. To suffer God in one particular aspect, his Divine Beauty, is a commitment embraced to heal the pleasure of immediacy. This pleasure of immediacy is what ruins the prospect of attaining affective adherence to that beauty God revealed: the Cross of Christ. Balthasar predicted that, without a fascination with this Divine Beauty, a man would lose interest in prayer and even love.¹⁵ This is true because beauty carries one into union with the Divine Person. Without this transcendental, a person becomes fixated on "taking" from reality rather than "receiving" from it. To be affected by the beauty of Christ, to receive his person, such is the way to becoming a giving person. Beholding the beauty that is Christ, contemplating him, is the "river in the wasteland," the source of life among the distractions and life-ebbing involvement in images that possesses so many today. These images, at

¹² Wilfred Stinissen, *Into Your Hands, Father*, trans. Sister Clare Marie, O.C.D. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2011), 63.

¹³ Stinissen, *Into Your Hands*, 68.

¹⁴ PPF, §83

¹⁵ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 1, *Seeing the Form*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, ed. Joseph Fessio, S.J., and John Riches (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), 18.

best, are simply puny entertainment—at worst, occasions of sin. They capture, by their instant gratification, constant action and movement; but they are empty. The remedy is depth; the remedy is to contemplate life and love—not death, not isolation. Since the resurrection of Christ, faith has made it clear that love is greater than death. In order for the seminarian to ascend from narrow immediacy to deep liberty, he must suffer the way of a transposition of images. This contemplation of Christ opens the interior of a man to be affected by him so deeply that the seminarian moves from “seeing” Christ to holding him in his being.

To contemplate the beauty of the Crucified is to place oneself in a condition of poverty, aware of one’s longing to be acted upon in love,¹⁶ healed, and liberated. In the presence of Beauty, we want to become aware of a Presence with us. The whole “fantasy” industry is built upon loneliness and alienation dragging at the depths of every man. To reverse this “drag,” we call the seminarian to place himself in a position to suffer the beauty of God as he awaits the Divine Presence making himself known. “The listening of our soul in prayer is not to hear a voice making a *request* but to recognize a mysterious and sacred presence *asking for this return of love*.”¹⁷

To move to more specificity, we need contemplation to be secured by interior silence, a silence overflowing with divine presence. Within this presence seminarians come to know *celibacy as intimacy*, rather than pain-provoked “busy-ness.” “Silence is the essential condition for receptivity.”¹⁸ Without entering silence, the seminarian inadequately prepares himself to suffer the coming of God in prayer. Silence wraps the man in a habitual openness to receive what is being offered to him from God. In the transition from fixating on images of this “passing age” (Rom 12:1–2) to contemplating the eternal beauty of Christ on the Cross (John 19:37), it will be silence that carries the man from fantasy to contemplation.

¹⁶ Joseph Ratzinger, *The God of Jesus Christ: Meditations on the Triune God*, trans. Brian P. McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 97.

¹⁷ Haggerty, *The Contemplative Hunger*, 145.

¹⁸ Haggerty, *The Contemplative Hunger*, 145. See also James Keating, “Seminary Formation and Interior Silence,” *Nova et Vetera* (English) 10, no. 2 (2012): 307–19.

Participating in Divine Beauty: The Birth of a New Imagination

When a man is called to sacrifice marriage for priesthood, he is simultaneously called to become a “mystic.”¹⁹ When a man does not become fascinated with the Holy, the need for erotic fulfillment goes in search of erroneous places of rest like a homeless man looking for shelter. There is only *one* reason God calls a man to celibacy: he wants his full attention in order to satisfy the cleric’s need for love. This love is not simply for the priest’s personal consolation, no, it overflows into ministry as love of neighbor. The mysticism of celibacy proclaims that only when one is totally bound to God’s generous love can he, in turn, donate himself with a universal love “of the many” (Matt 26:28).

To reduce the call to celibacy to utilitarian reasons (more availability to ministry, easier management of priestly assignments for bishops) is ecclesially dangerous. The Church does not want bachelors or workaholics or “shy” men using their “single” state to earn a living from the Church. History has shown that, after a while, these men will direct their need to assuage loneliness in pathological or sinful ways. Making the transition from bachelor to priestly commitment is one that tutors a man to correctly receive love from God, sometimes from God *alone*, and to do so in peace. To become a man fascinated with the Holy may take many years as the superficial elements of popular Western culture are “exorcised” from the seminarian and he comes to rest in communion with God and not false escapist habits of immediate gratification. Only commitment to a disciplined way of life centered in prayer and mercy toward others can liberate a seminarian from superficial elements of popular Western culture.

The formational priority of a contemplative interior life for seminarians is supported within a context of commonsense discernment on the spiritual and psychological level. Promoting interiority to an emotionally immature or unbalanced man may compound the man’s isolation tendencies or personality idiosyncrasies. To underscore the

¹⁹ By “mystic,” I mean an understanding of this term that is sober and contextualized in a man’s *living participation in the sacramental mysteries of Christ*, a participation in Christ that yields wisdom more than personal consolations, such as tears or locutions. See Paul Murray, O.P., *Aquinas at Prayer: The Bible, Mysticism, and Poetry* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 19. See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §2014.

vitality of a contemplative life for the diocesan priest is not to make a category mistake and foist upon him the life of a monk. Indeed, without deep interiority, without an identity that rests in communion with God, there can be *no* sending into ministry. In fact, to “take” ministry without being “sent” from communion with God within an ecclesial context configures priestly life as counterfeit. If ministry does not flow from communion with God in personal prayer and sacramental engagement, then from what source within the man is such service flowing?

For a man to have a celibate mystic imagination firmly rooted in his character, he must attend to the Paschal mystery of Christ as primary mental and affective nourishment. Contemplating the Paschal mystery must be seen as the seminarian’s main work of affective/spiritual development, along with an integrated intellectual, fraternal, and ministerial life.

When a man suffers a deeper faith in beholding the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, he can then discern all things with a new imagination. This imagination is sacred, born of faith, born of surrender to Christ. Each vocation specifies and particularizes this imagination, and through it, this new way of thinking grasps reality, and so facilitates Christ reaching the mind of the cleric. Specifically, Christ produces and reaches the mind of the priest by affecting him with his own sacrificial mysteries. The experience of being moved by these mysteries opens up the possibility of a priestly imagination. Only when one has experienced these mysteries as real does his mind conspire with the affect for new mental and affective imagery. Without the experience of being taken up into these mysteries, there can be no sustained entry into a new way of thinking founded upon a participation in a new culture, one noted for its diminishing interest in the distractions of this passing age (Rom 12:1–2). There are acts of imagination that one is capable of only after having a relevant experience.²⁰

“Faith is in the intellect, in such a way that it causes affection. For example: *to know that Christ died ‘for us’ does not remain knowledge, but becomes necessarily affection, love* (Proemium in I Sent., q. 3). Love . . . sees what remains inaccessible to reason. Love goes beyond reason, sees more, and enters more profoundly into the mystery of God. . . .

²⁰ John Crosby, *The Personalism of John Henry Newman* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 45.

All this is not anti-intellectual: it implies the way of reason but transcends it in the love of the crucified Christ.”²¹

This love leads the seminarian to contemplate the suffering Christ who, over time and in the Spirit, heals wounded reason (CCC §2037). Such contemplation allows the truth, who is Christ, to enter the conscience, the heart, and order it toward communion with God, and therefore conversion of life. Theological thinking is healed thinking because only it is brought into explicit and sustained contemplation of the mysteries of Christ, mysteries that are not exhausted in historical events, but rather carry encounters that abide in and through the faith of the Church, its sacramental life, and the personal prayer of the seminarian. This is the “suffering” that seminarians are called to assume: to open their minds toward the Paschal mystery of Christ, to sacramentally participate within this mystery and establish their theological comprehension upon Christ doing “His thinking within us.”²² This “thinking within us” is not a mystical exceptionalism, but simply the result of intentionally relating the mind to prayer as this mind receives and suffers the conceptualization of revelation. The seminarian, then, suffers the coming of Christ through noetic structures that are vulnerable to the truth and beauty of Christ; such vulnerability is, in fact, an eagerness within the seminarian to have intimacy with the Trinity and to live within that intimacy as his vocation.

Conclusion

To encourage seminarians to gaze upon a Crucifix, enter *lectio divina* more regularly, or to ponder the needs of the poor in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament loosens the grip cyberspace has upon their imaginations and renders the men more available to a life of mercy toward others. Speaking about the biblical story of the prodigal son, J. Brian Bransfield noted this:

From the moment we go off track, God the Father gazes into the distance between us and him. It is his look, his grace, even when we are in sin, that wakes us up again and inspires in us

²¹ Benedict XVI, General Audience, March 17, 2010, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20100317.html.

²² See James Keating, “Theology as Thinking in Prayer,” *Chicago Studies* 53, no. 1 (2014): 70–83.

the desire and longing for repentance. This is known as prevenient grace, a grace that comes to us to encourage us to turn back to God.²³

The imagination is powerful in its capacity to take a person more deeply into reality, especially as images relate to and define one another, such as in Scripture when the Genesis creation story is given further depth and meaning by the prologue of John's Gospel. The imagination is powerful in another way as well, powerful in its capacity to denigrate a man's character, wherein only the purifying images of Christ's mysteries can loosen the grip upon that mind that the culture of distraction currently possesses. Gazing in love upon the Blessed Sacrament in adoration or opening the heart to being moved by *lectio divina* will, over time and in the presence of a sound mind, recover reality's grasp upon a seminarian and birth in him a spiritual creativity. Being lost in the wasteland sections of cyberspace only compounds each person's native self-involvement, pulling him further away from creativity and light while plummeting each man into self-centered darkness. This darkness can never be the origin of ministry, and so there is an urgent cry from the Church to liberate seminarians from this cyber-born imprisonment in the self. **N-V**

²³ J. Brian Bransfield, *Overcoming Pornography Addiction: A Spiritual Solution* (New York: Paulist Press, 2013), 38.

The Problem with Teilhard

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THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL for Culture has voted to request that the *monitum* issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1962 against the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin be lifted on the grounds that, though “some of his writings might be open to constructive criticism, his prophetic vision has been and is inspiring theologians and scientists.” Whether there are scientists who, qua scientists rather than amateur philosophers, are inspired by Teilhard may be doubted. That there are still theologians of a certain sort who are thus inspired may not be. Which is why the *monitum* must remain in place. For it is not his association with frauds like the Piltdown man that matters, but his assault on basic Catholic orthodoxy in cosmology, Christology, and ecclesiology. A reminder of this seems timely. Hence I offer here an abridged version of what may be found in full elsewhere.¹

Let us begin with what attracted (and still attracts) people to Teilhard, in whom the conflicting hopes and fears of the twentieth century met and found expression. Positively, he wanted to reconcile, to unite in a grand synthesis, “faith in God and faith in the World,” or “the cult of progress and passion for the glory of God.” Negatively,

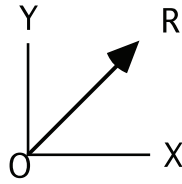
¹ Douglas Farrow is Professor of Theology and Christian Thought at McGill University in Montreal, and sometime holder of the Kennedy Smith Chair in Catholic Studies. The present article (personal copyright 2018) is adapted from Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia: On the Significance of the Doctrine of the Ascension for Ecclesiology and Christian Cosmology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 198–215, which see for references, and *Ascension Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 54–56.

he wanted to combat with resolute determination an *angst* he thought rooted in the trauma of the Copernican revolution. He recognized man's loss of bearings in the vastness of the universe and his sense of futility in a world subject to the law of entropy. He knew the "malady of space-time" that manifests itself as a "fundamental anguish of being," a "sickness of the dead end," a feeling of confinement: "As the years go by, Lord, I come to see more and more clearly, in myself and in those around me, that the great secret preoccupation of modern man is much less to battle for possession of the world than to find a means of escaping from it. The anguish of feeling that one is not merely spatially but ontologically imprisoned in the cosmic bubble; the anxious search for an issue to, or more exactly a focal point for, the evolutionary process; these are the price we must pay for the growth of planetary consciousness; these are the dimly-recognized burdens which weigh down the souls of christian and gentile alike in the world of today."²

Teilhard made it his aim to address this anxiety, to restore confidence in progress, and so to make the Christian faith relevant once again. To that end, he undertook what he called a "re-cosmologization of our religion," commandeering evolution as the vehicle not only of creation but also of redemption. Evolution, if we ourselves took charge of it, would lead us to what he called Omega, that final issue our hearts desire, a point of complete cosmic convergence that quells all fear of perpetual, meaningless becoming. With this combination of evolutionism and eschatology, he hoped to cure the spiritual crisis of the modern world. Humanity needed a common center, a new hope, a uniting faith and vision.

That is just what he hoped to achieve by breaking down the disastrous barrier dividing devotion to God above from commitment to worldly progress here below. These "rival mysticisms" must not be allowed to divide mankind any longer. Advance toward God must be linked with social progress for the benefit of both. In an article entitled "The Heart of the Problem," he offered the following diagram, in which O^Y represents, he says, Christian faith aspiring upward, while O^X represents humanistic faith driving forward, and O^R is a "rectified" Christian faith capable of reconciling the two:

² Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., *Hymn of the Universe*, trans. Gerald Vann (London: Collins, 1965), 138–39.



Through this rectified and rectifying faith, mankind would “achieve a breakthrough straight ahead by forcing its way over the threshold of some higher level of consciousness.” All who, in their own fashion, shared this conviction would advance in step together, be they Christian or otherwise.

I call this “diagonalism.” Teilhard called it “noogenesis.” By that, he meant the “ascent of the Universe towards consciousness,” the “drift of matter towards spirit,” a gradual liberation of consciousness from the primitive, material layers of the world—the triumph of the interior over the exterior, of mind over matter. Time itself is “the rise of the Universe into high latitudes where complexity, concentration, centration, and consciousness grow and increase, simultaneously and correlatively.” As diversification gives way to unification, creation’s spatio-temporal dimensions will be reduced to a vanishing point. The newly emergent consciousness, satiated on “the whole indivisible substance of matter,” will break away “to join up with the supreme and universal focus Omega”—that is, with its divine Origin and Destiny. Is it not conceivable, he asks, “that Mankind, at the end of its totalization, its folding-in upon itself, may reach a critical level of maturity where, leaving Earth and stars to lapse slowly back into the dwindling mass of primordial energy, it will detach itself from this planet and join the one true, irreversible essence of things, the Omega Point?” That may be “a phenomenon perhaps outwardly akin to death: but in reality a simple metamorphosis and arrival at the supreme synthesis.” It will be “an escape from the planet, not in space or outwardly, but spiritually and inwardly, such as the hyper-concentration of matter upon itself allows.”³

Did I say attractive? It should not be necessary to point out that that all of this is far closer to the gnostic cosmology and eschatology than to the Judeo-Christian. Teilhard’s vision of salvation is undeniably escapist. His hope is not, as some pretend, in the renewal of

³ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Future of Man*, trans. Norman Denny (London: Collins, 1964), 122–23.

all things, but in the forsaking of all things. It is not hope in the restoration of a proper relationship between God and the world and between the soul and the body, but in the eventual repudiation of the body and of the world, of all that is material, through union with God. That is his idea of rectification, indeed of deification, and it is—not to put too fine a point on it—a decidedly heretical idea.

It goes without saying that this heretical cosmology requires an heretical Christology to support it, and that Christology is found in Teilhard's exposition of the "Cosmic Christ." The expanding cosmos seemed to have rendered our planet and our race, and hence also Jesus of Nazareth, virtually irrelevant, leaving individualistic materialism as the only option. One recalls here, more recently, Paul Feyerabend's challenge to Cardinal Ratzinger that the Church ought to have foreseen this problem long ago. Père Teilhard was certainly aware of it, and his answer was to shift the emphasis to something or someone more grand than a mere man. Jesus, he suggested, was only one expression among many of the Cosmic Christ, a local expression appropriate to the needs of our particular planet and race.

Already in 1916, the young Jesuit wrote in his journal of "surrender to the Cosmic Christ" as the option that would secure what is best *both* in classical spirituality *and* in a more world-affirming posture. Beyond the traditional two natures of Christ, he claimed, we must reckon today with his *third* nature: with his relation to the Universe, rather than to the Father and the Spirit. This he posited as our most pressing theological problem. We must get to grips not with "the Man-Jesus and the Word-God," but with "a third face of the theandric complex," with "the mysterious super-human person everywhere underlying the most fundamental institutions and the most solemn dogmatic affirmations of the Church." We must get to grips with "the consummating and cosmic Christ of St. Paul," who alone could hold everything together.⁴

But Teilhard's Cosmic Christ, who underwrites noogenesis, has in fact nothing to do with the risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ to whom Paul bears witness. He is not Lord at all, really, but rather the product of the cosmic process. There is a sense in which he does not yet even fully exist. If evolution is noogenesis, noogenesis is *Christogenesis*. "Christ is the end-point of the evolution, even the natural evolution, of all beings; and therefore evolution is holy." "Quite

⁴ See J. A. Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ in Origen and Teilhard de Chardin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 189–90.

specifically,” says Teilhard, “it is *Christ whom we make or whom we undergo in all things.*”

So who was Jesus? In him, this future Cosmic Christ appeared proactively, or perhaps we should say retroactively, as a particular man. He did so in order to infuse into human nature a grace essential to evolution’s “hominization” phase. By his sacrifice on the Cross, Jesus provided the impetus to self-transcendence, without which unification—incorporation into one infinite Person—is ultimately impossible. In his resurrection, he anticipated our liberation from “the temporal zones of our visible world” into the oneness of the *Pleroma*. Having thus demonstrated a law common to all life, he began to draw the whole world after him as the enormous body of his ascension. The Cross now represents “the deepest aspirations of our age,” and “towards the peaks, shrouded in mists from our human eyes, whither the Cross beckons us, we rise by a path which is the way of universal progress.”

For Teilhard, the incarnation was a decisive but temporary affair, then. The Christ “appeared for a moment in our midst” that we might see and touch him “before vanishing once again, more luminous and ineffable than ever, into the depths of the future.” His withdrawal—both a going up and a going ahead, an ascension and an advance—means a going beyond the humanity he once shared with us. He has become “an immense and living force” to be encountered already, and worshipped, in all creatures. His presence is “silently accruing in things” until, in the Parousia, as if at a kind of flashpoint, it will suddenly break forth in all its splendor. For, as the twin vectors of our rectified faith “veer and draw together” they point us to the consummated Christ, the divine soul of a divinized creation.

To meld two opposing worldviews requires a powerful bond. Since Jesus of Nazareth could not supply that bond, Teilhard turned to the Cosmic Christ. But is that Christ something more substantial than a diagram, an invented metaphysic, an empty guarantee that forward is upward? And if so, can we follow Teilhard in addressing him as “Jesus”? For this much is clear: the first task of the Cosmic Christ is to dispose of the scandal of particularity with which Christianity has hitherto been burdened. Jesus of Nazareth is retained only as a reference point on our evolutionary chart, stretched out on the cross that is constructed for him by the intersection of Teilhard’s twin axes or aspirations. To expect belief in him today, as a living man, as “this same Jesus,” would not unite, but divide. The resurrected Christ,

whose strength bends these axes until they touch again at Omega point, is someone quite different. He is no longer the incarnate one, with his own human and bodily specificity, but the immanent one. “Why should we go searching the Judaea of two thousand years ago?” asks Teilhard. “You do truly appear to me as that vast and vital force which I sought everywhere that I might adore it.”

On the basis of his Christology alone, it is impossible to speak, with the Pontifical Council, merely of reservations or room for constructive criticism. We are talking about heresy, full stop. Were the *monitum* to be lifted, what Pius XII called a “cesspool of errors” would slop out all the more readily into the Church. But we must add something now about Teilhard’s view of the Church.

The Church is that “portion of the world which has reflexively become Christ” already. Little by little, it is harvesting “the world’s expectancy and ferment,” gathering together mankind’s spiritual energies “in their most sublime form” so as to focus them on the Omega point. The Church is the primal fall, the evil that is inevitable in creation, reversing itself.

Let me explain. Teilhard’s evolutionism, as already intimated, consists of a twofold process of descent into multiplicity (divergent evolution, subject to entropy) and ascent into unity (convergent evolution). There is first a spreading out of material entities and then a regathering through the perfection of inwardness. The spreading out can rightly be regarded as a fall, the regathering as redemption. “The multitude of beings is a terrible affliction,” he avowed. Or in the equally plain words of his journal: “There is only one Evil = disunity.” In human society, the Church serves to overcome disunity, or ought to. All that is required is a “simple readjustment” to orthodox beliefs, a turn from “the man who lived two thousand years ago” to the ubiquitous Christ who “shines forth from within all the forces of the earth.” That will enable the Catholic faith to be retooled as one “containing and embracing all others,” a strong and attractive faith that must eventually “possess the Earth.” (Yes, this sounds rather like Schleiermacher in his Fifth Speech.)

The Church he describes as a phylum, a kind of genetic pattern that has emerged to govern the future unfolding of evolution. It fosters convergence. It strives towards a planetary synaxis. It demolishes all barriers to social unification—religious barriers in particular. It builds up Christ. When, in *Le Divin Milieu*, Teilhard speaks of “the onrush of the cult of the Holy Eucharist,” this is what he has in view. This is

Christogenesis, the Church generating Christ. Has it not been busy from the start transforming creation, little by little, into an extension of the body of Christ through its daily Masses? Not in some crass physical sense, of course, but by the steady assimilation of humanity into the one communion of him who underlies everything. "As our humanity assimilates the material world, and the Host assimilates our humanity, the eucharistic transformation goes beyond and completes the transubstantiation of the bread on the altar. Step by step it irresistibly invades the universe." For, in a secondary but true sense, "the sacramental Species are formed by the totality of the world, and the duration of the creation is the time needed for its consecration."

The Church, then, is engaged in effecting the consecration of everything. It is knitting together for Jesus, out of the stuff of creation, an immense body "worthy of resurrection." It is fulfilling its Marian task of bringing forth Christ. Through its cooperation with the world, the one who has hidden himself in the womb of the world will reappear. The Church is in labor, and the product of that labor will be the pure spiritual Unity it adores. In Teilhard's notorious "The Mass on the World," his offering of strange fire in the Ordos desert, he completes his act of Christogenetic idolatry: "'Lord.' Yes, at last, through the twofold mystery of this universal consecration and communion I have found one to whom I can whole-heartedly give this name. . . . Glorious Lord Jesus Christ: the divine influence secretly diffused and active in the depths of matter, and the dazzling centre where all the innumerable fibres of the manifold meet, . . . it is you to whom my being cried out with a desire as vast as the universe, 'In truth you are my Lord and my God.'"⁵

On the altar of Unity, the Church itself is to be a victim. According to Teilhard, it has become "the principal axis of evolution," the hub of "a perennial act of communion and sublimation" by which the Cosmic Christ "aggregates to himself the total psychism of the earth." But it cannot remain this if it is not prepared to grow and change with the world, to embrace the world in its own advancing humanity, to be fulfilled by the world. Its faith and praxis must be rectified by the pull of society at large. If it will not thus transcend itself, if it will not happily embrace the compromises of diagonalism, it can hardly hope to lead others in the quest for Omega. To assimilate the world, in other words, the Church must also be assimilated

⁵ Teilhard, *Hymn of the Universe*, 33–34; see also 19ff. and 94–95.

by the world. (And yes, when we recall Teilhard's statist inclinations, this does now sound very much like Hegel.) Who then is consecrating whom? Which is really the critical phylum? Does it even matter, or is that a distinction without a difference? If Christ and cosmos can be run together, and Christ and Church, what can separate Church and world? The whole is greater than the parts, and Christ is that whole. "Always from the very first it was the world, greater than all the elements which make up the world, that I was in love with; and never before was there anyone before whom I could in honesty bow down."

Teilhard's monistic drive explains the fact that he could describe not only Roman Catholicism, but also fascism and communism as being, "in line with the essential trend of cosmic movement."⁶ It is true that, after the Second World War, he could be found criticizing faceless and dehumanizing collectives. However, his Cosmic Christ—neither fully human nor fully divine, but itself a faceless *tertium quid*—pulled him steadily toward the reefs of the impersonal. "Even as late as 1946," notes John Passmore, Teilhard "was still prepared to write that it was too early 'to judge recent totalitarian experiments fairly,' to make up our minds whether 'all things considered, they have produced a greater enslavement or a higher level of spiritual energy.'"⁷ Teilhard was not blind to the fact that the unification of human society seemed to be producing not harmony, but turmoil and suffering—what Irenaeus called "minglings without cohesion"—but he had a kind of chaos theory by which to account for this: "Incoherence is the prelude to unification." Meanwhile, we must "look for our essential satisfaction in the thought that by our struggles we are serving, and leading to salvation, a personal Universe."



L'En Haut et l'En Avant
Upwards and onwards,
onwards and upwards!

⁶ Teilhard, *The Future of Man*, 46.

⁷ John Passmore, *The Perfectibility of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 246.

One can of course quibble about the details in interpreting Teilhard, and one can always find an intriguing remark or felicitous phrase, a quotable paragraph or page, that seems quite susceptible of an orthodox reading. But the Cross-cancelling outline is plain enough.⁸ Pius XII was not exaggerating. The Holy Office was not being overly scrupulous when, under John XXIII, it issued its warning. Karl Barth, for that matter, did not go too far when he described the thought of Teilhard de Chardin as a giant gnostic snake. With all due respect to the Pontifical Council for Culture, it is high time the Church's heel struck that snake a sharp blow on its head. The *monitum*, if it is to be lifted, should be lifted only for that purpose—to replace it with a condemnation of the material heresy with which Teilhard's work is replete.⁹ N-V

⁸ I have tried to represent that in the above diagram, which adds to Teilhard's own diagram the three missing quadrants.

⁹ Here, in sum, is a short list of his errors, each of which implies several others:

1. Creation, as the gnostics taught, entails a fall.
2. Diversity means disunity, and disunity is the only evil.
3. The redemption of creation involves overcoming matter with spirit and escaping, rather than renewing, the material world.
4. The risen Christ is not the man Jesus, but a spiritualizing force immanent in all creation.
5. Christ has three natures, not two: divine, human, and (synthesizing those two) universal.
6. The Church is building Christ by bringing his ubiquity to ritual expression.
7. Transubstantiation means the spiritualizing of matter.
8. The Church or city of God is one axis of Humanity as it fulfills its task of spiritualizing the world; the other is the city of man, with which the Church must fully (not partly or provisionally) identify and cooperate in a common enterprise.
9. The Cross represents the deepest aspirations of our age.
10. God is not, from and to all eternity, the Holy Trinity in transcendent splendor, who creates freely and grants being and goodness to all things that he makes, but rather, as Hegel taught, the Spirit-generating Process of diversification and unification.

Catholicism and Its Discontents: Revelation in an Ecumenical and Interreligious Context¹

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AS HEGEL NOTED, the human mind aspires naturally to the universal, even through all the dialectical turns of history, aiming at it like a kind of star in the night. Human culture is composed of a diversity of tribal genealogies, incompatible legal customs, competing philosophical systems, and contrasting religious claims. And at the same time, the human race strives incessantly to find an all-encompassing truth, one that holds for all persons and for all time. In fact, only this aspiration accounts for the generation of such diverse monuments of culture that are themselves so contrasting. Only the universal can quench the living thirst of the mind.

This universal truth is evasive, however, and at times the conviction of having found such a thing is not only illusory, but even dangerous. The Enlightenment desire for a post-Christian political life of secular rationality began with a grand ambition for universal truth, but it also gave impetus to the tribalism of the Reign of Terror and the Napoleonic wars. With the advent of scientific positivism, this confident aspiration has taken a painfully reductionist turn, becoming incapable of articulating realistically the specifically human characteristics of freedom, political responsibility, artistic beauty, the search for the truth, or human religion. The two great universalist systems that have come from the Enlightenment have

¹ A longer version of this article previously appeared in *Angelicum* 93 (2016): 399–416. It is republished here with kind permission of the *Angelicum*.

not fared particularly well. International Marxism gave rise to many embarrassing examples of despotic authoritarianism and violent nationalism. The rise of progressivist democratic liberalism has been more successful politically but has terminated in an obsession with the progress of economic consumerism and the advances of sexual freedom. Contemporary European and American societies seem unable to sustain any deep connection to traditional Western notions of human nature and the common good. Consequently, our modern, post-Enlightenment culture is united superficially by merely a common set of market conditions and psychological instincts. This makes for a very shallow form of culture, one in which the aspiration to a meaningful form of universalism is eclipsed. Or perhaps it is a culture in search of a yet higher form of ethical and metaphysical resolution. Is there a greater universalism yet to come?

The most important work of Catholic theology written in the twentieth century was Henri de Lubac's *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*. The book is made up of a series of associative meditations, like a collection of conceptual postcards, each one documenting in a succinct but spiritually profound way a major theme from the Catholic intellectual tradition. All of them have to do with universalism in Christ: the unity of the human race, the life of the one "Catholic" Church, the one Eucharistic communion in grace, the one eschatological destiny of all men. It is a masterpiece of intellectual erudition and sophisticated apologetics.

What de Lubac effectively sought to do in *Catholicism* was to preserve but also to rethink the conditions of modern Catholic triumphalism. Early modern Catholic ecclesiology was triumphalist and also dialectical and militant. In response to the Reformation: the Church is the true ecclesial body founded by Christ. There is no other. In response to the rise of Enlightenment critics: supernatural revelation alone provides the human beings with truth-knowledge of the most ultimate kind; there is no salvation outside the Church. In response to the anti-clerical political movements of nineteenth-century Europe: the Church is a political society that is perfect and that is self-governing in sovereign independence of the state. There is no competence of the secular state to govern our supernatural destiny and the life of the Church. De Lubac, of course, believes all these things. But he reconfigures them in such a way as to address the aspirations of modern secular political systems in an apologetic mode, speaking in a way that is inclusive and that addresses concerns of non-Catholics, affirming the modern quest for the universal: what you have failed to

accomplish, the Church in her grace and mystery is capable of doing. When Protestantism aspires to ecclesial unity by way of the ecumenical movement, then it aims implicitly toward the fullness of the means of salvation that is found in the Catholic Church alone. When secular humanism seeks a transcendent meaning to human history in which genuine ethical values are instantiated in human society over the course of time, it aims implicitly toward something that only the New Testament revelation can provide in an authentic way. When modern governments seek to safeguard and provide the grounds for authentic human unity, they aspire to what ultimately only the Church can give. A modern humanity that is often fragmented by ideology, but also by individual solitude, can find its deepest fulfillment only in that sacramental communion in Christ that the Church affords. The triumph of Catholicism is one that works from within, rather than against, the age. Catholicism alone is capable of fulfilling the tormenting desire for the universal, a desire that breaks the heart of an unstable and uncertain modern world.

As we know, this inclusive triumphalism was to become thematic in the Second Vatican Council. The Church is introduced there in the opening chapter of *Lumen Gentium* as the “sacrament of the unity of the human race,” as the sign and instrument by which human beings are united in authentic communion with God and with one another. Paragraphs 14–16 are the paradigmatic example of the inclusive triumphalist perspective. There we see the axiom that there is no salvation outside the Church stated overtly, but also reconfigured positively: all salvation that occurs in human history is in some way either in the Church or related to her. There is a gradation of forms named that participate more or less imperfectly in the universal mission of Christ and the Church: the Eastern Orthodox churches, Protestant ecclesial communities, the Jewish people, Islamic monotheism, the great world religious traditions that are not always explicitly monotheistic, and even, among secularists, the moral conscience by which human beings are led to seek the true and the good.

This viewpoint is complemented coherently by documents like *Gaudium et Spes*, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, and *Nostra Aetate*. *Gaudium et Spes* §22 famously claims that only in Jesus Christ is the mystery of the human person fully unveiled to the human race. Yet grace and salvation are at least offered to all, such that each human being is invited in some way to be united to the Paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. The wide variety of social doctrines contained in *Gaudium et Spes* should be understood in a Christological light that is at

once both triumphalist and inclusive: the grace of Christ inspires all to embrace the truths of the natural law that the Church rightly promotes as the principles of ethical unity and political universalism. *Unitatis Redintegratio* insists that the grace of Christ that is found in the Catholic Church in a perfection of intensity is at work also in the genuinely Catholic elements of tradition and sacramental life found in other ecclesial traditions. The Catholic Church can therefore rightly take the initiative in the ecumenical movement to seek forms of life and theology that promote universal Christian unity. *Nostra Aetate* speaks of the light of the Word of God shining “a ray of that truth that enlightens all men” upon the practitioners of other religious traditions, leading them toward the fullness of the truth of Christ. The Church’s interreligious dialogue can therefore be a means not only to mutual understanding among the religions but also to genuine evangelization and to the formation of a religious consciousness of humanity enlightened progressively by the grace of Christ.

This inclusive Catholic triumphalism has been the normative paradigm of mainstream Catholic theology for the past fifty years. One finds it present in both conservative and progressivist spheres. It animated the vibrant pontificate of St. John Paul II, in his anti-communist writings on human freedom in relationship to truth, in his theology of universal human dignity (in confrontation with the culture of death), and in his treatment of subtle questions of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. It is present in the pontificate of Pope Francis in the appeal to a Catholic vision of creation as the basis for authentic environmental ethics and in his appeal to the Church’s social doctrine as a privileged instrument for addressing international challenges of poverty and economic injustice. The modalities are diverse, but the inclusive universalism is apparent in either case.

And yet, one senses that this normative paradigm of modern Catholic theology, despite its genuine achievements and its real vibrancy, is in fact in crisis, or perhaps more accurately, is currently subject to an existentially threatening form of malaise. The reasons have to do with the changed conditions of modern society. Cardinal de Lubac and the Second Vatican Council gave us a vision of Catholicism as the spiritual gravamen or essential spiritual core of authentic human civilization. In at least some sense, this is incontrovertible, theologically speaking, because the grace of Christ heals and elevates human nature in a unique and most perfect way. But as an apologetic stance, this claim is made difficult today due to major changes that have

occurred since the time of the Second Vatican Council, changes that its documents did not foresee.

The most acute of these is the intensive secularization that has arisen in vast swaths of Europe, North America, and increasingly, South America. Allied with this is, subsequent to the fall of communism, the rise of utilitarian liberal government not based on traditional values, but on a social program consisting primarily in the delivery of utilities. Western governments have modified in the face of post-Christian culture by a kind of survivalist adaptationism. They exist not primarily to provide laws inclining citizens toward a universal conception of the good life, but to provide existential space for their citizens to each live out the postmodern project of value constructivism. The common denominator that government provides is the existence of utilities that permit this existential space: physical protection, health care, education principally in view of technology fabrication and participation in the work force, the management of markets and entertainments, and the support of sexual liberties. Allied with this new social configuration is the rise of a postmodern theory that typically rejects the Enlightenment ideal of universal rationality and affirms the inevitability of heteronomous conceptions of reality and social norms, depending on diverse cultural, ethnic, and gender identities. The concept that holds together the unity of the modern utilitarian state and the ideology of postmodern constructivist pluralism is that of "tolerance," a nebulous virtue (instrumental at best) that is meant to allow persons with incompatible worldviews to inhabit the common market space in a nonjudgmental, coexistent way.

All of this takes us very far afield from the context in which de Lubac wrote *Catholicism*. In our new context, traditional religious practices become enemies of the postmodern project: the claim to absolute knowledge, the appeal to a form of universalism that should inform civilization that is not based on empirical indexes alone, the asceticism on human sexuality that religious traditions tend to promote (which are often seen as a direct threat to human freedom), the seemingly arbitrary privileging of tradition, the creation of hierarchies that depend upon gender or distinctively religious forms of moral behavior (like hierarchies based upon theological knowledge or the practice of celibacy). Already, all of this makes religion seem a threat to modern liberal society. When we add in the threat of Islamic extremist violence, the situation is only exacerbated, and quite acutely at that.

What is my point of all this rapidly sketched sociology? Basically

that Catholic theology today is offering the modern secular world a model of civilizational unity it no longer seeks. We need a new model for the proposal of divine revelation that recognizes our new circumstances. Communism was a real metaphysical alternative in the age of Vatican II, and it required a clear counter-alternative. Today we face a different cultural challenge and require a distinctive and different theological response.

Something that can help us, at least partially, is another important theological work of the twentieth century, Hans Urs von Balthasar's *The Theology of Karl Barth*. Devoted to a sympathetic exposition of Barth, it also contains a treatise on the relationship of nature and grace in Catholic theology as such, with particular attention given to the question of the natural human capacity to grasp universal truths regarding being, natural law, personhood, and the transcendent reality of God, as this capacity relates to both grace and sin. Does our fallen human condition darken our natural intellectual capacity for knowledge of God, human personhood, and the natural law? Does the grace of Christ inspire and stimulate the healing of these native capacities, employing them in the service of a deeper wisdom that is Christocentric in kind? Balthasar was influenced by Gottlieb Söhngen, the Munich theologian and teacher of Joseph Ratzinger who engaged with Karl Barth creatively over the question of natural, metaphysical knowledge of the existence of God (the so-called *analogia entis*). Where Barth claimed that such knowledge is, in reality, impossible or an obstacle to true knowledge by faith (the *analogia fidei*), Söhngen attempted to do justice to Barth's insight about the frailty of human knowledge of God by situating the question of natural knowledge of God within a uniquely Christological context. It is when and if the light of the incarnate Word shines upon the human mind that the native capacity for thinking metaphysically about God and humanity in light of God is revived and coordinated vitally with the revealed truth of Christ, interior, so to speak, to the act of faith itself. The *analogia entis* is discovered from within the *analogia fidei*.

Balthasar adopts this approach. It is significant because it suggests that we need a vital ecclesial intellectual life and a culture of grace in order to actuate our knowledge of basic metaphysical truths about God, the human person, and the natural law. One can disagree here with Barth's wholesale rejection of natural theology but agree with the *practical* claim regarding the inefficacy of appeal to the classical Western metaphysical and moral tradition in the face of a secular

culture. The implication here is that, if the Church seeks to generate and nourish a culture of the living knowledge of God and a proper human anthropology in the midst of a secular age, she must seek first and foremost to articulate a Christological vision of reality based on revelation. The Christological universalism of *Gaudium et Spes* §22 thus takes precedence. Apologetic efforts to build up unfulfilled desires toward Catholic fullness are no longer of central concern. What is central is the irreducible proclamation of an integrated Christian wisdom, at once dogmatic and metaphysical, systematic and practical, and rooted in tradition. Contemporary questions and controversies need to be illuminated by revelation before they can be brought into a Catholic system of thought, just as the secular world can recognize its need for revelation only if it is first confronted with the plenitude of Christian revelation. The revelation of Christ purifies, elevates, and unites. Consequently, Balthasar seeks to illuminate all human thought by appeal to the light of Christ, who draws the fragmented, disparate truths of humanity, both secular and religious, into one, a truth that is distinctly theological. Here we are no longer speaking of inclusive triumphalism, but of an alternative portrait of the whole—we might say, of the Church as a sacrament of truth, a sign and instrument of the light of wisdom that is so often lacking in the world of an unselfconsciously profane humanity that does not acknowledge the light of the Gospel.

The position that I have sketched out here rather hastily is evidently intended to provide a broad view of the theological stance of the *Communio* movement, which has had immense international influence in the Church. Thomists in general have been sympathetic to this project but have tended to find it problematic in at least one respect. In a world marked by the effects of original sin, and *a fortiori* in a post-Christian, secular culture, one can agree that human beings have a very difficult time grasping essential truths. Revelation illumines and heals a debilitated human reason. So, a culture informed by grace is one in which metaphysical realism should flourish in principle, and a culture of ignorance or of indifference to the mystery of Christ is one in which metaphysical disorientation may readily follow. What Thomists tend to find more problematic with this schema is the insistence that natural reason can be exercised only in healthy conditions within the explicit domain of theological wisdom, only ever from within a process of theological reasoning and proclamation. The danger of Balthasar's proposals is that everything becomes theology, all the way down. All ontology is always, already Christological.

This approach is attractive because it is theologically totalitarian, but in reality, it gives too little place to the universal power of natural human reason, be it philosophical, scientific, or historical. A modern Church that reclaims the primacy of Christological truth and insists on the primacy of grace need not become a Church that appears turned in on itself, without sufficient practice of and engagement in the project of universal rationality. Here de Lubac is right: revelation should not be placed in opposition to fallen human reason. In the face of a secularism that is indifferent to Catholic inclusive triumphalism, the Church must avoid the risk of falling into the reactive extreme of an epistemological and cultural sectarianism.

What then should we do? Inclusive Catholic triumphalism is, in large part, an exhausted theological paradigm. We face new challenges. The Catholic Church in the twenty-first century cannot presume that the secular society stands in need of the existential answers offered by the Church of the Vatican II era. Nor can she resign herself benignly to underscoring those occasional causes of progressivist culture that have some affinity with Catholic social doctrine so as to become merely the domesticated court chaplain to the causes of secular humanism.

Balthasar and de Lubac are each helpful, under different aspects. With Balthasar, the Church should recognize that only the fullness of Catholic wisdom can heal a fallen human culture. With de Lubac, and against postmodernity, the Church must help restore to the human person a sense of the natural capacity for the universal. Our postmodern age needs both the radiant light of Christ's theological wisdom and encouragement to venture out in search of philosophical truth (something that restores the apologetic aim of de Lubac's project). Along with these two concerns, we must name a third: the imperative to practice spiritual charity toward all those who are fated to live disoriented lives in postmodern, secular culture. We can sketch out these three ideas briefly, construing them as tasks for contemporary theology.

The first task corresponds to Balthasar's Christological aim. Balthasar grasped rightly that, in an increasingly de-Christianized epoch, a central challenge for theology is to return to the core teachings of the Gospel as revealed in Scripture and Tradition so as to promote a profound understanding of divine revelation. Only then can we really gather the shards of truth found throughout human culture into the one light of Christ. In fact, the deepest threat to Catholic intellectual life today stems not from a lack of engagement

with the outside world, but from ignorance of our own tradition and widespread loss of authentic biblical and doctrinal thinking. Dogmatic illiteracy within the Church itself is the central contemporary intellectual challenge facing the Church. But if this is true, how is the return to dogma able to galvanize the aspiration to universalism, especially in an age in which religious behavior is typically perceived as a direct threat to secular society?

They say that, in Judo, the martial artist learns to use the weight of his opponent against him to bring him down. The pressing weight of secular culture bearing in upon the Church is in its skepticism. But this is also its weakness. Our own era is haunted by despair about the very question of a discernable meaning to human existence or a common purpose of human political life, a despair to which a response is needed that emphasizes the explanatory power of belief in the very mystery of God himself. Today, Catholic theology should focus on Trinitarian monotheism. Why? Because God is the ultimate truth, the principal source of explanation that gives human existence its greatest intelligibility.

Aquinas says that the two central truths of Christian revelation are the mystery of the Holy Trinity and that of the Incarnation. They are ultimate because they tell us who God is in himself and how he has become human so that we might participate by grace in the divine life itself. If the ultimate metaphysical explanation of reality is Trinitarian in character, then what that tells us is that, metaphysically speaking, personhood is primal to reality. In the beginning, there was the Trinitarian communion of persons. The universe is the gift of a personal transcendent source and is made for the communion of persons by grace. If this is the case, then what is most personal in human beings, the capacity to seek the truth and to make free deliberate decisions to love, is not something that merely evolved arbitrarily or an accidental feature of reality. On the contrary, personhood is central to reality and the human search for knowledge and love is always warranted because it takes on its most ultimate meaning in light of the communion of Trinitarian persons.

There is another feature of this universalism that should be acknowledged as well, without being opposed to the first. This is the rational warrant of monotheism. The world is best understood if it is explained metaphysically by recourse to a primary principle. The existence of a multiplicity of finite, contingent beings requires us to posit the existence of a necessary, transcendent being. The imperfect goodness, beauty, and truth of the universe serves as an indirect but

certain witness to the existence of the Creator who is infinitely good, perfect, and wise. In this sense, God is the natural lodestar of the human intellect, the most universal truth to which the human mind can aspire, because God is the cause of all else that is. Here we should realize that the explanatory power of Christian thinking about God includes this aspect of monotheistic realism as well. One side of the explanatory logic pertains to love, but the other side equally pertains to being, and love and being must be understood together. The God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is also simple, perfect, good, infinite, omnipotent, and eternal. With Söhnigen, we can say that the knowledge of the Trinity as a communion of love (the *analogia fidei*) does not do away with knowledge of the divine being (the *analogia entis*), but rather makes use of it. In this way, Christian theology can rightly emphasize that what is most ultimate about being is love and that the love shared between the Trinitarian persons is at the very ground of created reality, as its transcendent source of being. The possession of personhood that each of us experiences is the opportunity to seek out this mystery, to discover that the one God who truly is is also a being of love.

The second task concerns the defense of the Enlightenment aspiration to universal rationality. De Lubac's era was haunted by the search for a collectivist movement that could unite humanity politically, and it was tempted by the promises of atheistic Communism, which functioned as a kind of secular eschatology. De Lubac's apologetic response was to propose Catholicism as the authentic answer to the human search for meaning and universal communion. Today, the challenge is different: to convince human beings that the search is itself even possible. This situation is more dire in one respect, but more promising in another. The Catholic Church incites suspicion because she promotes the notion that the human intellect is naturally made to seek universal explanatory meaning and metaphysical understanding of reality. However, it is also the case that the Church has few competitors presenting truly coherent alternative philosophical conceptions of reality. De Lubac is right: if the Church can legitimately resolve secular humanity's own internal problems for her, then that humanity is more likely to take the Church seriously as the answer to her own deepest questions. Consequently, the Church needs to make the *philosophical* argument in the public square today that the world is inherently intelligible (that our minds are naturally made for objective truth). She should simultaneously promote Catholicism as the religion of mystery *and* as the religion that seeks

to promote the authentic universality of human reason. The two are not only not opposed; they are deeply interrelated. A sound sense of rational objectivity opens the mind to the mystery of being, just as a deep sense of engagement with the revelation of Christ challenges the mind toward a more realistic approach to all of reality.

But where is the secular world confronted inevitably by such questions today? Where are the needs of public rationality most pressing in our own era? A few key issues readily come to mind. Contemporary culture agrees on the importance of the scientific revolution, not only in terms of the speculative depiction of modern cosmology but also in the practical domains of public health and the ever-developing technological industry. But what is the relationship of the natural sciences to larger questions of philosophical meaning? Considered in themselves, the natural sciences give us no real reason to support a culture of liberal freedoms and offer no transcendent purpose to human life. They are often perceived by religionists and secularists alike as antithetical to religious traditions. A key task, then, which twentieth-century Catholic theology largely ignored, is to show the fundamental compatibility of the modern natural sciences with a deeper philosophy of nature and a metaphysics of the human person, one that is ultimately religious in orientation. Here the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas is of noteworthy assistance, but so too are the philosophical reflections of secularist critics of naturalism, who are dissatisfied with the reductionism and over-simplification of contemporary materialism. Modern physics, evolutionary theory, and contemporary neuroscience invite us to pose deeper metaphysical questions about the meaning of human existence, and when rightly understood philosophically, they pose no real challenge to a religious interpretation of reality.

A second philosophical issue that is pressing has to do with the rationality of religious behavior within the context of modern democratic political culture. Contemporary secularism and Islamist extremism are inimically opposed on a host of issues, but they are united by a common conviction that democratic liberalism and traditional religious conviction are inherently incompatible. Here the teaching on religious freedom offered by *Dignitatis Humanae* appears deeply prophetic, but it also requires a much more extensive philosophical explanation and theological defense in engagement with secular self-understanding, as well as with that of Muslims. How is it that Catholicism can promote a notion of religious absolutism that defends the place of religious freedom to both anti-democratic reli-

gionists and anti-religionist secularists alike? What is needed today is a more religious concept of modern pluralistic democracy.

Also of importance for Christian philosophy today is the question of asceticism in public culture. If liberalism is essentially a philosophy of “naked public space” where individuals can explore their economic and sexual interests, then it also is a philosophy that perpetually generates an unsolvable problem or question regarding the right use of freedom. Yes, we are free, but how can we be happy? The traditional answer to this question, offered by Aristotle and Augustine, entails a structured use of our freedom based on the asceticism of our virtues so that our lives are shaped by rational decisions and ethical nobility. This message is not difficult to promote because liberal postmodern culture is spiritually fractured. It increasingly leaves people alone, unmarried, and subject to the whims of the market and the addictions of their sexuality. A philosophy of authentic freedom is what the world needs, and that can be championed especially by those who know Catholic philosophy well. If the Church promotes a philosophy that shows the profound harmony of scientific realism and the metaphysics of theism, of religious freedom and religious absolutism, and of the modern liberal search for happiness and the promise of Catholic asceticism, then she will provide a new form of rational “universalism” more authentically inclusive than anything else promoted in the public square.

A final issue pertains the role of spiritual charity in a cold world. De Lubac was rightly concerned about a fractured individualistic view of salvation occupying the Church’s thinking in a one-sided way. This has turned out, however, to be a prophetic insight regarding life outside the Church in our own age. Human beings in modern secular society are all seeking to save themselves, and their lives are marked very typically by trying solitude and extreme forms of individualism. The revelation of Christ appears in this context most effectively through the witness of the collective life of the Church, in the liturgy, in Christian marriage, and in the witness of authentic religious life. When lived integrally, this collective Catholicism recapitulates the two features mentioned above: belief in the mystery of the Holy Trinity as the ultimate truth about reality, acknowledged in a rational way in the midst of our complex modern world. Human beings in the world today know very little what to do with their bodies. The physical life of the human person is frequently commodified, sexually objectified, or analyzed materially through the tools of science. But none of this tells modern people what their bodies

are actually for or how to live a genuinely happy life in the body. It turns out, however, that our bodies are made for the worship of God and for genuine acts of spiritual love. When Catholics both live and teach this truth, they show what it means to be human and what it means for the Word to become flesh. The Church really does become a universal sign and instrument of enlightenment. The witness of fraternal charity is the ultimate form of triumphant inclusivism that is needed in every age. A Catholicism that lives the victory of the charity of Christ in the flesh is one that can vanquish every spiritual adversary and convert every doubtful heart.

Today, many of our non-Christian compatriots have abandoned the search for an overarching explanation of reality and seem even indifferent to the very question itself. But the human desire for truth is ineradicable on a basic level, and nature abhors a vacuum. The Catholic theology of revelation is as theoretically viable today as it ever was, and we can add that one rarely encounters any other intellectually satisfying explanation of the nature of religion or even the meaning of human existence. Consequently, this is the time for courage. In the First Book of Samuel, it is not David's army that overcomes both the army of the Philistines and the pride of Saul, but his confidence in the truth. For a Christian, the only real weapon is the truth lived in love. Truth taught and lived in charity alone has the power to save. That is the authentic universalism of Christ, the true light that is coming into the world. If we take up that arm, God will be with us: the one true Church, the Church militant, the Church triumphant—the Catholic Church. N-V

Two Paradigms on the Eucharist as Sacrifice: Scheeben and Journet in Dialogue

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Introduction

THE AIM OF THIS ESSAY is to set into dialogue and, ultimately, synthesize two different approaches to the perennial question of the sacrificial character of the Mass, those of Matthias J. Scheeben (1835–1888) and Charles Journet (1891–1975). I have chosen Scheeben and Journet precisely because they approach this question from opposite directions, both of which deserve retrieval in certain ways today. Scheeben is heir to post-Tridentine speculation on the Mass that focuses on *the Church's new act of offering sacrifice*. For Scheeben, the Mass is a sacrifice *of the Church* precisely because her gifts are transubstantiated into the body and blood of the glorified Christ, whence her members partake of the fruits of his Passion. Journet, on the other hand, emphasizes the numerical unity of the Church's offering with Christ's Passion. The Mass is a sacrifice because, in it, Christ's Passion is sacramentally re-presented and is, therefore, made present in power. At bottom, these positions represent different ways of accessing the texts of St. Thomas, as we shall see.

By placing Scheeben and Journet in dialogue, I hope to show that their approaches can, if taken noncompetitively, mutually inform one another, producing a resultant position that is stronger than either taken individually. I will anticipate my conclusion here by saying that, although I consider Journet's position to be stronger taken in itself (it foregrounds what is of primary importance), nevertheless, I also think Scheeben's position provides a necessary counterpoint to

Journet's, since it illumines other aspects of the tradition that Journet, for the most part, leaves undeveloped. In so doing, I hope to contribute to the ongoing recovery of the Eucharist's properly sacrificial dimension in contemporary Catholic theology.

This essay will proceed in three parts. In the first, I will set forth Scheeben's theory of Eucharistic sacrifice. In the second, I will examine Journet's counter-proposal. In the last, I will set the positions in dialogue, showing how their different approaches are nevertheless able to mutually inform one another.

Scheeben on the Eucharistic Sacrifice

In order to understand Scheeben's (initially counterintuitive) position on Eucharistic sacrifice, it is necessary to first set forth some of the defining features of his sacrificial theology in general. To this end, I will first examine his take on the requisite alteration or *immutatio* needed to distinguish a sacrifice from a mere oblation: is it, he asks, an exclusively *destructive* action? In this connection, I will also discuss Scheeben's position on what this alteration—or series of alterations—is intended to express in terms of a human being's relationship to God. By first surveying these two topics, we will be better positioned to understand the particulars of his theory of Eucharistic sacrifice.

Scheeben begins his detailed treatment of sacrifice in volume 5/2 of his *Handbuch* with a discussion of the narrowing of its meaning and external form in the post-Tridentine period, next to which he presents his own position as the recovery of a broader (Augustinian-Thomistic) perspective. The meaning of sacrifice is narrowed, Scheeben tells us, when the “vantage point under which God should be specifically honored by sacrifice” is taken in too restricted a fashion or when the goal for which it is offered is likewise truncated.¹ Its *meaning* is narrowed when latreutic sacrifice, the highest form of sacrifice, is offered to God only for the recognition of God's majesty, next to which creaturely being is nothing.² The *goal* for which sacri-

¹ Mathias Joseph Scheeben, *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik*, vol. 5/2, ed. Carl Feckes, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 6/2, ed. Josef Höfer (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1954), no. 1424 (all citations of the *Handbuch* will be to the paragraph numbers rather than page numbers; all translations of the work are my own).

² Latreutic sacrifice—so designated according to its motive for offering—is the highest form of sacrifice because it is offered primarily to render to God λατρεία, the worship owed to him as God. “Latreutic” comes from the Greek λατρεία and Latin *latría*, and it refers to the service that is due to God alone

fice is offered is truncated when its laetific aims are subordinated to “the expiation to be performed for sin,” which is now taken as the “primary aim of sacrifice.”³ Against these truncations of the scope of its meaning and aim, Scheeben sets forth his own position by referring back to the broader conceptions of Augustine and Thomas.

With Augustine, Scheeben affirms that sacrifice is the highest expression of religion: it orders the creature to God “for his honor and glorification” through the ordering of the creature to God “as the highest and holiest good” via *caritas religiosa* in order to represent “the striving [of the rational creature] for perfect assimilation and unification with God.”⁴ Viewed in this way, sacrifice—in terms of its highest aims—is directed to the manifestation of God’s glory in the world, precisely through the glorification and transfiguration of the spiritual creature.⁵ Scheeben draws on the thought of St. Thomas in this connection through a pair of citations from the *Summa theologiae* [ST]. In the first, ST I-II, q. 102, a. 3, ad 8,⁶ Thomas speaks of “the goal of the most perfect sacrifice, the burnt offering,”⁷ as offered out of “reverence to [God’s] majesty, and love of His goodness.” As for the effects of this kind of sacrifice on the worshipper, Scheeben cites ST III, q. 22, a. 2, where Thomas notes that one of the main reasons sacrifice is offered to God is so that “the spirit of man [may] be perfectly united to God.”⁸ Scheeben thus stakes out his position: the

as God (see, e.g., Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 10.3). In scholastic discussions, the Old Testament sacrifice most directly connected with worship *as such* was the holocaust, the burnt offering (see, e.g., Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [ST] I-II, q. 102, a. 3, ad 10). See Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1445n9.

³ Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1424.

⁴ Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1424. Scheeben does not directly cite Augustine in this paragraph. With his reference to Augustine, he is directing the reader back to his citation of the *Doctor gratiae* in no. 1421, where he discussed Augustine’s famous locus classicus of sacrificial theology, *De civitate Dei* 10.6 (see, likewise, 10.3).

⁵ Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1424.

⁶ Scheeben cites ST I-II, q. 102, a. 3, ad 7, but this is a mistake.

⁷ Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1424. But cf. ST I-II, q. 102, a. 3, ad 9: “The holocaust was the most perfect kind of sacrifice.” See also ST I-II, q. 102, a. 3, ad 10. Citations of the *Summa theologiae* are from: Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, trans. Laurence Shapcote, ed. John Mortensen and Enrique Alarcón (Lander, WY: Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012).

⁸ St. Thomas continues by noting, “hence, under the Old Law, the holocaust was offered . . . the victim was wholly burnt,” thus linking the altar fire with the creature’s transformation in the state of glory.

highest aims of sacrifice are latreutic, ordered to God as the rational creature's first principle *and* last end.⁹

In connection with Scheeben's broadening of the aims of sacrifice also comes a reconsideration of its external form.¹⁰ So as to draw out a standard component in definitions of sacrifice, Thomists generally cite *ST* II-II, q. 85, a. 3, ad 3, where Thomas notes that a sacrifice is distinguished from a mere oblation through the fact that *aliquid fit*, that something is done to it: "A sacrifice, properly speaking, requires that *something be done* to the thing which is offered to God [*circa res Deo oblata aliquid fit*]."¹¹ A mere oblation, on the other hand, "is properly the offering of something to God even if nothing be done thereto" (*ST* II-II, q. 85, a. 3, ad 3). At this point, the question naturally arises of precisely *what kind* of alteration or *immutatio* is necessary to constitute an oblation as a sacrifice.

This is where Scheeben steps in. He maintains that there is a diminishment of the total idea when the form of the sacrificial action (*Opferhandlung*) is taken in an exclusively destructive sense, as an *immutatio demutativa seu destructiva*.¹² This is a move he sees increasingly among theologians of the new Scholasticism in the late sixteenth century, especially Gabriel Vásquez.¹³ Scheeben counters that, "besides the destructive alteration, there is also the *immutatio perfectiva seu consummativa*, which is to say, *transformativa in melius*," meaning a transformation of the *res oblata* (the thing offered) for the better, where it is raised into a *higher* condition.¹⁴ For Scheeben, it is this *immutatio perfectiva* that corresponds to the broader, perfective dimension of latreutic sacrifice outlined above (union with

⁹ For this formulation, see *ST* II-II, q. 85, a. 2, cited by Scheeben in *Handbuch*, 5/2:1426, where Thomas observes that "the soul offers itself in sacrifice to God as its beginning by creation [*principio suae creationis*], and its end by beatification [*fini suae beatificationis*]." Cf. *ST* I-II, q. 102, a.3. See also *Handbuch*, 5/2:1416: sacrifices are "the practical, respectively, symbolic expression for the striving of man to recognize God as the highest good as well as the first principle and last end [*erste Prinzip und letzte Endziel*], respectively, as the principle of his being and of his perfection." See also *Handbuch*, 5/2:1367, 1373, 1445. See too Scheeben's citation of Adam Tanner in no. 1427.

¹⁰ See the footnote by Carl Feckes in *Handbuch*, 5/2:1422: Scheeben's "broadening of the meaning of sacrifice requires therefore a broadening of its form."

¹¹ Emphases altered. Scheeben cites this passage in *Handbuch*, 5/2:1426–27. See also *ST* II-II, q. 86, a. 1.

¹² Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1425.

¹³ Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1425.

¹⁴ Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1425.

God as the creature's ultimate end). Moreover—and here we come to perhaps *the* key element of Scheeben's sacrificial theology—this perfective *immutatio* as expressed in Israel's typological sacrificial cult was accomplished through the application of *ignis divinus*, the divine fire burning on Israel's altar.¹⁵

Scheeben's meditations on the significance of Israel's altar fire form the center of his sacrificial theology. Israel's altar fire, Scheeben reminds his readers, was no ordinary fire. Rather, it first came forth "from the glory of God itself" at the time of Aaron's priestly consecration (see Lev 9:23–24), and then later after Solomon's dedication of the Jerusalem temple (see 2 Chr 7:1–3).¹⁶ This is why the altar fire is, for Scheeben, the "image and organ of the sanctifying power of God,"¹⁷ and again, the "supernatural organ of his purifying, transfiguring, assimilating and unifying power."¹⁸ In other words, the burning in the altar fire in Israel's typological cult represents the moment of divine acceptance in the sacrificial rite, which moment corresponds to the teleological/unitive moment in latreutic sacrifice. Here, the gift is accepted by God and transformed in such a way that, rising up in smoke, it becomes a sign and pledge of the creature's call "through participation in his glory" to be made "into a testament of his glory."¹⁹

For Scheeben, the sending of divine fire and its transformation of Israel's sacrifices in the Old Testament was a type of that other supernatural, epicletic action so characteristic of the New Testament. It was inaugurated when the Spirit fell on the Blessed Virgin at the

¹⁵ I have taken the Latin *ignis divinus* from Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 65.18, cited from St. Augustine, *Opera Omnia: Tomus Quartus*, in PL 36, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Brepols, 1841), 798. Scheeben cites this passage in *The Mysteries of Christianity*, trans. Cyril Vollert (New York: Crossroads, 2006), 440n9.

¹⁶ Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1439. Moreover, as Jacob Milgrom notes, it was "this fire" that was the subject of the injunction in Lev 6:9, 12–13 that the fire on Israel's altar be kept *perpetually* burning (*Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with an Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 3 [New York: Doubleday, 1991], 388–89: "The sacrifices offered up at the inauguration of the public cult were consumed miraculously by a divine fire (9:24), and it is *this* fire which is not allowed to die out so that all subsequent sacrifices might claim divine acceptance.") Note, however, that Milgrom provides commentary on Lev 6:13 as Lev 6:6, due to an alternative chapter–verse division he employs.

¹⁷ Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1440.

¹⁸ Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1439.

¹⁹ Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1421.

Annunciation²⁰ to constitute Christ a perfect sacrifice.²¹ It fell on Easter Sunday to signify the acceptance of the sacrifice of the Cross in Christ's resurrection.²² It falls presently on Christians believers through their sacramental participation in Christ's Paschal Mystery, first via grace, then glory.²³ And it also falls on the Eucharistic gifts in the consecration.²⁴

Before turning directly to Scheeben's theology of Eucharistic sacrifice, let us ask one more question apropos his sacrificial theology in general: does Scheeben's stress on the perfective character of Israel's altar fire lead him to ascribe an exclusively positive significance to the sacrificial *immutatio*, and therefore to the rite of sacrifice as a whole? It does not, and this is in two respects. First, Scheeben is willing to ascribe a destructive significance to a number of the preliminary acts in the sacrificial rite, such as the slaughter of the animal, a sacrificial act that obviously has something less than a perfective significance.²⁵

²⁰ See Luke 1:35, with its allusion to Exod 40:34.

²¹ See Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1478, where Scheeben notes that Christ's "offering [*Opfergabe*; i.e. his sacred humanity] was from the beginning [*von Anfang an*] situated on the altar and in the altar fire." See also no. 1472, where Scheeben identifies the altar, in Christ's case, as the "*divine Logos*, who, as the hypostatic bearer of Christ's flesh, in and with his human spirit, is the altar" on which his sacrifice rests, as too "this same Logos, both in himself, as well as [under that aspect whereby he is regarded as] the principle of the Holy Spirit, is the *holy and living, spiritual fire* that, in and with the human spirit of Christ, spiritually transfigures and vivifies the flesh hypostasized in him."

²² See esp. Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 436: "But we must insist on the fact that His resurrection and ascension actually achieve in mystically real fashion what is symbolized in the sacrifice of animals by the burning of the victim's flesh. . . . The Resurrection and glorification were the very acts by which the Victim passed in to the real and permanent possession of God. The fire of the Godhead . . . caused it [Christ, the slain lamb] to ascend to God in a lovely fragrance as a holocaust."

²³ See Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Nature and Grace*, trans. Cyril Vollert (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009 [orig. 1954]), 335: "The fire in which this holocaust [i.e., the self-gift of the rational creature] is to be offered to God is grace, along with the burning love of God that grace enkindles in the creature." For the transformation of grace into glory, see 337.

²⁴ For now, see Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 506: ". . . as the fire of the Holy Spirit consumes the substance of the bread and substantially changes it into the highest and most sacred holocaust."

²⁵ See, for example, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1441, where Scheeben notes that the sacrificial slaughter serves as "an expression of the [lay offerer's] willingness to give himself up to death." However, as Scheeben also notes, rather significantly, the slaughter does not constitute the *form* of the sacrificial act, but serves instead as

Second, he is even willing to ascribe a certain destructive significance to the consuming action of the altar fire, but his point is that this is simply not the primary one:

Admittedly, with the transformation *through the fire* there always slips in some kind of *destruction* of the natural existence of the offerings, and, with that, the activity of the renunciation of a natural good, respectively, the representation of the complete emptying of oneself [comes to the fore]; however, it is the moment of perfective transformation that is certainly the dominant one and is precisely the one that makes the transformation a priestly one.²⁶

Here, the basic shape of the sacrificial action, in Scheeben, comes to the fore: it is neither purely destructive nor transformative, but *Paschal*. In other words, Scheeben does make room for a destructive moment, but this moment is always *preliminary* and always ordered, as such, to the perfective one. “Each act of submissiveness and renunciation,” he writes, “has a sacrificial tendency precisely insofar as it aims, directly or indirectly, to introduce the one so offering into a condition wherein he lives in God and for God, and precisely thereby finds his own beatitude.”²⁷ As applied to Christ’s sacrifice, one can readily see where Scheeben is going with this. As Aidan Nichols put it, “Scheeben [here] anticipates the twentieth-century theology of the Easter events as a single ‘Paschal mystery.’”²⁸

The following notes sum up the characterization thus far of Scheeben’s sacrificial theology in general. First, whatever other aims there may be for sacrifice,²⁹ the latreutic aim is primary. Second, latreutic sacrifice, which is offered primarily to glorify God’s name, does not

the layman’s “*material component part*” of the sacrificial action, which is then *in-formed* by the priest’s act of offering that forms “the soul of the [sacrificial] action,” through which the gift thus offered is set in relation to the altar.

²⁶ Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1425. For the hieratic dimension of the sacrificial burning, see the previous footnote and Scheeben’s reference to the “soul of the [sacrificial] action.”

²⁷ Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1424.

²⁸ Aidan Nichols, O.P., *Romance and System: The Theological Synthesis of Matthias Joseph Scheeben* (Denver, CO: Augustine Institute, 2010), 372.

²⁹ Scheeben follows the traditional scholastic fourfold division of motives for sacrifice as found, for example, in *ST* I-II, q. 102, a. 3, ad 10: the propitiatory, the latreutic, the eucharistic and the impetratory (*Handbuch*, 5/2:1445n9).

aim simply at recognition of his sovereignty or majesty, but instead seeks to glorify him through the perfection of the rational creature made in his image, who thereby becomes a living “testament to His glory.”³⁰ Third, this perfective dimension of latreutic sacrifice was expressed ritually in Israel’s sacrificial cult through the requisite *immutatio* by divine fire, the ritual burning of the *res oblata*, here taken as representative of the moment of divine acceptance in the sacrificial rite. Fourth, what was expressed figuratively in types and shadows in the Old Testament cult (see Heb 8:5 and 10:1) is now brought to a mystical-real fulfillment in the person and work of Christ, as well as in their supernatural extension via the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who is “the Spirit of Christ” (Rom 8:9). Fifth and finally, the sacrificial *action*, for Scheeben, is not an exclusively perfective action; it is, rather, a *paschal* action. As such, it has ample room for the destructive moment in the rite of sacrifice, but with the important caveat that this moment is always preliminary to the higher, perfective one. As we turn now to Scheeben’s theory of Eucharistic sacrifice, we will see all of these elements of his general theory recapitulated in significant detail.

There are two principal sources for Scheeben’s theology of the Eucharist as sacrifice. The first is his treatment in sections 69–76 of *The Mysteries of Christianity*, the magnum opus of his youth.³¹ The second is a pair of articles that appeared in 1866, “Studien über den Meßkanon” parts I and II, that deal with the Eucharist in its concrete liturgical setting in dialogue with the studies of Ludwig Augustin Hoppe on the nature and meaning of the Epiclesis.³² Both

³⁰ Scheeben, *Handbuch*, 5/2:1421.

³¹ See Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, 469–535. For the original German, see Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Die Mysterien des Christentums*, 3rd ed., vol. 2 in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Josef Höfer (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1958), 385–441. Scheeben’s treatment in *The Mysteries*, however, was preceded by a preliminary study: Matthias J. Scheeben, “Das Geheimniß der Eucharistie,” *Der Katholik* 42 (1862): 41–75, recently reproduced in Matthias J. Scheeben, *Über die Eucharistie und den Messkanon*, ed. Michael Sticklebroeck with commentary (Regensburg: Pustet, 2011), 17–49.

³² Matthias J. Scheeben, “Studien über den Meßkanon im Anschluß an das Werk von Dr. Hoppe über die Epiclesis, I,” *Der Katholik* 46 (1866): 526–58; Scheeben, “Studien über den Meßkanon im Anschluß an das Werk von Dr. Hoppe über die Epiclesis, II,” *Der Katholik* 46 (1866): 679–715. These articles have recently been reproduced in Scheeben, *Über die Eucharistie und den Messkanon*, 50–128, and will be cited as “Studien I” and “Studien II,” respectively, with page numbers cited according to the pagination of Sticklebroeck’s

of these works will be consulted in what follows.

In *The Mysteries*, Scheeben attempts to account for the sacrificial character of the Mass by locating the sacrificial *immutatio* proper to this absolutely unique *res oblata*. This procedure is one he shares with a number of post-Tridentine scholastics. Underlying all these attempts—Scheeben’s included—there seems to be an argument built upon the following premises.³³ The first of these is the Council of Trent’s dogmatic assertion, *pace* the Protestant denials thereof,³⁴ that the Eucharist is, in point of fact, a “true and proper sacrifice [*verum et proprium sacrificium*].”³⁵ The second premise joins this affirmation of the Mass’s requisite sacrificial character with St. Thomas’s definition of what distinguishes a *sacrificium* (sacrifice) from the broader category of *oblatio* (oblation) as found in *ST* II-II, q. 85, a. 3, ad 3.³⁶ According

reprint, rather than the original publications in *Der Katholik*. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from both “Studien I” and “Studien II” will be my own. Scheeben also treats of the Eucharist briefly in *Handbuch*, 5/2:1507–9, but his *Dogmatics* was left incomplete at his death in 1888, and thus he never wrote the final portion, which would have included his treatment of the sacraments.

³³ See Trent Pomplun, “Post-Tridentine Sacramental Theology,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Sacramental Theology*, ed. Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 346–61, at 352–53, and the argumentative patterns present in Pomplun’s presentation of Bellarmine’s, Suárez’s, and de Lugo’s positions in particular (to be discussed below). See also the argumentative pattern present in Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 506–8, which presupposes that (a) the Eucharist is a sacrifice that, accordingly, (b) has “something . . . done” to it (508). See too the tenor of Charles Journet’s overview in *The Mass: The Presence of the Sacrifice of the Cross*, trans. Victor Szcurek (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2008), 252–67, where he notes that the unbloody offering of the Eucharist is, indeed, “a real and true sacrifice,” but he asks why this is so. He then proceeds to survey a spectrum of responses post-Trent, many of which look for a new destruction or transformation of some kind to account for the fact.

³⁴ See Peter Walter, “Sacraments in the Council of Trent and Sixteenth-century Catholic Theology,” trans. David L. Augustine, in Boersma and Levering, *Oxford Handbook of Sacramental Theology*, 313–28, at 320: “The issue of whether the Mass is a sacrifice was a central point of the Reformation critique of the traditional praxis of the Church.”

³⁵ Council of Trent, Session 22 (September 17, 1562), can. 1, in *Heinrich Denzinger: Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals* [DH], 43rd ed., ed. Peter Hünermann, Robert Fastiggi and Anne Englund Nash (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), no. 1751. See also Trent’s statement that the Eucharist is a “true and unique sacrifice [*verum et singulare sacrificium*]” (DH, no. 1738).

³⁶ Scheeben discusses this passage from St. Thomas in his generic discussion of sacrifice in *Handbuch*, 5/2:1426, a formula that Scheeben further specifies in

to Thomas, a sacrifice is distinguished from an oblation—something that is merely *offered*—by the very fact that “something is done [*aliquid fit*]” to it.³⁷ This *aliquid fit*—that is, *immutatio* or change—is accordingly a defining feature of any sacrifice properly so-called. This being the case, however, one concludes that there must likewise be an *immutatio* of some kind in the Mass whereby it truly merits the designation sacrifice. Were we to condense this argument into syllogism form, it would read as follows:

Major premise: The Eucharist is a “true and proper sacrifice,” according to Trent.

Minor premise: Every sacrifice, however, has “something done” to it whereby it is distinguished from a mere oblation.

Conclusion: Therefore, the Eucharist undergoes the requisite *immutatio*—at *some point* in its celebration (as yet undetermined)—through which it becomes a sacrifice.

Scheeben shares this basic line of argumentation with many of his Baroque Scholastic (and later) confreres. Where Scheeben differs from some of these authors is in the *type of immutatio* needed, on his view, for a sacrifice to be constituted as such. Accordingly, those theologians who, unlike Scheeben, were predisposed to see sacrifice in predominantly destructive terms set out to find the requisite *immutatio destructiva* in the Mass. The difficulty quickly arose, however, as to where to locate this destructive action, and the answers have varied widely. Robert Bellarmine’s proposal, for example, placed the destructive moment in the priest’s consumption of the sacramental species, which were thus *broken down* through digestion.³⁸ John de Lugo—and, with him, Johann Baptist Franzelin (a professor of Scheeben’s at the *Gregorianum* in Rome)—found the destructive

no. 1427 as a “conficere per immutationem materiae alicujus,” whence the term *confectio* as applied to the Mass.

³⁷ See also *ST* II-II, q. 86, a. 1. See Pomplun, “Post-Tridentine Sacramental Theology,” 352–53, for the role of these texts by Thomas (and others) in this developmental process. Pomplun also notes on 352 that Franciscans often employed *Summa fratris Alexandri* 3.55.4.1 for the same purpose. Scheeben cites this latter text in *Handbuch*, 5/2:1417, as part of his general treatment of the “notion of sacrifice in the hieratic sense” (beginning in no. 1415).

³⁸ See: Journet, *The Mass*, 253; Johann Auer, *A General Doctrine of the Sacraments and the Mystery of the Eucharist*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, ed. Hugh M. Riley (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 275.

immutatio in Christ's supposed abasement in adopting a sacramental mode of existence.³⁹ August Rohling, in his critique of Scheeben's theory of Eucharistic sacrifice (published in 1868), proposed something similar to de Lugo, countering that Christ was sacrificed in the Mass, inasmuch as he was, through the consecration, deprived of the use of his senses, and thus was present, though alive, "in the condition of death."⁴⁰

However, not all destructive theories of sacrifice in this period necessarily led to the positing of a new destructive action per se. For example, Gabriel Vásquez, whom (as we saw above) Scheeben opposed in connection with his interchanging of *immutatio* and *destructio* in his general definition of sacrifice, simply posited a "mystical immolation" of Christ via the double consecration.⁴¹ As Leo Scheffczyk put it, for Vásquez, "the double consecration at Mass involves only a symbolic death," the symbolic destruction here being sufficient to constitute the Mass a sacrifice properly so-called.⁴² Leon-

³⁹ See: Journet, *The Mass*, 253; Pomplun, "Post-Tridentine Sacramental Theology," 353; Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 472n4; Leo Scheffczyk, "Eucharistic Sacrifice," in *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology*, ed. Karl Rahner et al., vol. 2 (London: Burns and Oates, 1968), 273–76, at 275.

⁴⁰ August Rohling, "Miscellanea Eucharistica," *Der Katholik* 48 (1868): 257–83, at 279 (translations of Rohling are my own). Rohling views the moment of destruction as essential to any sacrificial act where God is not visibly present (as he was in Paradise when he strolled among his people [see Gen 3:8]) (see Rohling, 272–73). From this, Rohling concludes regarding the Mass: "[As] the moment of destruction is indispensable for all cases where man stands opposite the Eternal One who is no longer visible; therefore, it must also be found in the holy sacrifice of the Mass" (Rohling, 273). On 279, Rohling, arriving at his conclusion on where to locate the destructive moment in the Mass, avers that Christ is abased by being placed under the species without his proper spatiality or the use of his senses: "Thus, the body of Christ is indeed present alive; however, the consecration constitutes him present in such a way that he is present as dead: He has eyes and they do not see, ears and they do not hear, the sense of feeling and he does not feel. O a moving thought, our Lord in our hands—living and yet dead, full of life and in the midst of death!"; "Here alone," he triumphantly concludes, "can the true sacrificial character lie."

⁴¹ See Journet, *The Mass*, 258. The term "mystical immolation" is Journet's, employed also with reference here to the theory of Cardinal Billot, which is similar to—but goes beyond—Vásquez's.

⁴² Scheffczyk, "Eucharistic Sacrifice," 275. See also Pomplun, "Post-Tridentine Sacramental Theology," 353: "No unanimity existed during the baroque age on the celebrated question about whether the transformation of the *res oblata* necessarily involves the so-called 'destruction' of the eucharistic victim. Vásquez, for example, rejected the 'destruction' theory altogether, maintaining

ard Lessius's theory treads along a path similar to Vásquez's. However, Lessius's mystical mactation, unlike Vásquez's, looks for a destructive moment in the separation of Christ's body and blood as effected by the double consecration. After the consecration, they are, in point of fact, still united on account of the glorious Christ's impassibility, but now only by way of concomitance (i.e., the body is there primarily, then the blood).⁴³

Contrary to these various destructive theories, Scheeben follows Francisco Suárez⁴⁴ in proposing a *productive* theory of Eucharistic sacrifice. Scheeben locates this productive *actio sacrificialis* in the transubstantiation. In Aidan Nichols's succinct summation: for Scheeben, "the *transsubstantiatio* is the *actio* of the Mass."⁴⁵ As for the contents of this action, Christ's body comes to be present in the bread not so

that the Mass, being a relative sacrifice, need not involve a slaying of Christ at all, but only that this death be represented visibly by the separation of the body and blood on the altar. In Vásquez's view, Christ, being impassible, undergoes no transformation in the double consecration beyond being made present visibly by the separation of the body and blood on the altar." See also: Roger J. Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice* (London and New York: T & T Clark International, 2009), 164; Auer, *General Doctrine*, 276.

⁴³ See: Journet, *The Mass*, 253; Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled*, 164–65; Auer, *General Doctrine*, 276: "Lessius further developed this theory by saying that the words of transformation are the mystical sword whereby this *mactatio mystica* occurs."

⁴⁴ Scheeben acknowledges his dependence on Suárez in *The Mysteries*, 507n4, citing Suárez's *In Illam Partem*, disp. 83, sect. 2. Scheeben also refers to Lessius here, but I presume this is principally because Lessius situates the *actio* in the *consecratio*, and not because of his mystical mactation theory per se. See also: Nichols, *Romance and System*, 391; Pomplun, "Post-Tridentine Sacramental Theology," 353–54: "Matthias Scheeben . . . [offers] a variant of Suárez's position." Journet summarizes Suárez's position as follows: "[For Suarez] the sacrifice of the Mass consists in the consecration. The following elements belong to the essence of the Mass: 1) the double consecration of the bread and wine, which mystically signify the bloody separation of the Body and Blood on the Cross; 2) the destruction of the substances of the bread and wine, offered as the matter from which comes the sacrifice; 3) first and foremost the presence of Christ under the sacramental species, the end [i.e., *terminus ad quem*] of the [act of] sacrifice. The Mass, therefore, is a very new sacrifice, since the priest, far from immolating the Victim, actually brings it into existence. It has for its end not a destruction, but rather a production (*effectio*) and a presentation (*praesentatio*)" (*The Mass*, 254). Scheeben's dependence on Suárez will become evident in what follows.

⁴⁵ Nichols, *Romance and System*, 391. Or, in Scheeben's own words: "Transubstantiation formally constitutes the real sacrificial action proper to the Eucharistic sacrifice" (*The Mysteries*, 506).

much by “expel[ing] the substance of bread” with its ingress, but by the “conversion of the bread into it[self],” which takes place when his body comes “down from heaven upon the altar” (but without his body leaving heaven in the process; there is no local motion of Christ’s body).⁴⁶ This production of Christ’s body cannot be understood in the sense of a “natural conversion” like, for instance, digestion, where the bread would simply accrue to Christ’s body. Rather, in its passing over, the “bread simply ceases to exist as to both form and matter,” with the body of Christ, accordingly, taking the place of the substance of the bread under the accidents.⁴⁷

That said, Scheeben still finds very useful here St. Gregory of Nyssa’s and St. John Damascene’s depiction of the action of conversion as a consecration that proceeds on analogy with Christ’s human metabolic activity during the days of his flesh.⁴⁸ In *De fide orthodoxa* 4.14, St. John Damascene speaks of how Christ consumes the bread and wine on the altar not by digestion, but by consecration, by means of the digestive solvent of the Holy Spirit, who is poured out upon the gifts proffered for this purpose. He likens this process to the Incarnation of the Son of God (i.e., that original epicletic action where the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Blessed Virgin, following her *fiat*, for the production of Christ’s flesh).⁴⁹ It is as an

⁴⁶ Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 497–98 (*Die Mysterien*, 410). For Thomas’s rejection of local motion (i.e., movement from point A to point B) in the Eucharistic conversion, see *ST III*, q. 75, a. 4.

⁴⁷ Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 498 (*Die Mysterien*, 411).

⁴⁸ Scheeben respectively cites St. Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism* 37, in *The Mysteries*, 498n34 (for an English-language edition of Gregory’s work, see *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* [NPNF], vol. 5, *Gregory of Nyssa: Dogmatic Treatises, etc.*, trans. William Moore and Henry Austin Wilson, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004], 505–6), as well as (in the same note) St. John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 4.14 (for an English-language edition, see *NPNF*, 9[*Hilary of Poitiers, John of Damascus*]: 83).

⁴⁹ See John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 4.14: “The body which is born of the holy Virgin is in truth body united with divinity, not that the body which was received up into the heavens descends, but that the bread itself and the wine are changed into God’s body and blood. But if you enquire how this happens, it is enough for you to learn that it was through the Holy Spirit, just as the Lord took on Himself flesh that subsisted in Him and was born of the holy Mother of God through the Spirit. . . . But one can put it well thus, that just as in nature the bread by the eating and the wine and the water by the drinking are changed into the body and blood of the eater and drinker, and do not become a different body from the former one, so the bread of the table [or: *prothesis*; *προθέσεως*] and the wine and water are supernaturally

outgrowth of this metabolic model that Scheeben first sets forth his epicletic model of Eucharistic sacrifice/consecration. So as to effect the conversion of the substance of the bread into that of the body of Christ, the Holy Spirit falls on the Church's waiting sacrificial gifts like divine fire to perfect them and consecrate them, thereby bringing them into a higher state of existence. This is why, on Scheeben's view, the sacrificial action in the Eucharist is reminiscent not so much of Christ's crucifixion as of the productive action of Christ's body in the Incarnation (and, parallel with this, the transformative action of the Spirit in Christ's resurrection).⁵⁰

Does Scheeben's emphasis here on the productive character of the Eucharistic *actio sacrificalis* mean that he has no place for the Eucharist's anamnestic re-presentation (*Vergegenwärtigung*) of the Cross? On the contrary, when speaking of the consecration of the *discrete* species, Scheeben observes that Christ "appears in our midst under the symbols of His immolation, as the Lamb slain for the honor of God."⁵¹ Indeed, through this efficacious re-presentation, the Cross is made present to us in power,⁵² such that, "receiving its fruits during the sacrifice," we are privileged to drink "the merits welling up in it [as] from their very fountainhead," whence "we are also made one sacrifice with Him."⁵³ Nevertheless, granted that the Eucharist is for Scheeben an efficacious anamnesis of the Cross, it is still, for him, constituted a "true and proper sacrifice"⁵⁴ through the productive transformation of the gifts into Christ's body and blood (whereby he accounts for the *immutatio* proper to this sacrifice).

Scheeben's next move is to place this epicletic, productive dynamism of the Eucharist's *actio sacrificalis* more securely within the

changed by the invocation and presence of the Holy Spirit into the body and blood of Christ, and are not two but one and the same" (*NPNF*, 9:83).

⁵⁰ Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 509 (*Die Mysterien*, 421): "Since the sacrificial action [*Opferhandlung*; i.e., of the Eucharist] consists in a mutation by which the lower gift is changed into the higher, it has, from the viewpoint of its essential character, greater similarity with the execution of the hypostatic union and the resurrection of Christ's body *than with the immolation of that body on the cross*" (emphasis added).

⁵¹ Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 495.

⁵² For Scheeben's fullest treatment of the complicated question of the relationship of the Eucharist as efficacious anamnesis to the historical action of the crucifixion—a relationship mediated through the exercise of Christ's heavenly priesthood—see *Handbuch*, 5/2:1496–98, read together with no. 1507.

⁵³ Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 495.

⁵⁴ Council of Trent, Session 22 (September 17, 1562), can. 1 (DH, no. 1751).

overarching paschal dynamism of his sacrificial theory. He begins by reminding his readers that “sacrifice, understood in its most comprehensive sense, involves a certain [read: preliminary] destruction of the victim.”⁵⁵ This does not mean that the content of this action as applied to the Eucharist can be found in the mere fact that “the substance of the bread and wine are destroyed.”⁵⁶ The reason for this, Scheeben writes, is that it is “not the bread, but the body of Christ” that is “the proper sacrificial victim [read: *res oblata*] of the Church.”⁵⁷ But his body is the sacrificial victim here as the result of a *process* of conversion, a process that is necessary if this sacrifice is to be truly *ecclesial*:

The body of Christ truly becomes the sacrifice of the Church only on the condition that the Church makes an offering of that body to God from its own midst by changing the bread into it, and by this same conversion pledges and effects the surrender of itself to God. And if this oblation is to be more than a simple offering⁵⁸ made to God in connection with a sacrificial act already accomplished, and is to be offered in a *new, genuine act of sacrifice* [*eine neue, wirkliche Opferhandlung*], the conversion of another gift into this gift must be brought about.⁵⁹

If the *res oblata* of this sacrificial action is none other than the body of Christ, then his body, though sacrificed once for all on the Cross, becomes the Church’s sacrifice, but only on the grounds that his body is offered to God therein via the total *conversion* of her gifts.

To the objection that his theory of Eucharistic sacrifice makes the gifts of bread and wine (and not Christ’s body) the *res oblata* in the Eucharistic sacrificial action, Scheeben responds that the *actio* in question consists in a dynamic process with two poles, a *terminus a quo* and a *terminus ad quem*. “We find the essence [of the Eucharistic *actio*],” he writes, “in the total conversion, with reference simultane-

⁵⁵ Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 505 (*Die Mysterien*, 416).

⁵⁶ Translated from *Die Mysterien*, 416.

⁵⁷ Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 508.

⁵⁸ The text here literally reads “and if this oblation [*Opfergabe*] should be [one such that is] not merely offered [*offeriert*] to God” (Scheeben, *Die Mysterien*, 420). This is as obvious reference to the requisite *aliquid fit* of ST II-II, q. 85, a. 3, ad 3, by which a sacrifice is distinguished from a mere oblation.

⁵⁹ Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 508, emphasis added (*Die Mysterien*, 420).

ously to the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem*.⁶⁰ If, however, the bread and wine are thus “de-substantiated”—to borrow a term from Rohling⁶¹—then it must be said that it is the *terminus* of this dynamic movement that carries the day in Scheeben, via the productive action *at which* the gifts *arrive* via this process of transferal.⁶² It is truly the body of Christ that is offered, but now *from out of* the gifts of the Church.⁶³ Hence, “the value of the sacrificial action,” Scheeben writes, “is not gauged by the value of the gift undergoing change, but by the value of the gift *into which* it is changed.”⁶⁴

Before concluding this treatment of Scheeben’s theory of Eucharistic sacrifice, it is necessary to take a moment to draw out certain key *liturgical* implications that follow from his theory of Eucharistic sacrifice as set forth in a pair of articles published in 1866. Scheeben composed these articles after his quite favorable encounter with Ludwig Augustin Hoppe’s 1864 book *Die Epiklesis der griechischen und orientalischen Liturgieen und der römische Consekrationsskanon* (*The Epiclesis of the Greek and Oriental Liturgies and the Roman Consecratory Canon*) on the nature and meaning of the liturgical prayer known as the Epiclesis.⁶⁵ Hoppe’s aim in this book is twofold. First, he proposes

⁶⁰ Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 508 (*Die Mysterien*, 420).

⁶¹ Rohling, “Miscellanea Eucharistica,” 273.

⁶² See Scheeben, *Die Mysterien*, 420.

⁶³ For, Scheeben writes, the body of Christ “can be offered anew and consecrated to God by the Church only insofar as it emerges [*hervorgeht*] from the gifts dedicated to God by the Church or insofar as the Church consecrates and presents her gifts to God through their transubstantiation into it” (“Studien II,” 88).

⁶⁴ Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 508–9 (emphasis added).

⁶⁵ Ludwig Augustin Hoppe, *Die Epiklesis der griechischen und orientalischen Liturgieen und der römische Consekrationsskanon* (Schaffhausen: F. Hurter, 1864). For Scheeben’s definition of the Epiclesis—derived from Hoppe—see “Studien I,” 60: by the Epiclesis (*Epiklese*) is meant “the invocation [*Anrufung*] or, rather, the calling down [*Herabrufung*] of the Holy Spirit onto the sacrificial gifts so that they are sanctified, consecrated, or transformed by Him into the holy body and blood of Christ.” For a contemporary discussion of the bounds of what should be included in the definition of the Epiclesis, see John H. McKenna, C.M., *The Eucharistic Epiclesis: A Detailed History from the Patristic to the Modern Era*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2009), 94–105 (ch. 3: “Understanding the Terminology of Modern Writers”). McKenna defines “the more developed epiclesis” by situating three elements: “In any case, three basic facets *generally* turn up in the fully developed epiclesis, namely; an appeal for the Holy Spirit (1) to transform or sanctify the bread and wine (2) so that they may benefit those who partake of them worthily (3)” (*The Eucharistic Epiclesis*, 105). This last element, though absent from the definition given

that, while the Words of Institution are what actually effect the consecration, the Epiclesis is also a primordial liturgical datum that is found in all liturgies, both East and West. In this connection, Hoppe argues that the Western variant of this liturgical formation is none other than the *Supplices te rogamus*⁶⁶— a prayer that occurs shortly after the enunciation of the Words of Institution in the Roman Canon—in which the Church, through her minister (the priest), beseeches God for the interchange of the gifts on the earthly and heavenly altars “by the hands of your holy Angel [*per manus sancti Angeli tui*].”⁶⁷ By this point, it should be no surprise that both Hoppe and Scheeben identify the *sanctus angelus* in question with the Holy Spirit.⁶⁸ If this is the case, however, and there is indeed a post-consecratory Epiclesis in the Roman Canon, this means that the problem of the Epiclesis is no longer a problem of East versus West because it now presents itself as an *intra-Western* liturgical problem.

This brings Hoppe to his second point (and it is here that Scheeben really begins to intervene in Hoppe’s work at the theological level): given that the Epiclesis is a common element of the Eucharistic Anaphora, what does it mean?⁶⁹ In particular, how does this (seem-

above, is nevertheless discussed by Scheeben at length in “Studien II.” See also Anne McGowan, *Eucharistic Epicleses, Ancient and Modern: Speaking of the Spirit in Eucharistic Prayer* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 13–15.

⁶⁶ See Hoppe, *Die Epiklesis*, 121–50, in a section entitled, “Ermittlung des Sinnes der Oration *Supplices te rogamus*, Investigation of the Meaning of the Oration *Supplices te rogamus*.”

⁶⁷ For the English/Latin of the *Supplices*, see *Daily Roman Missal: Complete with Readings in One Volume* (Woodridge, IL: Midwest Theological Forum, 2012 [7th ed., 3rd printing]), 778–79: “In humble prayer we ask you, almighty God: command that these gifts be borne by the hands of your holy Angel [*per manus sancti Angeli tui*] to your altar on high in the sight of your divine majesty, so that all of us, who . . . receive the most holy Body and Blood of your Son, may be filled with every grace and heavenly blessing.”

⁶⁸ See Hoppe, *Die Epiklesis*, 167–91, esp. at 179: the *sanctus angelus* “is none other than the holy messenger [*Gesandte*] of the Father and Son . . . the Holy Spirit.” For Scheeben’s identification of the *sanctus angelus* with the Holy Spirit, see “Studien I,” 68, where Scheeben also, however, multivalently identifies the *Gesandte*, the messenger or one sent, with Christ/the Logos. Although, in “Studien I,” 69–71, he broadens this identification to include the “*ministerium* of the created angels”—in line with some early liturgies—but he notes that this interpretation can only be taken in “an auxiliary sense.”

⁶⁹ Hoppe treats of this question in the second part of *Die Epiklesis*, “Absicht und Berechtigung der Epiklese,” “Purpose and Justification of the Epiclesis,” 211–334.

ingly consecratory) *deprecatory* oration (“In humble prayer, we ask you, almighty God”)⁷⁰ relate to the consecratory Words of Institution spoken in the *declarative* voice (“This is my body,” etc.)? Hoppe’s solution takes as its point of departure the twofold role of the priest in each consecratory act.⁷¹ First, the priest “appears as the representative [*Stellvertreter*] of Christ, who speaks and acts in the person of Christ.”⁷² In the Eucharist, this role is expressed by the priest’s recitation of the Words of Institution, acting *in persona Christi capitis*. However, when the priest acts as Christ’s *Stellvertreter*, “the person of the priest and the Church . . . recedes wholly into the background.”⁷³

What, then, of the place of the Church in this action? Or, again, what of the place of the priest, now conceived of not primarily as Christ’s representative, but as the Church’s? For Hoppe, this second aspect—taken as the Church’s consciousness of her role as Christ’s *ministra* or *Dienerin* (female servant)—must be given expression through a prayer in which she “petition[s] for Christ’s gracious cooperation through His Holy Spirit.”⁷⁴ Thus, for Hoppe, the *Epiclesis* (whether the *supplices* or otherwise) functions as the “liturgical complement to the consecratory act” in which the Church expresses “her awareness that she is Christ’s subordinated representative [*untergeordneten Stellvertreterin*] in her representation of his divine act.”⁷⁵

Scheeben agrees with Hoppe’s presentation as far as it goes but thinks it can be given an even richer expression. For Scheeben, the Church’s “two-fold position as representative and servant of Christ” is best summed up in her status “as Christ’s *bride*.”⁷⁶ As such, what is primarily at stake vis-à-vis her liturgical petitions is not merely an

⁷⁰ The opening phrase of the *Supplices*, cited in *Daily Roman Missal*, 779. The equivalent prayer (i.e., the *Epiclesis* proper) in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, cited in *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, ed. R. C. D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming, 3rd ed., revised and enlarged (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 133, reads: “We pray and beseech and entreat you, send down your Holy Spirit.”

⁷¹ I am following Scheeben’s general summary in “Studien I,” 73–75. For the corresponding texts in Hoppe, see *Die Epiklesis*, 301–26, where he treats of the Church’s twofold relationship to Christ in the consecratory act under the headings (a) *Stellvertreterin*, (female) representative (301–5), and (b) *ministra*, (female) servant, (305–26).

⁷² Scheeben, “Studien I,” 73.

⁷³ Scheeben, “Studien I,” 74.

⁷⁴ Scheeben, “Studien I,” 74.

⁷⁵ Hoppe, *Die Epiklesis*, 326.

⁷⁶ Scheeben, “Studien I,” 75 (emphasis added).

expression of “her *subordination* under her bridegroom,” but rather an expression of the royal “dignity” that she receives from him.⁷⁷ Moreover, this dignity is expressed in her petitions, since she functions here not as “a simple organ” of Christ, as if she were a passive vehicle through which the consecratory act simply flowed, like water through a garden hose, but instead, through her *powerful* intercessions, through which she “solicits the unfolding of the power of her bridegroom’s grace.”⁷⁸ Thus, these deprecatory orations, Scheeben concludes, “are a meaningful and effective factor in which the Church asserts her [own] dignity” as Christ’s bride.⁷⁹

To develop this idea further, Scheeben next has recourse to the scriptural imagery of the Annunciation, with the Church now taking Mary’s place as Christ’s bride. In her Eucharistic prayer, Scheeben writes, the Church groans with the *gemitus columbae*⁸⁰—the groans of the dove—where she seeks, “through the overshadowing and insemination of the Holy Spirit, to emulate in a wonderful manner, the birth of the Son of God Himself from the womb of the Virgin.”⁸¹ She recapitulates this great mystery when “the bread that she proffers is recast through the fire of the Holy Spirit into the Body of the Son of God, just as the flesh of the Virgin was enlivened with that same fire and was united with the person of the Son of God.”⁸² Here we see Scheeben return to his model of Eucharistic sacrifice from *The Mysteries*, but it recurs now in an explicitly *liturgical* context in which Scheeben is casting about after the meaning of the Church’s *deprecatory* orations, particularly the post-consecratory Epiclesis. The significance of this will be drawn out in due course.

Proceeding on analogy with the Annunciation, then, Scheeben sees in the consecration proper the union of two desires, that of the Church and that of the Holy Spirit. When these two desires meet—

⁷⁷ Scheeben, “Studien I,” 75 (emphasis added).

⁷⁸ Scheeben, “Studien I,” 75. Scheeben continues here: “Because Christ wished to maintain her dignity as bride intact, for this reason he has given her petitions . . . an especially independent influence on his work, an influence which the holy Fathers often virtually set in parallel with the power of instrumental efficacy [in the celebration of the sacraments].”

⁷⁹ Scheeben, “Studien I,” 75–76.

⁸⁰ See Scheeben, “Studien I,” 75–76. Scheeben borrowed this term from St. Augustine, *De baptismo contra Donatistas* 3.17. See also Hoppe, *Die Epiklesis*, 310n656.

⁸¹ Scheeben, “Studien I,” 77.

⁸² Scheeben, “Studien I,” 77.

that is, when they “unite in a spirit of vital interpenetration”—conception occurs, the Church’s “desire turn[ing] into spiritual conception” via the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.⁸³ For her part, the Church expresses her desire—with its corresponding *gemitus* or groan—via her various epicleses (scattered throughout the liturgy), which are the liturgical counterpart to the *fiat* of the Blessed Virgin.⁸⁴ Given that the actual enunciation of Mary’s *fiat* preceded her conception of the Word, Scheeben thinks that it is “very fitting that there is an [pre-consecratory] Epiclesis in the oration *Quam oblationem*” of the Roman Canon, enunciated just before the Words of Institution.⁸⁵ (The Church’s voice, of course, steps into the background when Christ is speaking.)

What then of the post-consecratory Epiclesis? How is this Epiclesis, as *post-consecratory*, still an expression of the Church’s desire to synergize with the action of her divine Bridegroom (already accomplished in Christ’s words, spoken in the declarative voice)? Scheeben accounts for the post-consecratory oration on analogy, once again, with Mary’s conception of Christ. In the latter case, “the fructification of the Virgin’s womb by the Holy Spirit was [indeed] the work of a moment, but both the influence of the Holy Spirit, as well as the Virgin’s desire to give of her flesh and blood for the humanity of God’s Son . . . was something *continuous*.”⁸⁶ In other words, Scheeben does not think that the Virgin’s desire to give of her flesh and blood simply ceased with the moment of her conception of Christ. Just the opposite: her desire had to “stream forth from her heart all the more urgently . . . so long as she bore the Son of God beneath her heart.”⁸⁷ Yet the Church is in just this position when she too bears the Son of

⁸³ Scheeben, “Studien I,” 78.

⁸⁴ Scheeben, “Studien I,” 78: “The Epiclesis is the *fiat* of the Most Blessed Virgin, upon which the conception of the Logos immediately followed.”

⁸⁵ Scheeben, “Studien I,” 78. For the *Quam oblationem*, see *Daily Roman Missal*, 772–73: “Be pleased, O God, we pray, to bless, acknowledge, and approve this offering in every respect; make it spiritual and acceptable, so that it may become for us the Body and Blood of your most beloved Son.”

⁸⁶ Scheeben, “Studien I,” 85 (emphasis added). Scheeben explains how the work of the Spirit in the consecration is something continuous on 83–85, where he notes that the Spirit’s activity in the consecration, though instantaneous, is nevertheless something that involves “a static, perennial efficacy” through which he sustains the gifts from moment to moment “in the preservation of the product.”

⁸⁷ Scheeben, “Studien I,” 85–86.

God in her bosom, on her altar after the consecration. This is why Scheeben does not think that her petitions need to end with the consecration. Rather, her invocation or petition for the Holy Spirit, as the activity proper to the Church, from that moment on actually “becomes a more trusting and intimate one,” since she sees “before her the fulfillment of her longing,” whence it becomes “a real apprehension” of His efficacy.⁸⁸ (Nevertheless, this sated desire, of course, always has recourse to “that point in time when one did not yet possess” the good in question.)⁸⁹

The main fruit of Scheeben’s engagement with Hoppe, then, is Scheeben’s view that the Church’s deprecatory orations or epicleses—in particular, her post-consecratory Epiclesis—express the activity proper to the Church as Christ’s bride, since she there beseeches the Holy Spirit to transform her gifts, uniting them with Christ’s body. Note that this corresponds precisely to Scheeben’s depiction of the Eucharist sacrifice as “the sacrifice of the Church,” and again, as “a new, genuine act of sacrifice” with its own productive *actio sacrificialis*.⁹⁰ As such, for Scheeben, the Eucharistic sacrifice is given liturgical expression in the Epiclesis⁹¹ even if it actually takes place via the enunciation of the Words of Institution in the declarative voice.

The following points summarily characterize Scheeben’s theology of Eucharistic sacrifice. First, in line with many post-Tridentine neo-Scholastics, Scheeben thinks that there must be a new *immutatio* or *actio sacrificialis* proper to the Eucharist if it is to be, in the words of Trent, a “true and proper sacrifice.”⁹² Second, Scheeben thinks, in line with his sacrificial theory in general, that the *actio* proper to this sacrifice is the productive conversion of the Church’s gifts, transformed by the fire of the Holy Spirit as they are changed into the body and blood of Christ (the *terminus ad quem* of this dynamic, paschal movement). This is why Scheeben thinks that the *actio* in question more closely resembles the mysteries of Christ’s Incarna-

⁸⁸ Scheeben, “Studien I,” 82.

⁸⁹ Scheeben, “Studien I,” 82.

⁹⁰ Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 508 (emphasis added).

⁹¹ Indeed, Scheeben devotes the whole of “Studien II,” no. 1 (“The Meaning of the Oration *Supplices* Explained from the Organism of the Eucharistic Sacrificial Action”) to demonstrating how the complex of prayers following upon the Words of Institution in the Roman Canon—beginning with the *Unde et memores* and culminating in the *Supplices*—expresses his theory of Eucharistic sacrifice (“Studien II,” 86–101).

⁹² Council of Trent, Session 22 (September 17, 1562), can. 1 (DH, no.1751).

tion and resurrection rather than it does his Cross. Third, however, Scheeben also holds together his emphasis on the *productive* character of this *actio* with that other dimension whereby the Eucharist is the efficacious anamnesis of Christ's Passion, the latter being symbolized through the consecration of the *discrete* species of bread and wine. Finally, the *actio sacrificialis* proper to the Eucharist as a *new* sacrifice of the Church is given liturgical expression in the Church's deprecatory orations (above all, in her post-consecratory Epiclesis), when the ecclesial act of offering/petition for transformation comes to the fore, the latter being veiled during the actual act of consecration when the priest is speaking in the voice of the divine Bridegroom, and is thus acting *in persona Christi capitis*.

Turning now to Journet's Thomistic proposal, we will see how this twentieth-century theologian approaches the subject of the Eucharistic sacrifice from precisely the opposite direction as Scheeben.

Journet on the Eucharistic Sacrifice

In the mid-twentieth century,⁹³ Charles Journet's treatment of the Eucharist as sacrifice is situated on the far side of a broader rejection of the *immutatio* theories of Eucharistic sacrifice—whether destructive or productive—that prevailed in theological schools from the late-sixteenth through the early-twentieth centuries.⁹⁴ The key move informing this paradigm shift was the transfer of discussion of the Eucharist's sacrificial dimension wholly into the genus of *sign* or *sacrament*. Appealing to St. Thomas, a number of theologians—besides Journet, Anscar Vonier, and Eugène Masure are especially notable—reframed the argument in terms of sacramental efficacy: the Eucharist is not a “true and proper sacrifice”⁹⁵ because (in Thomas's words) “*aliquid fit*, something [read: new] is done” to it,⁹⁶ but rather because—and here theologians appealed to another text of St. Thomas, *ST* III, q. 83, a. 1—it is an *efficacious sign of Christ's sacrifice*.⁹⁷ Before turning directly to Journet, it will

⁹³ Journet's *The Mass* was originally published in 1957 in French as *La Messe: Presence du Sacrifice de la Croix* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1957).

⁹⁴ For an overview of this theological paradigm shift, see Scheffczyk, “Eucharistic Sacrifice,” 274–76. Scheffczyk also helpfully discusses the ambiguities of Odo Casel's position, which we have not had space to treat.

⁹⁵ Council of Trent, Session 22 (September 17, 1562), can. 1 (DH, no. 1751).

⁹⁶ See *ST* II-II, q. 85, a. 3, ad 3.

⁹⁷ For appeals to *ST* III, q. 83, a. 1, see Dom Anscar Vonier, *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist*, preface by Peter Kreeft and introduction by Aidan Nichols (Bethesda, MD: Zaccheus Press, 2003), esp. ch. 15 (95–103: “Saint Thomas and

be helpful to take a moment first to examine this text of St. Thomas, as Journet's position is an extended explication of it.

Thomas's *ex professo* treatment of the Eucharist as sacrifice in the *Summa* is limited to this one article, *ST* III, q. 83, a. 1. Despite its brevity, Thomas's terseness masks an unusual depth of insight. In this article, he gives two reasons that, when taken together, conspire to constitute the Eucharist a sacrifice. The first reason is that (citing Augustine) "the images of things are called by the names of the things whereof they are the images."⁹⁸ However, the celebration of the Eucharist "is an image representing Christ's Passion, which is His true sacrifice."⁹⁹ Therefore, the Eucharist "is called Christ's sacrifice."¹⁰⁰ In this article, Thomas does not specify how the Eucharist images Christ's Passion, but he surely has in mind, as in *ST* III, q. 74, a. 1, the consecration of the discrete species, since in "Christ's Passion . . . the blood was separated from the body."¹⁰¹ Is this relationship of signification between the celebration of the Eucharist and Christ's Passion sufficient grounds to say that Christ is sacrificed in this sacrament? On Thomas's account, it is not. For, he notes, on these grounds, we can say that Christ was likewise sacrificed in

the Council of Trent on the Oneness of the Christian Sacrifice"). For Vonier's application of Thomas's position, see esp. 64. (Vonier's work was written in response to Maurice de la Taille; see Nichols's introduction, on xii–xiii). For Canon Eugène Masure's explication of this text, see his *The Christian Sacrifice: The Sacrifice of Christ our Head*, trans. Illtyd Trethowan with preface (London: Burnes, Oates, and Washbourne, 1944), 217–19, in a section entitled "Eucharistic Tradition up to the 16th Century." Incidentally, this section is followed by Masure's discussion of the Baroque-era position, in a section ominously entitled "The Break with Tradition" (on 221–25). See particularly 255, where Masure praises the position of Cardinal Louis Billot (1846–1931) in concert with Vonier: Billot "has probably made possible all our present theological advances: the Mass is the very sacrifice of the Cross under sensible signs, which are convenient because representative. Then we return to the great stream of our tradition: *a reality beneath a sign*." See Journet, *The Mass*, 80–81, for his explication of Thomas's text.

⁹⁸ *ST* III, q. 83, a. 1, citing St. Augustine, *Ad Simplicianum* 2.

⁹⁹ *ST* III, q. 83, a. 1.

¹⁰⁰ *ST* III, q. 83, a. 1. For a good treatment of Thomas's take on the Eucharist's sacrificial character, see Štěpán Martin Filip, O.P., "Imago Repasentativa Passionis Christi: St. Thomas Aquinas on the Essence of the Sacrifice of the Mass," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 7, no. 2 (2009): 405–38.

¹⁰¹ Thomas continues in *ST* III, q. 74, a. 1: "And therefore in this sacrament, which is the memorial of our Lord's Passion, the bread is received apart as the sacrament of the body, and the wine as the sacrament of the blood."

the sacrifices of the Old Testament, since these too figured Christ's Passion.¹⁰² Therefore, something else is required if the Eucharist is to have a relation to the Passion that differs from that had by the Old Testament sacrifices.

Thomas's second reason, therefore, completes the first, and it has to do with sacramental efficacy: the celebration of this sacrament "is called a sacrifice, in respect of *the effect* of His Passion: because, to wit, by this sacrament, we are made partakers *of the fruit of our Lord's Passion*."¹⁰³ Here we arrive at the crux of what causes the sacraments of the New Testament to differ from those of the Old Testament. "We have it on the authority of many saints," Thomas writes, "that the sacraments of the New Law *not only signify*, but also *cause* grace."¹⁰⁴ Thus, the sacraments of the New Testament differ from other signs in this way: they are *efficacious* signs. They are signs that, "to use the common expression, effect what they signify [*efficiunt quod figurant*]."¹⁰⁵

As applied to the Eucharist, what this means is that the Eucharist, as a sacrament of the New Law, is an *efficacious sign*, a sign that is an instrumental cause of a "hidden effect,"¹⁰⁶ an effect that it effects precisely by way of *signification*. If, therefore, we wish to know what the celebration of the Eucharist effects, we must first look to its sign value. As noted above, however, the Eucharist, through the consecration of the discrete species (bread and wine), is an image of Christ's Passion. Therefore, in Thomas's words, "it is proper to this sacrament for Christ to be sacrificed in its celebration."¹⁰⁷ In a nutshell, this is Thomas's argument for the Eucharist's sacrificial character. For clarity's sake, allow me to condense it into syllogism form:

¹⁰² This is why, Thomas notes, Rev 13:8 speaks of the lamb "slain from the beginning of the world" (cited in *ST* III, q. 83, a. 1). Other readings of this verse, however, coordinate the phrase "from the beginning [or: foundation] of the world" with the names of the saints written in the book of life. Cf. the rendering of the Revised Standard Version, for example.

¹⁰³ *ST* III, q. 83, a. 1 (emphases added).

¹⁰⁴ *ST* III, q. 62, a. 1 (emphases added).

¹⁰⁵ *ST* III, q. 62, a. 1, ad 1. On Thomas's count, the sacraments are the *causa instrumentalis*, instrumental cause of grace. See *ST* III, q. 62, a. 1: "And it is thus [i.e., as instrumental causes] that the sacraments of the New Law cause grace: for they are instituted by God to be employed for the purpose of conferring grace."

¹⁰⁶ *ST* III, q. 62, a. 1, ad 1.

¹⁰⁷ *ST* III, q. 83, a. 1.

Major premise: Sacraments, according to “the common expression . . . effect what they signify.”¹⁰⁸

Minor premise: The celebration of the Eucharist, however, “is an image representing Christ’s Passion, which is His true sacrifice.”¹⁰⁹

Conclusion: Therefore, as a sacrament of a sacrifice, the Eucharist is (to anachronistically borrow the words of Trent) a “true and proper sacrifice.”¹¹⁰

This is Thomas’s argument,¹¹¹ and it is the starting point from which a number of twentieth-century theologians began to reevaluate the Eucharist’s sacrificial character, thereby bypassing the *immutatio* argument entirely.¹¹² Notice the key move here: the argument begins by first situating the Eucharist in the genus *sacrament* so as to argue to its sacrificial character, and not vice versa. Thus, the minor premise of the previous argument, positing (on Thomistic grounds) the need for a discrete *immutatio*, falls away. This is because the major premise begins not with the Eucharist’s sacrificial character, but with its sacramentality, only after which does it then argue, on the grounds that it is an efficacious re-presentation of Christ’s Passion (imaging his crucifixion),¹¹³ to the Eucharist’s properly sacrificial character.

¹⁰⁸ ST III, q. 62, a. 1.

¹⁰⁹ ST III, q. 83, a. 1.

¹¹⁰ Council of Trent, Session 22 (September 17, 1562), can. 1 (DH, no. 1751).

¹¹¹ As will be clear to the reader with ST III, q. 83, a. 1, open in front of them, I have restructured Thomas’s argument for clarity, drawing on, in particular, his foundational insights about the efficacious character of sacramental signs in general in ST III, q. 62, a. 1, which are presupposed in q. 83, a. 1. That said, I believe I have gotten to the bottom of what Thomas is saying here. See the following footnote for Abbot Vonier’s formulation of Thomas’s argument.

¹¹² See esp. Vonier, *Key to the Doctrine*, 64: “Let us take the signs, both things and words; examine these signs, and see whether they do really signify a sacrifice. If they do signify a sacrifice, then there is a sacrifice, according to the universal axiom that the Christian sacraments do what they signify: *Sacramenta efficiunt quod significant*.” Vonier restates this general argument in light of Thomas’s argument in ST III, q. 83, a. 1: “In the sacrament of the Eucharist, then, *representation and application* of the sacrifice of the Cross are the only kind of immolation to be admitted in the sacrifice of the Christian altar. The Cross is Christ’s true immolation [this is Thomas’s word *immolatio*]; the Mass is its perfect image, therefore it is an immolation” (*Key to the Doctrine*, 97; emphasis added).

¹¹³ I say the “efficacious re-presentation of Christ’s *Passion*,” however, contra Vonier, who takes the eccentric position that the signification of Christ’s body and blood as *separated* refers, in the Eucharist, not to the act of their separation

As will become clear, this is precisely the Thomistic foundation on which Cardinal Journet builds his own formulations, as he gathers and organizes Thomas's diffuse material relevant to this subject.

The central emphasis of Journet's theology of Eucharistic sacrifice is already evident in the subtitle of his work, *The Mass: The Presence of the Sacrifice of the Cross*. In this work, Journet is concerned to provide an account of the numerical oneness and identity of the sacrifice of the Mass with that of the Cross. "There is not *another* oblation for sin," he writes, "but a *presence*, an *application*, an *actualization* of that one oblation."¹¹⁴ The Eucharist is a "true sacrifice . . . not by the impossible reiteration of the unique sacrifice, but by the reiteration of the *presence* of the unique sacrifice under the unbloody rite."¹¹⁵ "Presence," "application," and "actualization" of the Cross: these are the hallmarks of Journet's approach to the Eucharistic sacrifice.

When we view it thus, we can see right off the bat how Journet's position differs from Scheeben's. Whereas Scheeben freely emphasizes that the Eucharist, as "a sacrifice of the Church," is offered in "a *new*, genuine act of sacrifice,"¹¹⁶ the transubstantiation, Journet stresses, on the contrary, the unity and numerical oneness of the sacrifice of the Mass and the Cross. Whereas Scheeben emphasizes that the productive *actio sacrificialis* of the Mass, precisely as productive and/or consecratory, more closely resembles the Incarnation and/or resurrection¹¹⁷ (even if it be without detriment to the anamnestic character of the dual consecration),¹¹⁸ Journet is keen to emphasize precisely

in Christ's crucifixion, but to *the dead Christ*. This is Vonier's interpretation of "*Christus passus*—the Christ *who has suffered*" (emphasis added), by which he brings out the past tense character of the perfect passive participle *passus*: "In virtue of the sacrament, the Eucharist contains, not the mortal Christ, not even the dying Christ, nor does it contain the glorious Christ; but it contains the Christ directly *after His death*" (*Key to the Doctrine*, 86). Vonier does, however, go on (*Key to the Doctrine*, 87) to stress that, by virtue of concomitance, the glorious Christ is also present, but this is almost in spite of the sacramental signification! For Journet's rejection of Vonier's interpretation of the sacramental signification (though Journet is, in general, favorable to Vonier's overall position), see *The Mass*, 261–62.

¹¹⁴ Journet, *The Mass*, 23 (emphases original). See also 50: the sacrifice of the Church/Last Supper are "inseparable from the Passion," since it "brings the Passion to us."

¹¹⁵ Journet, *The Mass*, 31 (emphasis added).

¹¹⁶ Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 508.

¹¹⁷ See Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 509.

¹¹⁸ See Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 495.

the efficacious character of the Eucharistic anamnesis by which the identity of the Cross with the Mass is secured. Indeed, without ever mentioning Scheeben, Journet *de facto* rejects Scheeben's position via his surrogate Suárez: "Suarez [*sic*] would declare quite clearly that the sacrifice is essentially different at the Cross and at the Mass."¹¹⁹ "At the Cross, [in Suárez's view] the sacrifice is a destruction, a death; at the Mass, the sacrifice is a sanctification, a glorious sacramental presence,"¹²⁰ hence, the dissimilar sacrificial actions. For his part, Journet will have none of this. In his view, it is better to emphasize that the celebration of the Mass *makes present* the one sacrifice of the Cross. Of course, this raises the question of what precisely Journet means when he says that the Mass renders the sacrifice of the Cross present.

The key to understanding Journet's oft-repeated claim here is a distinction he develops between Christ's *substantial* presence and his *operative* presence. Substantially, Christ is present wherever he is,¹²¹ whether this be under his proper species (his natural appearance qua Jesus of Nazareth) or under his borrowed species (the sacramental species of bread and wine).¹²² For example, Journet observes, Christ was "present *substantially* in the house of Simon the Pharisee" (as recorded in Luke 7:36–50), as he was also "present *substantially* on the Cross," on both occasions under his own proper species.¹²³ At the Last Supper, however, Christ was "present *substantially* twice: first, naturally and under His proper appearances, and . . . second, sacramentally and under the borrowed appearances of bread and wine."¹²⁴ Lastly, at Mass, he is again present substantially, albeit only once this time, and this through his "*substantial* presence . . . now glorious" under the species of bread and wine.¹²⁵ Is the glorious Christ's substantial presence at Mass—via the dual consecration, and thus under the species of bread and wine—sufficient in itself, on Journet's account, to render Christ's redemptive sacrifice *on the Cross* present? The answer is that it is not. For this, something else is required: an

¹¹⁹ Journet, *The Mass*, 256. See also 79n45: "Suarez [*sic*] . . . would be led to see in the Mass a sacrifice specifically and essentially distinct from that of the Cross."

¹²⁰ Journet, *The Mass*, 256.

¹²¹ See Journet, *The Mass*, 59: "Substantial presence is for being in the ontological order."

¹²² For the distinction between proper and borrowed/sacramental species, see Journet, *The Mass*, 60.

¹²³ Journet, *The Mass*, 60.

¹²⁴ Journet, *The Mass*, 60–61.

¹²⁵ Journet, *The Mass*, 61.

operative or *efficient* presence of Christ with reference to his meriting action on the Cross.

By “*operative* presence,” Journet means that someone can be said to be present when that person there produces some kind of *effect*.¹²⁶ Thus, whereas Christ was present substantially in the house of Simon the Pharisee, “He was present *efficiently* only in the house of the centurion whose servant He cured” (in Luke 7:1–10).¹²⁷ Viewed in this way, we can say that Christ is present twice—that is, substantially *and* *efficiently*—at Calvary. We have already discussed how he is present there substantially, but now we must inquire how he is there *efficiently*. Journet tells us:

He is present *efficiently*, spiritually, by His action and His power, in the hearts of the Virgin and St. John [present at the foot of the Cross; see John 19:26], in order to draw them along in the wake of His offering and to pour out on them redemptive grace. He is at a distance from the Virgin and St. John by His substantial presence; He is *in* the Virgin and St. John by His virtual presence.¹²⁸

This image of the Virgin and St. John at the foot of the Cross is one to which Journet often has recourse to account for the presence of the Cross at Mass via efficiency.¹²⁹ His idea here is as follows: because the sacrifice of the Cross was offered with the intention of producing a certain effect in us, there is then, via the divine power, a “ray [that comes forth] from His bloody Cross,” a ray that touches and redeems us through our contact with this operative presence.¹³⁰ As such, what was merited on the Cross is now at work in us spiritually so as to produce its intended effects in our souls.¹³¹ If, however, this “ray of the

¹²⁶ See Journet, *The Mass*, 59: “Operative presence is for acting in the dynamic order.”

¹²⁷ Journet, *The Mass*, 60.

¹²⁸ Journet, *The Mass*, 60 (emphasis added).

¹²⁹ See Journet, *The Mass*, 70, 94, 103.

¹³⁰ Journet, *The Mass*, 81.

¹³¹ See Journet’s discussion of Thomas in *The Mass*, 81. Without explicitly citing the text, Journet is here referring to Thomas’s words in *ST* III, q. 48, a. 6, ad 2: “Christ’s Passion, although corporeal, has yet a spiritual effect from the Godhead united: and therefore it *secures its efficacy by spiritual contact*—namely, by faith and the sacraments of faith.” For Christ’s Passion as meritorious in Thomas, see *ST* III, q. 48, a. 1.

bloody Cross” was indeed at work in the Virgin and St. John, what ultimately matters is not whether we are contemporaneous with the event itself (such contemporaneousness is, for obvious reasons, “excluded from us”).¹³² Rather, what matters is “the [same] presence of spiritual contact” at work in us now that “touched the Blessed Virgin and St. John,” even as they stood *at a distance from*—though contemporaneous with—the event itself.¹³³ On Journet’s account, it is this “ray,” the operative, efficient, or virtual presence of Christ’s Cross, that accounts for the presence of Christ’s sacrifice at Mass, since this ray “moves with each succeeding generation in order to touch us” there.¹³⁴ Thus, the Mass, he writes, is “a true and real sacrifice,” since “it multiplies the real operative presences of the unique redemptive sacrifice”—that is, Christ’s Cross¹³⁵—so as to render it efficiently present to the faithful of all generations.

For Journet, how are these two presences of Christ, substantial and operative, made present at Mass? His answer is that they become present through the conjunction of re-presentation and efficacy that occurs there through the consecration of the discrete species,¹³⁶ which signify, and therefore make present, not only the presence of Christ’s body and blood (now glorious) but *also* the separation of his body and blood “in the only manner in which [this latter] can be rendered present to us, namely operatively.”¹³⁷ Journet brings all of this together in the following passage:

At the Mass there is, under the appearances of bread and wine, the *substantial* presence of Christ now glorious. And there is under the same appearances the *efficient, operative* presence of His one redemptive sacrifice. Not without reason does Christ, now glorious, come to us under the appearances of His Body given for us, of His Blood poured out for the remission of sins;

¹³² Journet, *The Mass*, 70.

¹³³ Journet, *The Mass*, 70.

¹³⁴ Journet, *The Mass*, 70.

¹³⁵ Journet, *The Mass*, 61–62 (see also 80, explaining St. Thomas’s position: “Christ is sacrificed at the Mass because the Mass brings us the effect of His Passion; it actualizes for us His Passion; it makes us partakers of the fruits of His Passion”).

¹³⁶ See Journet, *The Mass*, 80 (see also 70: “the spiritual ray of His bloody Cross come[s] to us in a sensible envelopment, capable at once of *signifying and transmitting* it” [emphasis added], which is to say, it comes to us via the confection of the sacrament).

¹³⁷ Journet, *The Mass*, 71.

it is in order to signify that He comes to us with the application, the contact, the power and the presence of His one redemptive sacrifice.¹³⁸

Here, Journet's exposition reconnects with the text of St. Thomas outlined above, emerging as an explication of it. Ultimately, what Journet intends to elucidate with his distinction between Christ's substantial and operative presence at Mass is what, precisely, St. Thomas meant when he spoke in *ST* III, q. 83, a. 1, of the sacrament as realizing "the effect of [Christ's] Passion," by which "we are made partakers of the fruit of our Lord's Passion."¹³⁹ If Thomas deals elsewhere with the presence of Christ's body and blood in this sacrament,¹⁴⁰ there is still the question of his body and blood being made present with "the effect of His Passion," whence it "contain[s] Christ crucified."¹⁴¹ This is the distinction Journet is highlighting. This is why, when he wishes to sum up Thomas's take on the Eucharistic sacrifice, he does so by redeploing his own finely articulated distinctions: "In other words [i.e., he is restating Thomas's position in his own words], the Mass brings us not only the *substantial presence* of Christ in His glorious *state*, but also the *operative presence* of His redemptive sacrificial *act*."¹⁴²

Before leaving Journet's texts, I would like to turn briefly to his discussion of the interrelationship of the respective roles of Christ and the Church in the liturgical offering of the Mass.¹⁴³ Here there are surprising convergences—but also some differences—between Scheeben's and Journet's positions. As we saw, Scheeben, in his account of the Eucharistic sacrifice, assigns an important place to the distinction at Mass between the priest's role where he speaks in the voice of Christ the divine Bridegroom (expressed in the Words of Institution) and his role where he speaks in the name of the Church as his bride (expressed, above all, in the various epicleses scattered throughout the Anaphora). As it turns out, however, we find a similar distinction in Journet. In a subsection treating of "the role of the Church and that

¹³⁸ Journet, *The Mass*, 61.

¹³⁹ Journet cites this passage in *The Mass*, 80.

¹⁴⁰ Throughout *ST*, especially *ST* III, qq. 75–76, particularly q. 76, a. 1, where Thomas deals with the presence of whole Christ—body, blood, soul, and divinity—in this sacrament by way of real concomitance.

¹⁴¹ Cited from *ST* III, q. 73, a. 5, ad 2.

¹⁴² Journet, *The Mass*, 81 (emphases original).

¹⁴³ Journet, *The Mass*, 93–94 (in ch. 5: "The Offering of the Mass").

of the priests in the cultic unbloody offering,”¹⁴⁴ Journet observes that “the Church intervenes through her priests in the cultic unbloody offering on two essentially distinct levels: as she is the bearer of the voice of the Bridegroom, or as she makes heard her own voice as Bride.”¹⁴⁵ As to the first level, where Christ is speaking (this level is primary).¹⁴⁶ “[The Church, in the transubstantiation] acts through her priests, *in persona Christi*. . . . It is the voice of the Bridegroom which she makes heard, and not that of her own.”¹⁴⁷ At what point, then, does the Church speak *in propria persona*, in her own name as bride? She speaks in her own name, Journet writes, both “before and after the transubstantiation.”¹⁴⁸ It is here that the priests “are no longer ministers as before, that is to say, in the sense of purely the instruments of Christ the Bridegroom”; rather, “they are ministers in the sense [that they are] the servants of the Church the Bride.”¹⁴⁹ Regrettably, Journet does not go into more detail as to precisely how the Church expresses her own voice in these anaphoral prayers (or, for that matter, into what consecratory symbolism might be implied through an analysis of their contents). He is content to simply mention the bare fact in one brief paragraph and then move on to the question of the laity’s act of self-offering at Mass in the order of charity.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, he does not discuss whether there is an act of the Church implicitly contained (in veiled fashion) in the priest’s enunciation of the Words of Institution (whereby the priest is, then, simultaneously Christ’s representative and the Church’s). We will return to this question below.

¹⁴⁴ Journet, *The Mass*, 98–99 (I have removed the capitalization from the subsection head for in-text citation).

¹⁴⁵ Journet, *The Mass*, 98 (emphases added).

¹⁴⁶ See Journet, *The Mass*, 93: “If Christ is both Priest and Victim at the Mass, according to the Council of Trent, then He holds the first place, and the Church the second.”

¹⁴⁷ Journet, *The Mass*, 98.

¹⁴⁸ Journet, *The Mass*, 99: “Before and after transubstantiation the Church acts through her priests in her own name, *in propria persona*. It is in her own voice, that of the Bride” (emphasis added).

¹⁴⁹ Journet, *The Mass*, 99.

¹⁵⁰ Later in *The Mass*, when Journet does deign to go into a more extended discussion of the other components parts of the Anaphora (227–33), his analysis is still cursory and consists mostly of remarks detailing the historical formation of the Canon. When he does discuss the *Supplices te rogamus*, on 231, he treats it exclusively as a prayer for *our* incorporation into Christ’s offering, and not as referring to the transformation of the gifts. His treatment of the *Quam oblationem* on 229 is wholly cursory.

As summary, the following points characterize Journet's theology of Eucharistic sacrifice. First, he emphasizes, above all, the numerical unity of the sacrifice of the Mass with that of the Cross. As such, the sacrifice of the Mass is not a "new" sacrifice (contra Suárez), but instead a re-presentation and actualization of Christ's one sacrifice, offered on the Cross "once for all" (Heb 7:27; 9:26; 10:10, 14). Second, Journet's position on the Mass as an efficacious re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice is basically an extended explication of Thomas's. Thomas's position is itself characterized by two points: (a) the consecration of the discrete species of bread and wine as an efficacious sign—or sacrament—of Christ's Passion, through which, then, (b) its fruits are applied. Third, key in explaining the latter point (b) is Journet's distinction between Christ's substantial presence and operative presence in the Eucharist. Substantially, Christ's glorified body and blood are present under the species of bread and wine following upon the consecration. Operatively, however, Christ is present in the Eucharist because he acts there to communicate the fruits of his Passion. This is why, then, on Journet's count, the Mass is "a true and real sacrifice": (a) through the medium of effective signification resulting in transubstantiation, Christ is rendered present, yes, substantially, but also because (b) he brings with him the *power* or *efficiency* of his Passion.¹⁵¹ Lastly, for Journet, the consecration is the work of Christ the Bridegroom as conveyed by the priest acting *in persona Christi* (via his declarative voice enunciation of the words of consecration). Journet, however, maintains this emphasis without detriment to the priest's role as representative of Christ's bride, the Church (even if he mostly leaves this other traditional datum undeveloped).

Having set forth Scheeben's and Journet's positions on the Eucharist as sacrifice, let us now turn to an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of their respective positions, setting them in dialogue. It is my contention that, far from being contradictory, each has the power to complete the other when viewed from the proper angle.

Scheeben and Journet in Dialogue

Allow me to begin by stating that, of the two arguments presented earlier—the one beginning from the Eucharist's sacrificial character and the other from its sacramental character—I regard the second

¹⁵¹ Journet, *The Mass*, 61–62.

argument, Thomas's, to be correct. The great difficulty with the various post-Tridentine *immutatio* theories is that, as Leo Scheffczyk put it, they have the habit of "each cancelling out the other."¹⁵² At least in some of their destructive formulations, there is also the further problem that they run the risk of renewing Christ's state of humiliation.¹⁵³ No consensus was ever reached on the identity of the desired sacrificial *immutatio*, nor could there be, since the search itself was premised on a category error. This is why, in the long haul, I regard this paradigm's eventual eclipse in the first half of the twentieth century as no great loss for Catholic theology, though I have learned much from the great theologians who advanced this paradigm.¹⁵⁴

Where, then, does this leave Scheeben's position? This is a more complex matter. On the one hand, I do not think his position is correct as it stands. His principal error derives from his search for the fresh *immutatio*—in his case, *immutatio perfectiva*—needed so as to constitute the Eucharist a "new, genuine act of sacrifice."¹⁵⁵ A side effect of this move is that it effectively severs his treatment of the Eucharist's sacrificial character from his account of its character as an efficacious memorial of Christ's crucifixion. The result is that these

¹⁵² Scheffczyk, "Eucharistic Sacrifice," 275.

¹⁵³ This, for example, is Scheeben's critique of de Lugo's (and Franzelin's) theory concerning Christ's sacramental debasement: "The sacrificial character of the Eucharist cannot, it seems, be found in such humiliation, if only for the reason that this humiliation, regarded as a moral annihilation, would renew the death and immolation of Christ, and hence also His meritorious activity, instead of merely representing them" (*The Mysteries*, 472–73n4).

¹⁵⁴ In saying this, I wish, however, to emphasize that I am not advocating a wholesale rejection of the views of any of the authors who have been discussed in these pages, nor do I mean to oversimplify the positions and contributions of any given era. Although the *immutatio* theories prevailed in the post-Tridentine period, I have not mentioned—due to considerations of space—the countervailing sacrificial winds of the seventeenth-century movement of priestly piety known as the French School, which, as Pomplun notes, "provide[s] the chief alternative [in this period] to these scholastic theologies of eucharistic sacrifice" ("Post-Tridentine Sacramental Theology," 357). Authors of the French School argue for the character of the Eucharistic sacrifice from the identity, as Pomplun puts it here, of the "same 'inner oblation'" in Christ's will both at Calvary and at Mass, as bridged by the mediating influence of Christ's heavenly sacrifice. For Scheeben's tacit rejection of the French School's position on Eucharistic sacrifice—on the grounds that the same inner oblation cannot be present in Christ's will both on the Cross and in heaven (because they are discrete *temporal* acts of willing)—see *Handbuch*, 5/2:1496–97.

¹⁵⁵ Scheeben, *The Mysteries*, 508.

two facets of his theology of Eucharistic sacrifice are compartmentalized from one another.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, while I do not agree with Scheeben's cleavage of the sacrificial *immutatio* (a false category) from the efficacious symbolism of the discretely consecrated species (even if their consecration be the engine that drives this sacrificial *immutatio*), I actually think that Scheeben, with his particular formulation of the *immutatio* theory, has picked up on something that Journet has overlooked. This has to do with the consecratory symbolism derived not from consideration of the Words of Institution, but from their broader liturgical context, which is caught up in an ongoing interplay between the Lord's institution (at the Last Supper),¹⁵⁷ on the

¹⁵⁶ In the pagination of *The Mysteries*, they are separated by twelve pages: in 494–95, Scheeben discusses Christ's representative "immolation" under the sacramental species, whence he is present "as the sacrificial Lamb"; only later, in 507–9, in a different subsection altogether (no. 72: "Nature and Meaning of Transubstantiation") does he finally get around to discussing the Eucharist's "real sacrificial action," which bears "greater similarity with the execution of the hypostatic union and the resurrection of Christ's body than with the immolation of that body on the cross" (508–9). Shortly thereafter, he notes: "The Eucharistic act of sacrifice bears the stamp of the immolation consummated on the cross . . . only so far as in the heavenly holocaust the immolation of the cross is exhibited and offered in God's eternal remembrance, and this remembrance is visibly depicted to us in the separation of the blood from the body . . . by the difference between the species" (509; emphasis added).

¹⁵⁷ I say "the Lord's institution (at the Last Supper)," as opposed to "the priest's declarative-voice recitation of the Words of Institution at Mass," to hedge my argument somewhat, as there are a few known liturgies that lack the explicit recitation of the Words of Institution, such as the Anaphora of Addai and Mari celebrated by the Assyrian Church of the East. However, I still hold that all liturgies maintain the basic idea of the priest acting *in persona Christi* in a more or less pronounced form, since every Eucharist is, at bottom, a repetition of what Christ did at the Last Supper. Even Addai and Mari, in the Ghanta immediately preceding the Epiclesis, speaks of the "commemoration of the body and blood of your Christ which we offer you upon your pure and holy altar, as you taught us." This motif is taken up again a few lines later when the priest says that we "have received by tradition the example which is from you," and so "perform this great, fearful, holy, life-giving, and divine Mystery" (citations of Addai and Mari are from *The Order of the Holy Qurbana According to the Liturgy of Mar Addai and Mar Mari, The Blessed Apostles (for the Use of the Faithful)*, compiled by Lawrence Namato and the Assyrian Church of the East, rev. ed. [San Jose, CA: Adiabene, 2009], 57.) Thus, the symbolism of Christ's Passion, derived from the consecration of the discrete species following Christ's example, is still preserved, albeit obliquely, in this liturgy. For a discussion of the disputed historical question of whether Addai and Mari ever contained the explicit recitation of the Words of Institution, see

one hand, and the ecclesial reception of this act, on the other.

I submit that the Church's celebration of the Eucharist is essentially *one* action, but with *two* irreducible halves, which halves correspond respectively to the priest's relation to the action when he is acting *in persona Christi* and when he is acting *in persona ecclesiae*. By way of illustration, picture a curved line: it is one, and yet it has both a convex and a concave aspect. So too with the celebration of the Eucharist: it is one, but it has two different aspects, *in persona Christi* and *in persona ecclesiae*. *In persona Christi* represents Christ's institution, which in turn symbolizes/effects the Eucharist's relationship to Christ's saving Passion. This aspect will be emphasized whenever one places the emphasis in the liturgical rite on the Lord's institution as grounding the celebration of the sacrament, on the priest's recitation of Christ's words in the declarative voice, and in general, on the Eucharist as the memorial of Christ's saving Pasch.

The flip side of this action is the receipt and performance of this institution by Christ's bride, the Church. Even when the priest is acting *in persona Christi capitis* in the liturgy (above all with his recitation of the Words of Institution), this aspect—as both Scheeben and Hoppe contend—is still present, even if veiled. At other times in the liturgy, however, the priest expresses the Church's role in the action by speaking *in persona ecclesiae*, something that is expressed in the various offertories, epicleses, and intercessions that feature prominently in every known liturgy. Moreover, when the Eucharist is viewed from the vantage point of the Church's various offertories and consecratory petitions, it is not the Eucharist's aspect as an anamnesis of Christ's Passion that comes to the fore, but rather the transformation

U. M. Lang, "Eucharist without Institution Narrative? The *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* Revisited," *Divinitas* 47 (2004): 227–60. For a defense of its validity, see Robert F. Taft, "Mass without the Consecration? The Historic Agreement on the Eucharist between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East Promulgated 26 October 2001," *Worship* 77, no. 6 (2003): 482–509. The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity's declaration of Addai and Mari's validity, *Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East*, is available at the Vatican's website. For another prominent liturgy that potentially lacks the recitation of the Words of Institution, see Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Catechesis* 5.6–8, in *Lectures on the Christian Sacraments*, ed. F. L. Cross (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1977), 73–74. Granted, this is a catechetical work and not a liturgical text—whence it is *possible* Cyril skips over portions of the prayer; as it stands, Cyril passes immediately from the *Sanctus* in 5.6 to the recitation of the epiclesis in 5.7 with no hint of any intervening material.

of her gifts¹⁵⁸ through which Christ—together with the fruits of his Passion—is made present in her midst.

When the Eucharist is viewed in this way, as an irreducibly two-sided action, the apparent opposition between Scheeben's emphasis on the *newness* of the Eucharistic sacrifice as the Church's sacrifice and Journet's emphasis on its *numerical oneness* with Christ's Passion falls away. This is so, at least, provided we have first shed the rationale underlying the *immutatio* theory: the "newness" of the Eucharistic sacrifice is to be accounted for on the basis of the ecclesial repetition—and reception—of Christ's institution. Thus, the newness of the action is its aspect as a consecration of the Church's gifts in response to her petition that they may become the body and blood of Christ, something that happens afresh with each discrete celebration of the Eucharist. On the other hand, the action's numerical unity with Christ's Passion comes to the fore whenever it is viewed in terms of Christ's institution, the priest's recitation of the Words of Institution, and in general, the Eucharist's anamnestic relationship to Christ's sacrifice offered once for all at the Cross, which is rendered present at Mass via representation and efficiency.

By viewing the Eucharist as an irreducibly two-sided operation (*in persona Christi* and *in persona ecclesiae*), we can overcome what I view as the basic lopsidedness of Journet's position, while at the same time liberating Scheeben's richer perspective from the limitations of the *immutatio* argument. Journet's position is lopsided because he makes comparatively little of the ecclesial side of the Eucharistic action. The richness of Scheeben's perspective consists in the fact that he rightly emphasizes *both* that it is the anamnesis of Christ Passion *and* that the Church's sacrifice of bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. By retrieving Scheeben's perspective without his understanding of the *immutatio*, furthermore, we can open up certain lines of approach to the perspective of the Christian East, which has historically placed the preponderance of its emphasis on the deprecatory—and epicletic—half of this action (*in persona ecclesiae*), while the West has more heavily emphasized its character as the anamnesis of Christ's Passion, grounded in the recitation of the Words of Institution (*in persona Christi*).

¹⁵⁸ This is where the prominence that Scheeben gives to the Annunciation–resurrection typologies comes to the fore.

Conclusion

I would like to close with a nod to Eugène Masure, whose position resembles my own. Near the end of his book *The Christian Sacrifice*, Masure gives an extended account of the twentieth-century recovery of the Thomistic position of the Eucharist as sacramental sacrifice.¹⁵⁹ When, in due course, he takes up Suárez's position, he offers this criticism: on Suárez's count, "the Church's sacrifice becomes a sacrifice of bread and wine miraculously transformed in the course of the ceremony into the sacrifice of [Christ's] Body and Blood."¹⁶⁰ As Masure goes on to note, however, it is not so much that Suárez's perspective is false as it is that it is just incomplete, since it "shows only [the mystery's] secondary or initial aspect," its dimension as "the mystery of the Church."¹⁶¹

Contra Suárez, Masure avers, we must first say that: "The sacrifice of the Church is the sacrifice of Christ, thanks to the symbolic species of bread and wine already offered. By thus reversing the formula we set in order the entire doctrine."¹⁶² Masure sums up his position as follows: "The Mass is a liturgical sacrifice offered by the Church, which is yet at the same time the sacrifice offered on the Cross and consummated in heaven by our Lord—and this because the Church's oblations, the bread and the wine, whose species act as sacrament or sign for the immolation of Calvary, are changed into the body and blood of Christ's sacrifice, that is Christ Himself, so that the Church has as victim on her altars every day the very victim of the one eternal sacrifice."¹⁶³ This is well put. Masure has successfully integrated the two halves of the action: the consecration of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood and its character as an anamnesis of Christ's Cross. Both of these perspectives—that is, Suárez's and Thomas's—are needed so as to give a full account of the Eucharist's sacrificial character. The only question, then, is one of how to fit them together properly to form one whole. And it is this that I hope to have achieved in some measure in the present essay. N.V

¹⁵⁹ Masure discusses Thomas's position—and Trent's—in *The Christian Sacrifice*, 216–19. He speaks of its twentieth-century recovery beginning on 226.

¹⁶⁰ Masure, *The Christian Sacrifice*, 254–55.

¹⁶¹ Masure, *The Christian Sacrifice*, 255. As Masure puts it in a footnote here: "the Suarezian formulas express the mystery of the Mass well enough in so far as it is the mystery of the Church." (Masure's footnotes are unnumbered and refer back to the text with various signs; in the case of this note, it is an asterisk.)

¹⁶² Masure, *The Christian Sacrifice*, 255.

¹⁶³ Masure, *The Christian Sacrifice*, 253.

A Theological Aesthetic of Memory: Blondel, Newman, and Balthasar

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JORGE LOUIS BORGES'S MAN who can remember everything is "monstrous," rather than wondrous. The man himself in fact feels no wonder at all.¹ This is because memory is more than the mere notation of events, more than a mental etching of a period in time. It is far more active and alive, far more meaningful. Similarly, if sacred tradition is in some way the Church's memory of Christ, and if it is also in some way the Church's memory of its own past, then we are compelled to ask how this is so. We must ask how it is living and meaningful, how it is more than an etching.

This article is at once an excavation and an argument. In order to make the claims about tradition that I do, my argument appeals to resources that Hans Urs von Balthasar himself used in his "theological aesthetics" and elsewhere. Yet the purpose of such excavation is focused not on Balthasar, but on the problem of tradition. This is an article that makes an argument about the fundamental dynamics of sacred tradition. That is to say, this is an article on those founding principles that allow tradition to *be*, to exist. Tradition is, I argue, a kind of *remembering*. Further, I argue that the form that this remembering takes is coherently plural, at once many-faceted yet singular, a characteristic that I call *symphonic remembering*.

¹ See Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 413. The story itself comes from Borges's *Funes el memorioso*, first published in 1942.

In order to make my argument, I move upward from tradition in human experience into increasingly “heightened” synthetic concepts. This concession of method follows Balthasar’s own in *Glory of the Lord*, which begins with “The Subjective Evidence” and only later seeks the objective.² I begin, then, with a detailed study of human action from Maurice Blondel, followed by his reflections on tradition. Blondel argues convincingly that human action is both historical and metaphysical, and based on this, he successfully shows us how tradition mediates history and truth to one another on the plane of human experience. From here, Blondel needs several clarifications, and John Henry Newman serves as the central explanatory figure. Blondel is, for his part, unclear about what role history plays in ideas, and Newman’s theory of the development of doctrine proves indispensable. Finally, I reflect on tradition as “memory” using several sources, chief among them Balthasar’s sense of tradition, memory, and their role in theology. “Remembering” and human consciousness are, on his view, strong analogies for tradition, but not without weaknesses. The final movement (of the symphony) strives to integrate the various themes of the article with a fully theological aesthetic consideration of time, a consideration of time as “music” that is open to the eternity that it itself is not. The total argument is Balthasarian in its essential polarity, like a compass set to follow the fundamental direction of Balthasar’s thought. It is at the same time a movement apart from him, an attempt to move theological aesthetics forward, asking questions and using sources that Balthasar himself did not.

Maurice Blondel

Human Action

Blondel’s first and most lasting major work was *L’Action* (1893), which he presents as a study of the “science” of human action.³ He chooses this science before all the others because we are, always and before we know it, deeply involved in action. “I am and I act, even in spite of myself,” he writes in his introduction; “I find myself bound, it seems,

² Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 1, *Seeing the Form* [hereafter, *GL I*], 2nd ed., trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009).

³ Maurice Blondel, *Action: Essay on a Critique of Life and a Science of Practice*, trans. Olivia Blanchette (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997).

to answer for all that I am and do.”⁴ So, he proposes to examine every detail of human action from the ground upward, as it were, since we are always caught up in acting. Even if I am a pure determinist or nihilist, after all, I still act. Action, then, “is *the* question, the one without which there is none other.”⁵ Yet action, this elemental matter of willing and doing, is significantly more complex and elusive than it might first appear to us.

One of Blondel’s major emphases is that human action is actually a composite of forces, influences, and powers: “Life therefore is the organization of a little world that reflects the big one. . . . In the diffuse infinity of its determining conditions, what is living thus appears as a concentrated system of coordinated forces; and the infinite of its act is more interior to it than exterior.”⁶ Since the human being is a microcosm, rather than a monolithic subject, the entirety of human action, including consciousness, is equally as complex and microcosmic.⁷ We might imagine the human being of Blondel’s analysis as something of a fractal, repeating a complex pattern at every possible depth. Within this logic, there is another key point that we need to separate out and highlight: for Blondel, human action is as much, if not more so, a matter of human consciousness as it is human deed. This is the case in two respects: (1) consciousness itself is an act;⁸ (2) action is really a “body” or complex whole, a dynamism, rather than a simple reality without parts.⁹

What Blondel does here is profound, for it helps to establish how the human being is really a complex and organized gathering of more than one dynamic power at the same time. If, for example, the human body is an ordered network of cells, a circulatory system, a nervous system, and so forth, the human body is at once singular—it is one body—and yet composite. Each system is ordered toward the others, though not identically, which helps to create the whole that is the body, a whole that is made of, yet not reducible to, its parts.

⁴ Blondel, *Action*, 6.

⁵ Blondel, *Action*, 11.

⁶ Blondel, *Action*, 100.

⁷ Blondel, *Action*, 101.

⁸ Blondel, *Action*, 105.

⁹ We can see this, for example, in Blondel, *Action*, 153: “And what must be understood by *the body of action* is everything, in ourselves and outside, that still separates us from ourselves.” Or, as W. A. Scott puts the matter, “action, reflection, reaction, and further action go on in a constant process” (“The Notion of Tradition in Maurice Blondel,” *Theological Studies* 27, no. 3 [1966]: 392).

Human action is much like this for Blondel, and not only because he grasps how my body is already operating and acting *before* I intend and carry out a specific action. It is much more the case that action emerges from me in the midst of dynamisms already at work and that my consciousness itself, as dynamic, is also an act, and that my individual voluntary motions emerge both from my consciousness and from my existence as such.

I act, and I can conceive of my action in all its depths only partially. It is, after all, not as if I understand the full extent of my action even as I carry it out. So there is a kind of double mystery at work here, both in the origins of action and in its goals:

Having come from an impenetrable origin, the conceived act then crosses the illuminated field of consciousness, in order to tend toward a goal again still impenetrable. We live, it is said, only by hope; we labor only in view of the better.”¹⁰

In other words, while a single voluntary action is discrete and individual, the human reality from which it emerges is not even remotely simple. We may be accustomed to thinking of action as that which we can see, as the deed itself or simply the movement from decision to deed, but for Blondel, reducing action to this conceals how we are already in motion, how our actions continue to reverberate in us, and how our deeds arrive in the world from out of our own microcosmic worlds.

Blondel offers an account of human action that is keen to grasp its complex genius. That action is not simple will be key for us in this article. That action is instead comprised of an interlocking series of operations, some known to consciousness and others unknown, is also key. We might say that Blondel, in his own way, understands what Heidegger calls the “thrown-ness” of existence: we are already in the midst of movement as we move, whether we are making decisions or being pulled along by a tide. But Blondel is less concerned with an image of the human being as a single unit “thrown” into existence and more concerned with the human being as a composite of distinguishable yet inseparable systems.

Human willing, for Blondel, is continually transcending itself. In the first place, it emerges from a creature that comprises deter-

¹⁰ Blondel, *Action*, 114.

minate systems—even, say, my heartbeat—and yet is free.¹¹ In the second place, the will wants to see its own willing through to its completion, to its final satisfaction, which is never achieved via a single act.¹² The will arises and moves outward, as it were, and the human creature grows and changes. For the will to move to act upon something in the first place is already transcendence from its origin.¹³ Indeed, this very transcendence awakens in us a profound awareness of our limitation, since we can never seem to equal our own willing. “The will has not yet willed itself entirely,” writes Blondel.¹⁴ Or, more concretely, “before, during, after our acts, there is dependence, constraint, failure.”¹⁵ Since consciousness itself is act, there is also a yawning distance that opens up within ourselves. That is, I cannot will myself into completion, see myself to my own end, even as my willing allows for and effects my transcendence: “Yes, I have to will myself; but it is impossible to reach myself directly; from myself to myself, there is an abyss that nothing yet has been able to fill.”¹⁶

It is tempting to see the natural desire for God and the twentieth-century debates over it in what Blondel is building for us here. While it is true that he is an influence within those debates in theology, we would do well to let him stand on his own for a moment. His stance, at least here in *L'Action*, is much more minimal and apophatic.¹⁷ It is a prelude more than it is a position.¹⁸ Blondel is much more inter-

¹¹ Blondel, *Action*, 68–69.

¹² Blondel, *Action*, 191–92.

¹³ Blondel, *Action*, 123–25.

¹⁴ Blondel, *Action*, 308.

¹⁵ Blondel, *Action*, 307.

¹⁶ Blondel, *Action*, 313.

¹⁷ See Alexander Dru's and Illtyd Trethowan's "Introduction" to Blondel's "History and Dogma" (1904) in *The Letter on Apologetics and History and Dogma*, trans. Alexander Dru and Illtyd Trethowan, *Resourcement: Retrieval and Renewal in Catholic Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 90–92.

¹⁸ On this point, I am in slight disagreement with Thomas Alféri, though I do not think the difference is ultimately a division. It is more a matter of different questions. Alfieri stresses the theological impetus of Blondel's work: "Effectivement, Blondel finit par considérer que, dans la vie croyante, la visée de la volonté humaine s'accomplit en faisant place à la volonté divine qui lui résiste" [Indeed, Blondel ultimately thinks that the life of faith, with respect to the human will, is achieved by making room for the divine will that resists it] ("Résistance et accomplissement de la volonté divine: une relecture de Maurice Blondel, *L'Action*," *Science et Esprit* 67, no. 2 [2015]: 256; my translation). My point is simply that it is too much of a burden on the text to read it

ested in showing us how a careful, unflinching analysis of the body of human action reveals that we are not sufficient unto ourselves. But he also wants to show us that our insufficiency presupposes and implies a sufficiency, a reality, that transcends us entirely. This reality is what Blondel calls “the one thing necessary,” “the supernatural,” “God.”¹⁹

So it is that Blondel shows us how the realm of human action is at once both historical and metaphysical. It is historical in the sense that it is highly contingent, occurs in time, and is shaped by multiple influences. It is metaphysical in the sense that its character and intelligibility are explained only by the existence of a transcendent supernatural. This means that human history, which is the history of *human action*, always necessarily refers beyond itself. Much like the distinction in German between *Historie* and *Geschichte*, there is for Blondel both the vast realm of all that human beings have done and the more constricted realm of what is written about human deeds. Such distinctions are key for us because, when we say that tradition is “historical,” we need to be clear about what we mean. We do not mean only that tradition can be interpreted by scientific history; we also mean that it is collective human action over time. So it is that a study of action is essential when we ask questions about sacred tradition. W. A. Scott summarizes such logic this way: “Tradition . . . forms itself by the use of a methodology of action. And the application of a philosophy of action to tradition can be fertile because it is always in act, always in the process of acting and reflecting on the action which has made up the history of the Church.”²⁰

Tradition

When Blondel was writing his essay “History and Dogma” in 1902, there was an intense debate in the Catholic Church over the historical-critical method of interpreting the Bible. “History and Dogma” is a work on the nature of history written in the midst of a serious confrontation with it, and it is concerned with both the role of history and its boundaries in the study of Scripture. Blondel’s argument is framed according to the two “sides” of a specific biblical problem. How is the Bible true when it is also historical? One side of the conflict stresses truth apart from history (“extrinsicism”), while the

as a definitive statement on the natural and supernatural as defined by theology. He is speaking in a philosophical mode, albeit with a heart enlivened by faith.

¹⁹ See Blondel, *Action*, 314–24, for the major introduction to this framework.

²⁰ Scott, “The Notion of Tradition,” 395.

other stresses history apart from truth (“historicism”). Both poles of the debate are insufficient to the problem they address, and Blondel asks whether there may be any reconciliation or resolution to a crisis that seems to sunder the very possibility of faith.

For Blondel, the trouble with extrinsicism is not so much that it makes claims of truth as it is that it renders those claims of truth fundamentally unrelated to the human conditions in which truth is received. With extrinsicism, we emerge with a point of view in which the supernatural is a “password,”²¹ bearing a superficial relationship between sign and thing signified: neither the *words* of Scripture nor the *events* of history have supernatural meaning.²² Scripture and history are instead extrinsically laid over truth, like a thin cloth. As Blondel asks, “why bother to verify the details?” The worst result, he insists, is that extrinsicism “cannot set bounds to itself.”²³ This last claim is essential to remember because, while much more complex, historicism ends in much the same wasteland.

Historicism suffers because it wants history to do and to verify more than it is able. It is a kind of inversion of extrinsicism. In the case of historicism, human knowledge is considered a single unity, “an absolute monism,”²⁴ which means that it ends up demanding that history answer questions it is not armed to answer.²⁵ In other words, human thought and action have to answer entirely for themselves, and they cannot. Such an understanding of human activity leads to determinism: *that* something happened is taken to be its whole meaning, taken as *the* logical outcome of events.²⁶ Blondel calls this “an ontology . . . extracted from a method . . . a sort of dialectical determinism.”²⁷ In other words, in historicism, facticity *is* truth. The end result is as boundless as extrinsicism was: “Positive history is transformed into negative theology.”²⁸ History, then, usurps the role of divine truth. *That* something happened is all that could be and all that is, even with respect to God.

A couple of concerns are running underneath Blondel’s assessment of extrinsicism and historicism. If one pole is a kind of fundamental-

²¹ Blondel, “History and Dogma,” 227.

²² Blondel, “History and Dogma,” 228.

²³ Blondel, “History and Dogma,” 229.

²⁴ Blondel, “History and Dogma,” 235.

²⁵ Blondel, “History and Dogma,” 236.

²⁶ Blondel, “History and Dogma,” 239–41.

²⁷ Blondel, “History and Dogma,” 240.

²⁸ Blondel, “History and Dogma,” 239.

ism about truth, then the other is a kind of fundamentalism about history. Blondel's problem with such thinking is first that neither can ultimately relate itself to other modes of thinking. If history or faith suffice for all knowing, then they need not make reference to any other form of understanding. Much more fundamentally for Blondel, the problem is that neither thought form (extrinsicism or historicism) is able to perceive its own limits. Each "science," as Blondel prefers to put it, depends on other sciences.²⁹

Though it seems that Blondel opposes extrinsicism and historicism in a pure dialectic, in fact they endure the same failure of absolute monism.³⁰ Both imagine reality to be single, entire, invariant, and self-sufficient. In one case, that monism is truth; in the other, that monism is history. Either perspective results in claims that can never receive restriction or differentiation, can never receive definition. The failure of both, according to Blondel, is ultimately a failure to grasp the supernatural, or more precisely, to grasp the relation between the natural and the supernatural. Here he does not mean revelation and grace, strictly speaking, but rather nature's fundamental relation to the existence of God. That is to say, the natural cannot entirely answer for itself.

Significant for our purposes is what Blondel does with his differentiated understanding of reality. Because human action is metaphysical as well as historical for Blondel, as we saw already in his analysis of human action, history plays a real but relative role in understanding it. The inverse is also true, though not in an identical way: metaphysics plays a real but relative role in understanding history.³¹ Within his variegated understanding of the real—and not otherwise—Blondel posits sacred tradition as the mediator of history and dogma. This allows him to preserve the relative independence of truth and history but also to relate them to one another. It also means that tradition is neither "nowhere" nor "somewhere" specific. Tradition is really known only through what it mediates: history and truth.

Blondel describes tradition as something other than "paper memory" (what could or will be written)³² and as something other

²⁹ Blondel, "History and Dogma," 234–35.

³⁰ This form of argument mimics Blondel's tactics in *L'Action*. For a breakdown of that logic, see César Izquierdo, "La tradición según Maurice Blondel," *Scripta Theologica* 21, no. 1 (1989): 63–96.

³¹ See also Scott, "The Notion of Tradition," 396.

³² Blondel, "History and Dogma," 266.

than “the transmission of a spoken word or of a custom.”³³ Here Blondel sidesteps arguments over *what* instruments hand on tradition and even *what* tradition hands on: there is an argument of an entirely different kind here. “Tradition’s powers of conservation,” writes Blondel, “are equaled by its powers of conquest: that it discovers and formulates truths on which the past lived.”³⁴ Indeed, tradition looks forward to the future God intends. So, tradition fundamentally spans not only time but also time as it is oriented to and animated by eternity. For Blondel, tradition is something much more like the body of the Church as it persists through history in “the unity of a consciousness which is divinely assisted.”³⁵ This makes sacred tradition at once historical, communal, and most importantly, the work of both the Spirit and human beings.³⁶ Says Blondel:

Something in the Church escapes scientific examination, and it is the Church which, without rejecting or neglecting the contributions of exegesis and of history, nevertheless controls them, because in the very tradition which constitutes her, she possesses another means of knowing her author, of participating in his life, of linking facts to dogma, and of justifying both the capital and the interest of her teaching.³⁷

With John Henry Newman in the background, Blondel presumes that doctrine can develop through the auspices of tradition. He associates tradition with the very existence of the Church, not as a thing separate. But the Church is nevertheless distinguishable from her tradition, for she can employ it as a means. Tradition has to do with human action that is metaphysical and historical, and yet it is not entirely either. It is a gift and a mediator. For Blondel, tradition is, like the Church, animated by divine life, and so is always bound to the flesh (to history, materiality) but not summarized by it. “Tradition,” César Izquierdo says of Blondel, “is not the handing on of a oral message that has not been collected in the Bible, but the living

³³ Blondel, “History and Dogma,” 267.

³⁴ Blondel, “History and Dogma,” 267.

³⁵ Blondel, “History and Dogma,” 268.

³⁶ Again mimicking *L’Action*. See: Blondel, *Action*, 373–424; Alféri, “Résistance et accomplissement,” 268.

³⁷ Blondel, “History and Dogma,” 268–69.

synthesis of facts (history), beliefs (dogma) and practices (life).”³⁸ Or rather, as Izquierdo acknowledges later,³⁹ tradition is more fundamentally a connection to the Incarnate Word in history and in truth.⁴⁰

The understanding of tradition that Blondel offers, while familiar to us through its hidden influence on others, indeed on the Second Vatican Council, is critical in its achievements.⁴¹ Here is a grasp of tradition that manages to be stubbornly historical without reducing itself to historical acts, that acknowledges communal awareness without hypostatizing the Church, that preserves the full dignity of revelation without divesting it of the Incarnation. Tradition is active mediation. This is what we need Blondel’s help to see, something he uniquely contributes, something we do not see at present.

John Henry Newman

Blondel’s account of tradition, which allows us to root it in history and in truth, is nevertheless incomplete. He does not, for example, discuss what it means to endure historical change, and this was a preoccupation of John Henry Newman’s.

Newman formulates the theory of development in response to historical research, and he does so in the face of theories about tradition that do not entirely explain what historical research in fact uncovers. A common ancient definition of tradition comes from Vincent of Lérins (fifth century): tradition is *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*—that which is believed always, everywhere, and by everyone.⁴² Of this rule, however, Newman admits that it is “more serviceable in determining what is not, than what is Christianity.”⁴³ This is so because what we actually find in the early Fathers is not nearly so clear, nor nearly so evenly held. A patristic thinker might well describe what is recognizable in the affirmation of a later council *and* what is recognizable as a later heresy in the same breath, and of still later Christian doctrines we may find no explicit mention.

³⁸ Izquierdo, “La tradición,” 68: “La Tradición no es la transmisión oral de un mensaje no recogido en la Biblia, sino la síntesis viva de hechos (historia), creencias (dogma) y prácticas (vida).”

³⁹ See especially Izquierdo, “La tradición,” 70–75.

⁴⁰ Blondel, “History and Dogma,” 274–76.

⁴¹ See, for example, Myles B. Hannan, “Maurice Blondel: The Philosopher of Vatican II,” *Heythrop Journal* 56, no. 6 (2015): 907–18.

⁴² Newman first quotes it in *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 10.

⁴³ Newman, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, 11.

Indeed, it is often much easier to recognize what is important in early sources according to what is said later. “To give a deeper meaning to their letter,” Newman says, “we must interpret them by the times which came after.”⁴⁴

Newman is aware, in other words, that tradition is subject to history. This is perhaps what marks off specifically modern theological perspectives on tradition. He is also aware that early formulations are not purely identical to later ones, and yet that they share a fabric that is more than purely chronological. He recognizes that past and present doctrinal understandings are not related to one another as simple cause and effect, as before and after. Instead, past and present doctrines are more unevenly related, as it were. They are historically related rather than purely logically. This means, in the first place, that the past and the present share a relationship that makes it possible to share ideas over time. Secondly, the passage of time allows for the development of ideas over time, and this is what allows ideas to *remain the same over time*. For Stephen Prickett, Newman helps us to see that “the true test of Catholicity is not just which Church is most like the supposed primitive form, but also which Church has demonstrated the greatest powers of organic development.”⁴⁵ The essential goal in Newman’s theory of development is to describe the complex relationship between ideas and their expression in time.

It is not merely that ideas—or rather, the same idea, the divine gift given in Christ—can develop over time. It is that these developments have particular characteristics that bind them together, characteristics that then allow for the idea’s development to be studied and understood. Avery Dulles writes, “Christian revelation as an idea, for Newman, has three leading attributes: it is comprehensive, living, and real.”⁴⁶ Revelation thus has particular characteristics that allow us to discern authentic developments from inauthentic ones. Newman offers these characteristics in his “Seven Notes on Authentic Development.” They are, briefly, as follows: preservation of type, continuity of principles, power of assimilation, logical sequence, anticipation of its future, conservative action upon its past, and chronic vigor.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Newman, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, 16.

⁴⁵ Stephen Prickett, “Newman: The Physiognomy of Development,” *Christianity and Literature* 40, no. 3 (1991): 269.

⁴⁶ Avery Cardinal Dulles, “From Images to Truth: Newman on Revelation and Faith,” *Theological Studies* 51 (1990): 254.

⁴⁷ Newman, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, 169–206.

What unites these seven characteristics or typologies is, as ever, the idea that Christianity as an idea has an “organic life,” has an elastic yet real *recognizability* like living things do.⁴⁸ The corruption of tradition is the opposite. In Newman’s words, corruption “is the breaking up of life, preparatory to its termination.”⁴⁹ Out of this general perspective, Newman’s more specific qualifications emerge. “Preservation of type,” for example, refers to a harmony between the external forms of an idea’s expression and its inner meaning, which allows for variety, yet not limitlessly so.⁵⁰ “Continuity of principles” describes how a doctrine comes out of a particular impetus that must be preserved along with it.⁵¹ Yves Congar mimics this sentiment decades later in *True and False Reform in the Church* when he talks of “being penetrated by the spirit of the Church” and describes how understanding the “spirit” that drove a past decision—rather than simple knowledge of the decision itself—is what animates true reform.⁵² Other notes like “anticipation of its future” highlight how, for Newman, doctrinal development does not simply point backward but, in its own history, points itself toward its own development.⁵³

Newman’s insight into tradition is an acknowledgment of tradition as a fundamentally historical reality. At the same time, it is an insight into the nature of (collective) human understanding; it is an insight into insights, as it were. His theory is based fundamentally on the idea that *ideas* are more than the words used to express them and ideas are more than the explicit understandings involved in their expressions. This is how ideas can develop while remaining the same: the idea itself does not change so much as our understanding of it deepens or develops. As Matthew Levering says in *Engaging the Doctrine of Revelation*, “Newman’s defense of doctrinal development rests in significant part upon his awareness that revelation is actively received and understood by human minds, a seemingly obvious point but one whose implications can be overlooked.”⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Prickett, “Physiognomy of Development,” 270.

⁴⁹ Newman, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, 170.

⁵⁰ Newman, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, 173.

⁵¹ Newman, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, 181.

⁵² Yves Congar, *True and False Reform in the Church*, trans. Paul Philibert (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011), 295 (see also 306).

⁵³ Newman, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, 195–99, esp. 196. It is unclear in this passage whether Newman thinks that we can know the anticipation as an anticipation of the idea, or only see it retrospectively.

⁵⁴ Matthew Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of Revelation: The Mediation of the*

That ideas are known by human minds makes them not only historical—since human beings are in history—but also developmental. Ideas are learned over time and enriched over time, both individually and communally. This is in part because human beings are limited and cannot grasp all things at once. Prickett stresses how this human “weakness” becomes, for Newman, a strength.⁵⁵ The flexibility of human knowing—that we can learn and revise and share—is vital evidence of the human mind’s ability to know what is greater than itself. Prickett argues:

What in the *Essay on Development* he had perceived primarily as a historical mode of growth, and in the *Apologia* had been linked with personal integrity, by 1870 he had come to see as a fundamental law of the mind’s operation. For Newman the human psyche was neither logical nor alogical but possessed of powers that made it rather “super-logical”—capable of reaching beyond the powers of reason and proof to conclusions that we nevertheless act upon as certainties.⁵⁶

If the development of doctrine is anything like a divine condescension to human knowing, it is also a sign of our ability to understand under more than one mode of intelligibility. It is also a sign that our understandings, while historical, are nevertheless understandings of what is not historical. This is what Blondel, linked with Newman, shows us so convincingly.

Transition: Metaphysics, History, Theology

To forward our logic thus far: if tradition and human action are as Blondel says, tradition is at once historical and transcendent. Blondel argues, first, that human action is both metaphysical and historical, and he builds his case by revealing the ways that human action continually transcends itself yet can never fulfill itself. In his essay “History and Dogma,” Blondel indicates that two opposed positions, extrinsicism and historicism, in fact share the same problem: both are too monistic

Gospel through Church and Scripture (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 182.

⁵⁵ Prickett, “Physiognomy of Development,” 268: “In the best tradition of Christian theology, what began as an observed phenomenon of contingent weakness ends by becoming the cornerstone of the whole edifice of faith.”

⁵⁶ Prickett, “Physiognomy of Development,” 274.

in their thinking, imagining the world as if it were a flat plane in which everything had identical meaning dominated by only one element. Instead, he proposes that both truth and history are meaningful, but distinctively. Tradition is what mediates between the two.

Newman enriches this position in two fundamental ways: by stressing the historicity of ideas and by accounting for how ideas “change” in history. For Newman, ideas—even ideas of the Church—are subject to history in the manner that human beings are subject to history. This means that we learn things over time and not all at once, which need not be a sign of loss so much as it is a deeper insight into a reality or the development of an idea. We do this communally as well as individually, which means that doctrine can develop in the tradition of the Church. Because the object of the Church’s contemplation is God-made-man, tradition is the mode of an ever-increasing (and never complete) grasp of what is infinite.

Our relationship to time (and thus history) is both fixed and flexible. It suggests, like Blondel, that the “real” is not limited to what is in time, and that we are not either. It also suggests that we are always experiencing the mediation of time. We should note, with no small amount of deference, that more recent continental philosophers like Paul Ricoeur have had similar insights.⁵⁷ Blondel and Newman together provide a more substantial description of how problems of history are embedded in problems of time and how time itself opens out into an unutterable horizon. This is what Blondel calls the “supernatural” and what undergirds Newman’s basic trust that ideas can be consistent over time. Neither man ultimately thinks that truth is immanent to us, though they do think its mediations to us are several and complex.

A watershed moment in the Catholic theology of tradition, enabled by thinkers like Newman, occurs with Vatican II. Here, in a clarification of Trent, tradition is brought together with Scripture so that “Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, committed to the Church.”⁵⁸ Rather than splitting the two into what is unwritten and what is written or allowing tradition

⁵⁷ See especially Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). Ricoeur’s final book is a summation of his philosophical career and, at the same, a press into the unknown—or as he puts it, into “incompletion” (506).

⁵⁸ Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* (November 18, 1965), §10 (translation from Vatican website).

to simply answer for what is not explicitly in Scripture, the council insists on a single deposit of faith, which both Scripture and tradition are and in which both participate.⁵⁹ This means, more practically, that considering tradition is also a way of considering Scripture without collapsing the two.

Sacred tradition, unlike other traditions, is not subject to disintegration, and this is so because the Spirit guides sacred tradition and Christ is its object. This is what makes sacred tradition a fully *theo*-logical problem. How to describe the complex interaction of human action (history), tradition, and truth—in time and before the eternal God—is still an immense puzzle, and it is at this point that I would like to suggest one possible integration: tradition as “remembering,” specifically as “symphonic remembering.”

Tradition and Remembering

Tradition as Memory

In his introduction to *Presence and Thought: An Essay on the Religious Philosophy of Gregory of Nyssa*, Hans Urs von Balthasar associates tradition with the “consciousness” of the Church, specifically with memory. His reflection is important enough to quote at length:

Tradition, therefore, is the very consciousness of the Church and, in a more particular way, her memory, in which are accumulated the experiences of her sons and daughters, who succeeded in keeping the “sacred deposit” alive and intact in an incredibly diverse panoply of situations. The treasure-house of these memories is at the disposal of the theologian in the same way that the storehouse of his lived experiences is available to the individual. But it is evident that recalling the problems and solutions of the past does not admit, for either the theologian or the individual, of a literal presumption of previous solutions

⁵⁹ Aidan Nichols describes something of a disintegration in confidence after the Council, and he attributes this change to three factors: pluralism, hermeneutics, and reception. For Nichols, theology becomes fragmented in such a way that it seems locked in infinite indeterminate perspectives that are endlessly interpreted and received, leaving no room for something like a holistic theory of the development of Christian doctrine (*From Newman to Congar: The Idea of Doctrinal Development from the Victorians to the Second Vatican Council* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990], 266).

and their mechanical application to the difficulties of the present. For a new problem there must be a new solution.⁶⁰

We can hear Blondel in the background as Balthasar writes, particularly in the way he speaks of experience. Balthasar (with Blondel and Newman) stresses the transmission of faith in anthropological terms, through analogies of human consciousness. Just as our own memories help to orient our present actions, tradition orients a community in an analogous way. At the same time, simple repetition of a past solution cannot be the same as a present solution, either in individual life or in communal life. Remembering has to be peculiarly *active* for it to be “memory” in the authentic, phenomenological sense.

Yet we need to be careful when we compare tradition to a mode of consciousness. In his *A Theology of History*, Balthasar warns us to remember who governs the deposit of faith, and it is not the Church, who has nevertheless been given this deposit—it is the Spirit:

The genuine tradition of the Church can only be compared within very strict limits to the phenomenon of organic psychic development from the implicit to the explicit—a comparison greatly favored by the Modernists; and it would certainly be wrong to apply the category “subconscious” to what is supernatural process.⁶¹

Consciousness and remembering, for the Church, do not refer to surfacing what before now was known only subconsciously or somehow possessed by the Church without the Spirit. Still less would it mean that development of doctrine simply narrows the field of what theology needs to learn, as if the deposit could be divided into “learned” and “not-yet-learned.”⁶²

The question for sacred tradition, as memory, is in whether the remembering that occurs is authentic to itself, which would mean it has to be open to itself (the memory of Christ) *and* to the present, rather than, say, traumatically closed in both directions. Balthasar stresses that Christian sight is always intensely focused on Christ, as

⁶⁰ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Presence and Thought: Essay on the Religious Philosophy of Gregory of Nyssa*, trans. Mark Sebanc (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 11.

⁶¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *A Theology of History* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 106–7.

⁶² Balthasar, *Theology of History*, 107.

in the saints, who act and pray with a keen apprehension of Christ in all things and all faces, and in whom we see Christ.⁶³ If we make idols of a past age or the present one, we are confusing earthly time (or earthly history) with the *kairos* of Jesus. Still, time and history are, on this view, not mere outer garments in which Jesus appears. In faith, the Church grasps what Balthasar would call the “form,” the *Gestalt*, of a thing, its animating principle in which we apprehend both its uniqueness and, through its uniqueness, its entirety;⁶⁴ that is, the Church perceives, and mediates, the form of Christ.⁶⁵

A couple of clarifications are necessary. In the first place, assertions such as these do not, for Balthasar, render faith reducible to doctrinal statements, but they do not exclude such statements either: “What is here involved is, therefore, nothing other than the turning of faith to its own interior authenticity, as faith in a proposition (‘belief that Christ’) becomes faith in a person (‘believing Christ’).”⁶⁶ Propositions of faith give way to the person of Christ because he is the supreme form of revelation, beyond every possible human word. Yet faith must also ask its questions and search for words (*fides quaerens intellectum*), even as it is necessarily “complemented by an *inveniens*,” by the arrival of God himself.⁶⁷

Similarly, Balthasar invests faith with a fully transcendent character while also refusing to move away from the historical nature of revelation. In faith, we perceive none other than Christ, but not a purely heavenly or ahistorical Christ. Balthasar draws from Karl Barth as he says, “just as we can never attain to the living God in any way except through his Son become man, but in his Son we can really attain to God in himself, so, too, we ought never to speak of God’s beauty without reference to the form and manner of appearing which he exhibits in salvation-history.”⁶⁸

⁶³ See, for example, Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 3, *Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1992), esp. 339–60.

⁶⁴ Balthasar, *GL I*, 19 and 115.

⁶⁵ A couple of example passages in Balthasar, *GL I*, are: “The image and expression of God, according to the Biblical assertion, is the indivisible God-man: man, in so far as God radiates from him; God, in so far as he appears in the man Jesus” (426); “Considered from the viewpoint of the Gospel, however, the Church has no other form than this relative form, whose function is to point to the supreme form of revelation” (541).

⁶⁶ Balthasar, *GL I*, 133.

⁶⁷ Balthasar, *GL I*, 132.

⁶⁸ Balthasar, *GL I*, 121.

Like all other memories, this “memory” of Christ in history comes alive in the present: as a memory, it is “malleable” both with respect to how moments of ecclesial judgment stress certain elements of the memory over time and with respect to how the ecclesial sense of the tradition is able to discover more in the memory (as in Newman’s theory of development). Here it is very important to let go of our typical presumptions about both the past and the present as they live in our minds. What *was* is not simply “there” to be found again; what *is* is not simply “here” to be projected onto everything of the past. Remembering is the active apprehension of the past in the present. That is to say, memory in the fullest sense apprehends both the past and the present in a single, creative act.

The act of remembering Christ in tradition is “singular” not only in the sense that sacred tradition itself is unique, but also in the sense that every act of remembering is *also* unique. I mean that remembering is always remembering again and anew. It is not a rote action; it is achieved every time memory comes alive. Remembering is “creative” (note that I do not say “inventive,” or even “fabricated”) because its apprehension is the intelligible ordering of the past and the present simultaneously. Memory is made present in its own recognizable integrity, an integrity that persists in the shape of a past-made-present. Balthasar calls this kind of perspective a loving one, a love that, in remembering and hoping, is also necessarily creative.⁶⁹

The singular nature of memory, on this analogy, means that it is simultaneously diverse or heterogeneous. Balthasar will, for example, compare Scripture to a kaleidoscope,⁷⁰ describe ecclesial characteristics using different specific persons as harmonic ecclesial “principles” (Marian, Petrine, Johannine, etc.),⁷¹ and emphasize the fragmentariness of experience alongside the wholeness of form.⁷² In an interpretive approach like the one I am deploying here, Balthasar appears—to follow Cyril O’Regan’s description—“between Tübingen and post-

⁶⁹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone is Credible*, trans. D. C. Schindler (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004).

⁷⁰ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Action*, vol. 2, *The Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1976), 63.

⁷¹ Balthasar, *GL I*, 341–55.

⁷² This is the theme of Hans Urs von Balthasar, *A Theological Anthropology*, trans. Rowman Littlefield (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1967). It also appears thematically at the end of his life in *Life Out of Death: Meditations on the Paschal Mystery*, trans. Martina Stöckl (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012).

modernity.”⁷³ The threat is that Balthasar becomes either postmodern or nostalgic, either falling sway to a flexibility of meaning so endless as to be meaningless or falling sway to a repetitive monotony that is equally as meaningless. Indeed, O’Regan points out that Balthasar has been contradictorily interpreted along both options.⁷⁴ Yet, for O’Regan, Balthasar transcends these poles in “an essential revision of the model of tradition as that which is one and the same everywhere and at all times.”⁷⁵ Balthasar simultaneously sets limits to this variety (in O’Regan’s parlance, variety of *difference* and of *plurality*).⁷⁶ In other words, “Balthasar moves beyond both univocal and equivocal interpretations of tradition.”⁷⁷

More recent work from O’Regan has focused more specifically on Balthasar and memory, ideas to which this article of mine draws quite near. He has published a volume on Balthasar and Hegel in which he claims that Balthasar works to re-remember Christian tradition in the face of Hegel, who deliberately mis-remembers it.⁷⁸ Based in the work we have done so far, remembering again is fundamental to tradition. It would be, for Balthasar, an instrument both of recollection and of subversion (as against Hegel).

Thus, memory is a way of appropriating the present through the past, and it is important that we never lose sight of either the past or the present. The past and the present are each patterned according to the other in remembering, though there is a certain primacy offered to the past. This dual patterning of past and present is the shape of memory’s particular form of mediation. What I want to do now is describe that mediation in some detail, particularly because we have already seen how the past does not come to us as whole cloth and partly because, in this section, we saw how the past is actively arranged and rearranged as we remember it.

⁷³ Cyril O’Regan, “Balthasar: Between Tübingen and Postmodernity” *Modern Theology* 14, no. 3 (1998): 325–53.

⁷⁴ O’Regan, “Balthasar,” 325.

⁷⁵ O’Regan, “Balthasar,” 329–30. O’Regan continues here: “From a Balthasarian point of view, the position advocated by Vincent of Lérins, which throughout the history of Catholicism has had considerable support, is flawed. . . . Excluded is the variety of theological perspective that is constitutive of the depth of the Catholic tradition.”

⁷⁶ O’Regan, “Balthasar,” 330–32.

⁷⁷ O’Regan, “Balthasar,” 332.

⁷⁸ Cyril O’Regan, *Anatomy of Misremembering: Von Balthasar’s Response to Philosophical Modernity*, vol. 1, *Hegel* (New York: Crossroad, 2014).

Tradition as Symphonic Remembering

Because memory involves the active arrangement of more than one element of the past and present together, multiplying the senses of time that we participate in as we remember, a helpful way to grasp memory is through Balthasar's work on theological aesthetics. It is helpful to understand memory under the aspect of beauty, particularly—in the case of sacred tradition—as beauty relates to the glory of God. Essentially, remembering is especially suited to aesthetic concerns.

For Balthasar, the aesthetic is partially described in classical-medieval terms: beauty has integrity, proportion (or harmony), and *claritas* (brightness).⁷⁹ Especially important to this understanding is how beauty assembles parts into a whole: beauty relates proportions to one another in such a way that this whole has integrity, and beauty arrests our attention when it “shines forth” from an object. Balthasar's word for beauty's integral interrelating—for the “whole,” the unity, that we see—is *Gestalt* (“form”). “Form,” as before, does considerable work for Balthasar. He uses the word in both a Thomistic and modern sense. What we need to understand of his modern appropriation is that beauty elicits our response with a certain emotional-psychological intensity. Balthasar says our response to beauty is ecstatic, drawing forth everything in us. So, for Balthasar, *Gestalt* is both intelligibly grasped and—for lack of a better word—emotionally grasped. I mean something like Jonathan Heaps's work in what he calls “body-feeling.”⁸⁰

The apprehension of beauty is an experience and a judgment—that a thing is beautiful—and for Balthasar, this kind of interplay resembles (but is not yet) love.⁸¹ Our response to beauty highlights how human knowing is a unity: more than one operation, distinguishable yet whole.⁸² Beauty elicits the response of the very dynamism of knowing; it is a sort of assembling of self in response to the beautiful.

⁷⁹ Balthasar, *GL I*, 19–20.

⁸⁰ Jonathan Heaps, “Insight is a Body-Feeling: Experiencing Our Understanding,” *The Heythrop Journal* 57, no 3 (2016): 461–72.

⁸¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Logic: A Theological Logical Theory*, vol. 1, *The Truth of the World* [hereafter, *TL I*], trans. Adrian J. Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 77–78. It is similar to when Bernard Lonergan describes the unity of proportionate being as potential, formal, and actual (*Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 3, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. Frederick Crowe and Robert Doran [Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1992], 533).

⁸² Balthasar, *GL I*, 26–27.

It is important to note that, for Balthasar, “sight” is not meant literally, as if the truth were “out there now.” For him, seeing the form carries with it all of the senses I have described above, including the cognitive. If beauty is as he says, then remembering is aesthetic, since it too is the drawing together of many parts into an apprehended unity. Whether we are discussing the memory of the individual or the memory of tradition, we are also discussing an aesthetic “act.”

I call the act of remembering *symphonic* as a way to highlight the specific shape of its aesthetic, and because “symphonic” is Balthasar’s term for genuine pluralism.⁸³ I would be remiss if I did not mention a far more ancient reason to employ music as an analogy for reality. Peter Casarella reminds us of the ancient tradition of the *carmen Dei*, a song or poem about God, which recalls the harmony and order of creation.⁸⁴ Comparing memory—that is, comparing our relationship to temporality—to the “symphonic” recalls this tradition too, resurfacing it for a modern use.

The memory of tradition is also symphonic in many of the ways that Jeremy Begbie speaks of music and theology.⁸⁵ In music, he explains, “there is usually a *multiplicity of temporal continua, operating concurrently.*”⁸⁶ By this, he means that music is internally temporal, not only in meter but also in rhythm (which is not identical to meter) and other factors. Indeed, these temporalities interact with one another, and we interact with them.⁸⁷ For Begbie, this element of music has a number of theologically significant outcomes, the most important of which relate time and eternity, and which relate repetition and the Eucharist.

John Tavener is one of Begbie’s primary interlocutors for considering music—time—and its apparent negation, eternity. Tavener, who is Orthodox, stresses musical minimalism and the careful use of chant.⁸⁸ Above all, silence dominates the sound. Says Begbie,

⁸³ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Truth is Symphonic: Aspects of Christian Pluralism*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987).

⁸⁴ Peter J. Casarella, “*Carmen Dei*: Music and Creation in Three Theologians,” *Theology Today* 62 (2006): 484–500.

⁸⁵ His major work is Jeremy S. Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000). He has also published numerous essays: see Begbie, “Sound Theology: Meaning in Music,” *Christian Century* 124, no. 23 (2007): 20–25; Begbie, *Music, Modernity, and God: Essays in Listening* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁸⁶ Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, 35 (emphasis original).

⁸⁷ Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, 37–51.

⁸⁸ Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, 133–36.

“Frequently the music emerges out of silence and drifts seamlessly back into silence. . . . The music of eternity sounds inaudibly ‘before’ the arrival of earthly sound and ‘after’ its cessation.”⁸⁹ Alongside Tavener, but also in contrast to him, Begbie’s theology concentrates on how the complexities of musical time hint at how the temporality of the Cross and resurrection can “penetrate” into the temporality of the rest of the world without being itself unchanged.⁹⁰ In other words, time can be changed by Christ’s time.⁹¹

It is unclear whether Begbie endorses a mutable God.⁹² Theologies and philosophies of music tend to attribute the mutability of music to divinity or eternity, and while Begbie himself is ambivalent, it is important to stress that, for Balthasar, there can be no question that God is immutable.⁹³ Balthasar’s version of immutability is admittedly idiosyncratic, and it is an open question whether he achieves his theological intentions against Jürgen Moltmann,⁹⁴ a question that has been studied at some length.⁹⁵ For our purposes, it is important to at least mark immutability as a necessary condition for a Balthasarian account of eternity and time, and so for tradition.⁹⁶ How this works out theologically would require an article of a different sort, though we have some sense of how this might look thanks to Blondel. Philippe Dockwiler, with Vincent Holzer, has done the most work in this direction in French scholarship.⁹⁷ For Balthasar, God’s immu-

⁸⁹ Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, 139.

⁹⁰ Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, 149.

⁹¹ Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, 150.

⁹² He does mention Pannenberg (Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, 151).

⁹³ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 5, *The Last Act* [hereafter, *TD V*], trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 66–68.

⁹⁴ Balthasar, *TDV*, 168–80.

⁹⁵ Gerard E. O’Hanlon, *The Immutability of God in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Gilles Emery, “The Immutability of the God of Love and the Problem of Language Concerning the ‘Suffering of God,’” trans. Thomas Joseph White, in *Divine Passibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009).

⁹⁶ There is neither the space nor the impetus to answer the controverted question here. Whether or not Balthasar maintains divine immutability as he wishes is one question; whether he considers it a condition for theological reflection is another.

⁹⁷ Philippe Dockwiler, *Le temps du Christ: cœur et fin de la théologie de l’histoire selon Hans Urs von Balthasar*, with introduction by Vincent Holzer (Paris: Cerf, 2011).

tability protects God's full transcendence and freedom, and this would be necessary to a theological aesthetic of memory.

If Christ is to be involved in history in a unique way as its redeemer, then he also must be "above" it, even while he is nevertheless "within" history. The Christological category that Balthasar concentrates on is Jesus's *uniqueness* as the Incarnate Word. This uniqueness allows Jesus to bear a universal mission and yet to transcend the world he saves. In *A Theology of History*, Balthasar argues that, in Christ, all the "abstract laws" of human nature are "integrated and subordinated within his Christological uniqueness, and formed and governed by it."⁹⁸ Jesus, as God, transcends the world, and thus is able to integrate its diversities without violating their relative integrity. At the same time:

In Jesus Christ, the Logos is no longer the realm of ideas, values and laws which governs and gives meaning to history, but is himself history. In the life of Christ the factual and the normative coincide not only *in fact* but *necessarily*, because the fact is both the manifestation of God and the divine-human pattern of true humanity in God's eyes.⁹⁹

Balthasar straddles the Incarnation's real appropriation of history and its transcendence thereof, binding history and theory together in Christ's life. The implication is, for Balthasar, primarily soteriological. It is not just that fact and theory can be reconciled in the Incarnate Word; it is also that faith comes to us *both* from above *and* through history. Balthasar refers to this as the "vertical" and the "horizontal." The proof of Jesus's divinity is "vertical" because: "He, his word and his existence must suffice to make the voice of his Father audible. . . . [But the leap of understanding] must equally be patient of a horizontal, progressive interpretation; it is the logical conclusion of a long history."¹⁰⁰

We can see further reflections on the coincidence of history and transcendence in the Incarnation in the ways that Balthasar links together his "aesthetics" and "dramatics" under the auspices of "form." Balthasar writes at the beginning of his theological dramatics

⁹⁸ Balthasar, *Theology of History*, 18.

⁹⁹ Balthasar, *Theology of History*, 24. See also 22: "As *he who is unique*, he can be simultaneously the Lord of all creaturely norms in the sphere of essential being and in that of history."

¹⁰⁰ Balthasar, *Theology of History*, 133.

properly speaking: “The beautiful presents a challenge to all that is mean and common. It does not stand turned in on itself, but rather turned outward, facing all who can grasp it.”¹⁰¹ The challenge of beauty immediately implies the realm of ethics, of action; it demands a response to the Good. “Where a thing of beauty is really and radically beheld, freedom too is radically opened up, and decision can take place.”¹⁰² This means, in Balthasar’s parlance, that the revelation of the beautiful form of Christ draws us into the *dramatic*.¹⁰³ It draws us into the mysteries of freedom and decision, of “action,” both on the part of God and on the part of human beings. If history is human action in Blondel’s sense, then Balthasar’s sketch of the analogous relationship between beauty and drama is a careful construal of the relationship between *form* and *history*. In other words, the aesthetic—*Gestalt*, splendor, symphony—plays a vital role in Balthasar’s analysis of (historical) action. “Great music,” Balthasar writes elsewhere, “is always dramatic.”¹⁰⁴

This is but a sketch of theological themes in music, time, and their relationships to eternity. What we can see already, thanks to Begbie and Balthasar, is that music includes both difference and sameness. We can see that its chronological progression—in music and outside of music—does not close it off from what transcends it. These are themes that we have struggled to understand throughout this article, and music allows us to see how they are fundamentally different aspects of a single reality. In the “memory” of tradition, we have an analogous dynamic of plural-yet-singular time, of the particular opened out to eternity. Remembering is, in that way, symphonic. In music, and analogously in time, we have a present tense that both recollects the past and drives toward the future: the notes are only heard now, and yet heard in succession together, and both the meter and musical phrases draw us into anticipating what arrives next. Memory is always a remembering of the past in the present, and yet not with mere nostalgia. Or we might say that nostalgia is an incomplete version of remembering. A note without temporal rela-

¹⁰¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: A Theological Dramatics*, vol. 2, *The Dramatis Personae: Man in God* [hereafter, *TD II*], trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 24.

¹⁰² Balthasar, *TD II*, 31.

¹⁰³ “This is what the ‘rapt’ man has tasted, this is the ‘book’ he has devoured—and its taste stays on his tongue. He must proclaim this Logos. In some shape or form, mission will be part of drama” (Balthasar, *TD II*, 31).

¹⁰⁴ Balthasar, *Truth is Symphonic*, 15.

tion to other notes. Instead, we recall the past in order to understand the present, even the re-minding of the present, and it is through the patterns of recollected experience that we make decisions in the present for the future. In Balthasarian language, Christ is not identical with (symphonic) tradition, but he is its form.

Conclusion

To recall Borges's man who can remember everything, mentioned at the very beginning of this article, we can understand better now why he is monstrous. Locked in every detail of his temporal existence, the world for him lacks every symbolic, mediatory possibility. He has every memory, and so he may as well have no memory at all. It is much more the case that human beings remember in patterned, mediatory capacities. We remember with more than one motive and more than one temporal concern, linking together the past and the present indissolubly with an eye for the future. In this context, to forget is not loss so much as it is a sign of memory's patterning, a sign of its orientation to truths that transcend it. In the case of sacred tradition, Joseph Mueller suggests that forgetting is a principle of continuity.¹⁰⁵ Rather than emphasizing forgetting, I have emphasized how the memory of tradition is symphonic, patterned, and ordered toward both history and truth. For tradition—and, ultimately, for human knowing—remembering's unity does not come from itself. To be more precise, human knowing and acting presupposes a perfect, transcendent God in order to be itself, as Blondel shows us. Newman reminds us that history makes ideas subject to development and that this does not have to mean change. Finally, Balthasar shows us how tradition's mediation of history and truth is radically without a symphonic unity unless it has God as its final object. Balthasar's aesthetics and dramatics speak to one another: the form of Christ is the form of tradition, and not otherwise. We are called to "see" Christ, and he is the fullest measure of tradition's authenticity. N-V

¹⁰⁵ Joseph G. Mueller, "Forgetting as a Principle of Continuity in Tradition," *Theological Studies* 70, no. 4 (2009): 751–81.

St. Thomas Aquinas's Treatise on Temperance and Aristotle

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FOR SOME DECADES NOW, one can witness a renewed interest in the non-Aristotelian sources of the thought of St. Thomas, and in particular in his debt to the Fathers of the Church and neo-Platonist sources.¹ Fully acknowledging the importance of these studies and St. Thomas's real indebtedness to these sources, the editors of a recent volume underscore—and rightfully so—that, “for this reason, Aquinas's theological use of Aristotle requires renewed attention, lest the study of Aquinas's theology become one-sided.”² It is in this same spirit that I will survey and analyze, after a brief introduction into temperance in the Greco-Roman world, the use of Aristotle in St. Thomas's treatise on temperance in the *secunda secundae* of his *Summa theologiae* [ST]. What a close reading of these questions and the use of Aristotle's arguments therein, and in particular from his *Nicomachean Ethics* [EN], will show, I hope, is the extent to which Aristotle is Aquinas's principal philosophical interlocutor.

¹ I have traced these and other sources extensively in my *Thomas d'Aquin et ses prédécesseurs* (Paris: Les Presses universitaires de l'IPC, 2015). An English edition will be published shortly by the Catholic University of America Press. The current article is a considerably revised version of “The Presence of Aristotle in St. Thomas Aquinas's Treatise on Temperance,” *Espíritu* 65 (2016): 327–48.

² *Aristotle in Aquinas's Theology*, ed. Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), vi–vii.

Temperance in Ancient Greece and Rome

In ancient Greece, the words *sōphrōn* (σώφρων) and *sōphrosynē* (σωφροσύνη) signified reservation and restraint in one's conduct and knowing one's place. To behave oneself in a temperate way is the opposite of being passionate.³ In particular, the young should be trained to adopt this attitude of self-restraint. In the *Charmides* of Plato, *sōphrosynē* is the beginning of spiritual health, and in the *Republic*, Plato formulates his doctrine of the four cardinal virtues as corresponding respectively to the mind and the three appetitive parts of the soul⁴.

Aristotle treats temperance extensively in *EN* 3.10 as a virtue that has its seat in the irrational part of the soul and makes us attain the mean with regard to bodily pleasures. However, he excludes from this need of restraining our desires the delight we find in objects of vision and of hearing, and part also of the delight in odor. Natural appetites may go wrong in the direction of excess, which is a sort of self-indulgence. Here, the virtue of temperance should intervene. A temperate person moderates his desires. Temperance is a disposition of the appetitive part of the soul that makes it obey reason. If one possesses this virtue, his desires will be moderate and there will be no need to repress them. Reaching "the mean" is to desire in the right degree, the right time, the right manner, and so on.⁵ Aristotle endorses the view that some pleasures are good while others are bad.⁶ He confirms, therefore, the commonsense view of moderation and a generally accepted distinction between the different kinds of pleasure.

The position of Epicurus on pleasure must be understood as a recommendation to seek moderate pleasures of taste, sex, vision, and hearing. He wrote about himself the following words: "I know not how to conceive the good, apart from these pleasures of taste, sexual pleasures, the pleasures of sound and the pleasures of beautiful form."⁷ But, as J. M. Rist observes, Epicurus writes elsewhere that he

³ Plato, *Gorgias* 478d; Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 12.160e. See the classical study by Helen F. North, *Sōphrosynē: Self-knowledge and Self-restraint in Greek Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966).

⁴ *Republic* 427e–34c. This theory of the four main virtues may not be Plato's invention; see Helen F. North, "Pindar, Isthmian, 8, 24–28," *The American Journal of Philology* 69 (1948): 304–8.

⁵ See James J. Walsh, *Aristotle's Conception of Moral Weakness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 91.

⁶ See William F. R. Hardie, *Aristotle's Ethical Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 294–300.

⁷ Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 10.6, trans. R. D. Hicks, Loeb Classical Library (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), 2:535.

is not talking so much about the sensual pleasures as about freedom from bodily pain and mental affliction: sober reasoning brings us the happy life.⁸ Epicureanism became a missionary doctrine that spread through the Roman Empire in spite of the strong opposition it met from the Academy, the Peripatetics, and Stoicism, in particular from Chrysippus.⁹ The beginning of its decline was brought about by its denial of afterlife.¹⁰

As to the ethical doctrine of the Stoa, the four main moral virtues were strongly confirmed by Chrysippus: he considered them expressions of one and the same reason¹¹ that unfolds itself into four directions, the four cardinal virtues. With regard to choosing desirable things, this central reason and activity of the *hêgemonikon*¹² becomes *sôphrosynê*, self-control, which brings all our movements and impulses into conformity with reason. It is the expression of the harmony of the soul. For the Stoics, the connection between the virtues is so strong that one wonders whether it is still possible to speak of *different* virtues. According to the Stoics, the four main virtues are accompanied and assisted by subordinate virtues.¹³ Cicero speaks of “parts” of the main virtues and translates the Greek term *sôphrosynê* by the Latin *modestia et temperantia*.¹⁴

The Stoics' ethical theory of the four main virtues was taken over by St. Ambrose, who coined the expression the “cardinal virtues.”¹⁵ The virtues are the highest moral good,¹⁶ and as did the Stoics, Ambrose accepted nature as a norm of moral behavior. Reason should reign over the passions. While Ambrose drew on the Stoics by way of his heavily drawing on Cicero, half a century later, St. August-

⁸ John M. Rist, *Epicurus: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 100.

⁹ Norman W. DeWitt, *Epicurus and His Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota 1954), 328–33.

¹⁰ See Franz Cumont, *Lux perpetua* (Paris : P. Geuthner 1949), 138.

¹¹ One should notice that, while Cleanthes stressed the *tonos* (force) of the soul, other Stoics extolled reason.

¹² The *hêgemonikon* is the seat of sensation, assent, thought, and reason.

¹³ See Stobaeus, *Eclogae* 2.60.9. The text uses the word *υποτεταγμένα* (subordinated) to describe their general character. Four are mentioned: orderly behavior, orderliness, modesty, self-control.

¹⁴ Cicero, *De officiis* 1.15. In the *Tusculanae disputationes*, he uses also *moderatio*.

¹⁵ See St. Ambrose, *De excessu fratris* 1.57. See also István Bejczy, *The Cardinal Virtues in the Middle Ages: a Study in Moral Thought from the Fourth to the Fourteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 12–18.

¹⁶ St. Ambrose, *De officiis ministrorum* 2.18.

tine records that the Stoics and their teachings are hardly mentioned any more in the schools of rhetoric.¹⁷ For Augustine, the four cardinal virtues are instances of the same love for God,¹⁸ and he defines temperance as the *habitus* that makes us refrain from our desires for those things for which *turpiter adpetuntur* (it is shameful).¹⁹

Another important authority repeatedly quoted in Aquinas's questions on temperance is Pope Gregory the Great. Gregory advises his readers about the pastoral aspects of such questions as fasting, and in answer as to whether sins of intemperance are the most serious sins, Thomas quotes him as saying: "Although their guilt is less, their infamy is greater."²⁰ Thomas considers him a valuable source for the study of gluttony and its effect, and for wrath, humility, and pride.

Temperance in the *Summa theologiae*

Temperance and its Parts

The treatise on temperance in *ST* II-II is divided as follows: temperance as such (q. 141); vices opposed to temperance (q. 142); does temperance have parts? (q. 143); the study of these parts and the contrary vices (qq. 144–69).

With regard to the question of the virtues associated with temperance and occasionally enumerated in Stoic literature, Aquinas introduces greater clarity by dividing them into three groups : (1) the *integral* parts of temperance are the feelings of shame, which makes us avoid impudent behavior, and appropriateness (qq. 144 and 145); (2) next are the so-called *subjective* parts, the species of temperance, such as being moderate in the use of food and beverages and restraint in sexual behavior (qq.146–56) ; finally, (3) Thomas also speaks of *potential* parts of temperance, meaning those virtues that introduce moderation, such as humility, meekness, mildness, modesty , simplicity, and contentment, in adjacent domains (qq. 157–62).

¹⁷ St. Augustine, Epistle 118, no. 21.

¹⁸ St. Augustine, *De moribus ecclesiae* 1.25.

¹⁹ Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.27; Augustine, *De diuersis quaestionibus* 31.1: "Temperantia est rationis in libidinem atque alios non rectos impetus animi firma et moderata dominatio." Its parts are *continentia*, *clementia*, *modestia*, and *pudor*.

²⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [*ST*] II-II, q. 142, a. 4, ad 1, citing Gregory's *Moralia* 1.33.12 (PL, 76: 688). All translations from *ST* are my own and based upon the Latin text as it can be found in the Busa/Alarcon edition at www.corpusthomicum.org.

The Virtue of Temperance

The first issue to be examined in question 141 is that of whether temperance is a virtue. To remind his readers that the *Summa theologiae* is a theological treatise and that profane authors, as such, have no authority in theology, the *sed contra* of article 1 quotes St. Augustine, not Aristotle, to confirm that temperance is a virtue.²¹ Significantly, Aristotle is present right at the beginning, when a *philosophical* difficulty is mentioned in objection 1: a virtue cannot be opposed to our natural inclinations, on the contrary, as Aristotle writes (*EN* 2.1), these inclinations are a natural aptitude to the virtues. This position will accompany us all through the treatise. Thomas also lets Aristotle say that our nature moves us to seek pleasure while temperance withholds us from doing so.²² This difficulty obliges us to study our different inclinations and to make a distinction between man as a rational being and man's animal functions. Temperance, Thomas writes, does not withhold us from those pleasures that are conformed to the demands of the rational part of our being, to our human nature.

In the following articles of *ST* II-II, q. 141, Aristotle intervenes time and again to lay down the philosophical foundation of what we are arguing about. His presence is impressive. He confirms in the *sed contra* of article 2 that temperance is a *special* virtue, and so he lays the foundation for the entire treatise, inviting the reader to consider more precisely its object.

Our languages, however, allow us to use the term "temperance" also for discreet and modest behavior, as is confirmed by a quotation from *EN*²³ in the *sed contra* of article 4. Aristotle tells us that, in the proper sense of the word, "temperance" concerns the desires and

²¹ One should keep in mind the role of the *sed contra* in the *ST*, which is to provide the basis for the response and doctrinal determination, and as such, it contains an authority (Holy Scripture, Tradition, the Fathers, the custom of the Church, and so on) in theology. See Leo Elders, "Structure et fonction de l'argument *Sed contra* dans la Somme théologique," *Divus Thomas* 80 (1977): 245–60. When, therefore, Aristotle is used in a *sed contra*, one should assign a particular philosophical and argumentative weight to that argument of the *sed contra*.

²² *Nicomachean Ethics* [*EN*] 1.1.1103a25 and 1.3.1104b5.

²³ *EN* 4.1123b5: "He who is worthy of little and thinks himself worthy of little is temperate." Unless stated as being quoted in another work such as *ST*, English translations of Aristotle come from *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

pleasures of the sense of touch. He reminds us that the word may also be used to express moderation in our desire of external things such as wealth or honors and that this virtue makes us want the latter only in so far as is fitting for us. Thomas himself explains why this virtue has as its object the pleasures of the sense of touch. He uses a comparison with the virtue of courage or force, which gives us the right attitude with regard to the greatest evils and dangers threatening us. In a similar way, temperance does so with regard to the most intense pleasures consecutive on our most natural operations, such as eating, drinking, and sexual intercourse. The pleasures consecutive on natural operations are the stronger the more important these activities are for the human individual or for the human race as such. The enjoyment in hearing good music or seeing beautiful things need not be restrained.

This takes us to the contents of article 5 of question 141, concerning the pleasures we experience through the sense of taste. It would seem that these pleasures, such as those of gluttony, also come in under the object of temperance and should be restrained by it, as Aristotle suggests in two texts quoted in the second and third objections, for the sense of taste is the sense concerned with food. But, in the answer to the first difficulty, Aristotle confirms that touch is the sense that is concerned in the first place with nutrition, since it registers warm and cold, humid and dry, essential for us when eating and drinking. St. Thomas answers that the virtue of temperance has as its primary object the pleasure consequent on our main natural activities ordained to the conservation of the individual and the species, but also that it secondarily has as its object contrivances that make these natural activities more pleasant, and so it also exercises control of the sense of taste.

Article 6 treats the rule or the right measure of temperance. This is an important theme of Christian moral thought, and so Augustine is invited to indicate the essentials of this virtue in the *sed contra*. Yet, in his response to the second objection, Thomas refers to Aristotle's distinction between "necessary as a condition without which one cannot live" and "necessary as that without which we cannot reach a good state of things."²⁴ So he reminds us that there are degrees in what is necessary for human life. As a matter of fact, temperance is concerned not only with the necessities of life but also with things helpful for our health or that give us a good condition. It helps us

²⁴ *Metaphysics* 5.5.1015a20.

to seek to acquire these things in the way we should.²⁵ Aristotle says the same in another quotation from *EN* 3.11: the temperate man also desires other pleasant things if they are no hindrance to the middle position he has chosen with regard to the above mentioned basic pleasures; he also takes into consideration that what he strives for are noble things and not beyond his means.²⁶ In short, Aristotle is quoted in support four times even in an article that considers what one would qualify as a theme of Christian ethics.

In article 7, St. Gregory the Great is quoted as the authority who confirms that temperance is a *cardinal* virtue,²⁷ and this takes us to the next point. Considering the importance this virtue has in Christian spiritual literature, one might wonder whether it is perhaps the most important of the moral virtues. St. Ambrose appears to confirm this in the first objection raised in article 8. Aristotle, however, asserts that those virtues that are also advantageous to other persons are to be revered most: "If a virtue is a faculty which confers benefits to others, the greatest virtues are necessarily those which are most useful to others."²⁸ In his response, Thomas confirms this by another quotation from the *Ethics*: "The good of the many is greater and more noble than that of a single citizen."²⁹

The Vices Contrary to Temperance

In *EN*, after having defined the object of temperance, Aristotle proceeds by indicating its characteristics and its opposite extremes, intemperance and insensibility. Aquinas treats these contrary vices in question 142 in four articles. Aristotle is the undisputed authority, providing the *sed contra* arguments, which are each time the basis and starting point for the subsequent doctrinal development in the response. The first article deals with insensibility. One might doubt as to whether this disposition is really sinful: abstaining from all pleasures of the sense of touch seems to facilitate the activity of reason. Even Aristotle himself writes that, if we put aside the pleasures, we are less likely to commit sinful acts.³⁰ Nevertheless, he considers insensibility a vice.³¹ Thomas explains that totally abstaining from all pleasures of the

²⁵ *EN* 3.12.1119b17.

²⁶ *EN* 3.11.1119a17–20.

²⁷ This qualification goes back to St. Ambrose.

²⁸ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.9.1366b4.

²⁹ *EN* 1.2.1094b7.

³⁰ *EN* 2.9.1109b11.

³¹ *EN* 2.7.1107b8 and 3.11.1195a5.

senses is wrong and that we should allow them in the measure they are necessary for preserving our health and for the survival of human kind. At this point, Aquinas introduces an important qualifying remark introduced, as it is so often, by *sciendum tamen*. Sometimes it is not only praiseworthy but also necessary to abstain from these pleasures that are otherwise necessary for a man's well-being or the preservation of the species. Some refrain from sensible pleasures in order to attain "certain engagements" (*propter alicuius officii executionem*), as do athletes. Others, like penitents, abstain from pleasures as a kind of "spiritual diet," and yet others sacrifice their carnal desires for the sake of "contemplation and divine things." Precisely because the things are done for the sake of a higher end, these actions are in accord with right reason and should therefore not be viewed as pertaining to the vice of insensibility. This more personal remark by Thomas is most likely inspired by opinions of certain members of the *Artes* Faculty, opinions that would become the topic of the condemnations of 1277.³²

In article 2, the question is raised of whether intemperance is just a childish behavior, as Aristotle seems to say in the *EN* 3.12, quoted in the *sed contra*. But, in a human and Christian perspective, it is much more than that, as St. Jerome and St. Paul indicate in the first and third objection. In fact, Aristotle does not say exactly that it is a childish fault: his remark just means that the Greek term for intemperate, ἀκόλαστος, is also used to characterize the behavior of spoiled children. Thomas avails himself of this remark to analyze further what intemperance precisely is. Firstly, just as children sometimes do something blotted or unpolished, the concupiscent person also does. Well-polished and decent behavior agrees with reason and man's dignity.³³ Passion does not follow reason, as Aristotle says,³⁴ so it is disgraceful. Secondly, intemperate behavior not only is unchastened but also shows some similarity with the result of the behavior of spoiled children: they become self-willed and conceited. In a similar way, if the intemperate person does not restrain his desires, these will become an irresistible incitation to bad conduct. A third similarity may be seen in the remedy to be applied: as spoiled children must learn by discipline, the intemperate must reduce his desires to decent proportions by resisting them, as Aristotle says in a text quoted by

³² See Roland Hissette, *Enquête sur les 219 articles condamnés à Paris le 7 mars 1277* (Louvain, BE : Publications Universitaires, 1977), 297–300.

³³ By way of confirmation, Thomas quotes Cicero, *De officiis* 1.27.

³⁴ *EN* 7.6.1149b1: "ἡ δ' ἐπιθυμία [οὐκ ἀκολουθεῖ τῷ λόγῳ]."

Aquinas: “As the child should follow the directives of his tutor, so ought the concupiscible to accord with reason.”³⁵ If it is objected that concupiscence is quite natural as far as eating and drinking and sexual intercourse are concerned, Thomas comments that, in respect of natural desires, our nature demands only what is necessary for the preservation of the individual and the species, such that excess lies in quantitative excess. But people sometimes use special contrivances to increase artificially these pleasures. In such cases, Aristotle speaks of an excess that is not conformed to right reason in this regard.³⁶

At the other extreme from intemperance, there is the vice of cowardice, examined in article 3. The Latin text has *timiditas*, but “cowardice” seems a better translation than “timidity.” Cowardice is the opposite of the virtue of courage, which as a virtue, ranks higher than temperance. Is cowardice worse than intemperance? Aristotle seems to say so in the second difficulty put forward by Thomas: “If a person is overcome by violent and excessive pleasures, . . . we do not admire him, but his conduct is somewhat understandable.”³⁷ It is, indeed, more difficult to combat pleasure than anger, says Thomas, again quoting Aristotle.³⁸ But against this condoning evaluation of intemperance pleads the fact, stressed by Aristotle in the *sed contra*, that intemperance is more voluntary than cowardice. The question is important because, in moral philosophy and theology, one must determine more precisely what intemperance actually is. So, in his response, Thomas explains that, considered from what these two vices are about, a coward flees from mortal danger to secure something urgent and important—to stay alive—whereas an intemperate person is seeking excessive pleasure, which has no real urgency.

If one considers cowardice from the side of the acting person, similar conclusions can be drawn. (1) The more a person has control over himself, the more serious his sin will be. Demented persons are not accountable for what they do or fail to do. Fear, such as the fear of death, and very serious grief can stupefy the human mind, something pleasure does not do. (2) The more voluntary a sin is, the more serious it becomes. Intemperance has more of voluntariness than does cowardice. The reason is that what one does out of fear has its ground in something threatening outside, such that it is mixed-voluntary.

³⁵ EN 3.12.1119b14.

³⁶ EN 3.11.1118b15.

³⁷ EN 7.7.1150b5.

³⁸ EN 2.3.1105a7.

Here again, Thomas refers to Aristotle.³⁹ What one does out of pleasure is simply voluntary. In general, no one wants to be intemperate, but in a concrete situation, people let themselves be overcome by the pleasures attached to certain acts. Therefore, in order to avoid intemperance, one should not linger when considering pleasurable objects. Finally, (3) it is easier to use remedies against intemperance than against cowardice, as has become clear. Aristotle provides the basic facts of what is examined in this third article, but Aquinas adds important developments from the point of view of moral theology and practice.

Article 4 examines whether the sin of intemperance is most detestable. Even in this question Aristotle provides helpful insights. Sins of intemperance are committed so frequently that they do not seem to be among the most odious transgressions. Moreover, this vice is concerned with pleasures resulting from human actions. But there are such deviations as bestiality, ripping open pregnant women and devouring their babies, cannibalism and other brutish acts.⁴⁰ Yet, as Aristotle says in the *sed contra*, among the vices, intemperance appears rightly to be execrable.⁴¹ This is explained by Thomas in the response: intemperance is most detestable because it is very much against man's dignity. Furthermore, intemperance does away with the beauty and decorum that are characteristic of a life in the light of reason.

The Parts of Temperance in General

Question 143 of *ST II-II* is an introduction to the study of those virtues that are parts of temperance, species of temperance, or dispositions used by it. Some are referred to in Holy Scripture, while Cicero mentions continence, clemency, and modesty. Macrobius, in his commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, and Pseudo-Andronicus even list seven of them.⁴² Using these divisions, Thomas presents a survey of these associated or auxiliary virtues by distinguishing integral, subjective, and potential parts of temperance. In the first objection, Aristotle reminds us that continence, considered by some a part of temperance, is not a

³⁹ *EN* 3.1. The example of the mixed voluntary act is that of throwing overboard valuable cargo in a storm.

⁴⁰ Quoted from *EN* 7.5.1148b20–35.

⁴¹ *EN* 3.10.1118b2: "Self-indulgence is rightly detestable because it is in us not in so far as we are men, but as animals."

⁴² Pseudo-Andronicus, *De passionibus*, in *Pseudo-Andronicus de Rhodis Περὶ Παθῶν, édition critique du texte grec et de la traduction latine médiévale*, ed. A. Glibert-Thirry (Leiden: Brill, 1977).

virtue: if one has to restrain oneself to behave temperately, one does not yet have this virtue. Thomas overcomes the difficulty by considering continence an imperfect state of temperance. Its object, however, is the same as that of the virtue itself.

The Integral Parts of Temperance

Passing now to the study of the parts of temperance separately, *verecundia* and *honestas* are examined in the next two questions (144 and 145) as integral parts of temperance. These terms are difficult to translate. *Verecundia* is the equivalent of feeling ashamed of one's intemperate behavior. Aristotle considers it a passion, rather than a virtue, but as virtues do, it helps us keep the mean between being shamed excessively and the absence of any feeling of shame.⁴³ In the second objection, Thomas argues that shame is not a part of any other virtue, since it is a sort of fear, as a text of Aristotle confirms. Yet it is a good and praiseworthy disposition, and therefore it must be a virtue in its own right. This applies the more so as virtues are generated from successive good acts.⁴⁴ Somewhat surprisingly, the *sed contra* of question 144 quotes Aristotle to the effect that shame is not a virtue, as one would nevertheless conclude from what was already explained. Thomas brings these different statements into harmony to show to what extent *verecundia* falls short of the definition of a virtue. Shame is a certain fear of something that is reproachable and detestable, but one who is in possession of temperance in its perfect state is not afraid of doing something condemnable.

Given the importance attached to shame in philosophical literature, Thomas further determines its character. Aristotle calls it the "fear of dishonor."⁴⁵ Some quotes from Aristotle help Thomas to determine shame as the fear of committing shameful acts (q. 144, a. 2). One is afraid of being blamed and exposed because of these acts. A next question is whether one fears most to be blamed by relatives and friends (q. 144, a. 3). Aristotle writes that people feel shame before those who are admired by them or who admire them.⁴⁶ A man

⁴³ *EN* 2.14.1108a32.

⁴⁴ In arguing these points, Thomas constantly refers to *EN* 2.1.1103b21 and 1.12.1101b15.

⁴⁵ *EN* 4.9.1128b11.

⁴⁶ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 2.6.1384b30. In this article, chapter 6 of the second book of the *Rhetoric* provides Thomas with the arguments needed to elaborate the theme of the feeling of shame.

does not reproach others with the shameful things he does himself. Aristotle also speaks of slanderers and people who spend their time in looking for their neighbors' faults, those of whom people are afraid more than they are of their relatives. But Aristotle also writes that people are likely to feel more ashamed of intemperate behavior before those who are likely to be always with them.

A final question is discussed in article 4: does a good person feel ashamed? *Rhetoric* 2.6.1384b17 tells us that people may also be afraid of indications of shameful things. But elsewhere, we read that the good man (*σπουδαῖος*) will never voluntarily do bad actions, and so he will feel no shame. Yet, if there was in them something blameworthy, they would feel ashamed. The virtuous person avoids not only what is really wrong but also what is considered wrong by common opinion.⁴⁷

A further integral part of temperance is respectability, treated in question 145. But is it really a virtue? Being respected comes from the outside, whereas a virtue consists in an inner attitude and choice. Moreover, Aristotle also reminds us that we do not seek a virtue for itself, but in order to reach happiness.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, and perhaps in view of the massive importance given to honors by Cicero and other authors, Thomas argues that honor is bestowed on one because of excellence, but excellence is above all measured by virtue, which, as Aristotle says, is the disposition of one who is perfect.⁴⁹ In this way, virtue and honor come down to the same thing. Although it is true that virtue is practiced because of the happiness it brings, as Aristotle says,⁵⁰ Thomas observes that respectability also has some goodness of itself and, so, can be sought.⁵¹ Some persons are honored because of their wealth, power, or nobility, but a quote from Aristotle confirms that, properly speaking, only the good man should be honored.⁵² The respectable is sought because of itself and is pleasurable.⁵³ But not all pleasurable things are respectable. The last article of question 145 inquires whether respectability must be considered a part of temperance. Is the respectable the person who is worthy of honor? Now

⁴⁷ *EN* 4.9.1128b21.

⁴⁸ *EN* 8.13.1163a22; 1.9.1099b16.

⁴⁹ Aristotle, *Physics* 7.3.246a13.

⁵⁰ *EN* 1.9.1099b16.

⁵¹ *EN* 1.7.1096a30.

⁵² *EN* 4.3.1124a24.

⁵³ As Aristotle says in *EN* 1.8.1099a7.

Aristotle writes that righteous and strong persons are respected most.⁵⁴ Thomas answers that, considering the good attained by justice and courage, these virtues deserve to be honored more, but temperance deserves to be honored because it makes us repress execrable vices.

The Subjective Parts of Temperance

The next questions, 146–62, deal with the virtues considered parts of temperance and the vices contrary to them: abstinence and fasting and the opposite vice of gluttony, followed by sobriety and drunkenness. The presence of Aristotle is minimal in these questions. He is quoted to remind us that the mean is characteristic of all the virtues.⁵⁵ And this mean is determined not according to quantity, but by reason.⁵⁶ A second quotation recalls Aristotle's saying that what is much for one person is little for a second.⁵⁷ To underpin that gluttony has some attraction, Thomas writes that it satisfies an aspect of happiness in that it gives some pleasure, as Aristotle says.⁵⁸ Inordinate passions are accompanied by pleasure or pain: misplaced gaiety is related to gluttony.⁵⁹

Turning now to the vice of drunkenness in question 150, the question arises whether it is sinful. One might object that it is not because there is no sin contrary to it, as virtues are in the middle between two extremes. Thomas explains this absence by quoting Aristotle: "People who fall short with regard to pleasures, by seeking them less than they should, are hardly found, for such insensitivity is not human."⁶⁰ A further interesting question on which Aristotle is consulted is whether drunkenness excuses from sin. Aristotle mentions that, in Athens, penalties were doubled for misbehavior of drunkards, since authorities were convinced that a man has the power of not getting drunk. The activity of reason is obstructed by drunkenness.⁶¹ Nevertheless Thomas quotes the sequel of a text of the *Politics* 2.9 that pleads for some leniency.

In the examination of chastity in question 151, Aristotle is quoted to remind us that a virtue is a willed and chosen disposition, while chastity (in the original meaning of the Latin term) seems to be the

⁵⁴ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.3.1105a1.

⁵⁵ *EN* 2.6.1106b36.

⁵⁶ *ST* II-II, q. 147, a. 1, ad 2, referring to *EN* 2.6.1107a1.

⁵⁷ *ST* II-II, q. 147, a. 7, obj. 3, referring to *EN* 2.6.1106a36.

⁵⁸ *ST* II-II, q. 148, a. 5, corp., referring to *EN* 1.8.1099a7 and 1.10.1177a22.

⁵⁹ *ST* II-II, q. 148, a. 6, corp., referring to *EN* 2.5.1105b23.

⁶⁰ *EN* 3.11.1119a3.

⁶¹ *EN* 3.5.1113b31; 3.7.1147a11; Aristotle, *Politics* 2.9.1274b20.

intactness of the body.⁶² But, finding support in another text of Aristotle, Thomas underlines the spiritual aspect of chastity: it restrains concupiscence.⁶³ When he examines whether chastity is a special virtue, he refers us again to a statement of Aristotle: the types of pleasure correspond to the different actions that one performs.⁶⁴ The objects of touch are different in the case of food and in sexual intercourse.⁶⁵ The last article of this question is about pudicity. Aristotle confirms that any form of intemperance is detestable.⁶⁶

The presence of quotations from Aristotle is impressive in article 2 of question 152, as to whether virginity is a licit form of temperance. The discussion of virginity, generated by what was thought to be Aristotle's position on temperance and insensibility, was heavily discussed in the early commentaries on Aristotle's *Ethics*.⁶⁷ The famous 1277 condemnation of 219 theses by the bishop of Paris, Etienne Tempier, precisely contains the thesis (no. 169) that "perfect abstinence from the act of flesh corrupts virtue and the species."⁶⁸ Aristotle himself seems to pose a difficulty insofar as he says, in *EN* 2.1.1104a22, that someone who refrains from all pleasures is insensible. Aquinas responds by first recalling that Aristotle also holds that the goods of the mind are more important than those of the active life and of the body.⁶⁹ Moreover, Aristotle holds that the criterion for determining the mean of a virtue is not quantity, but conformity to right reason.⁷⁰ In other words, a virtue can be quantitatively in excess and, yet, a mean with respect to right reason. Aquinas refers to magnanimity, of which Aristotle writes that, quantitatively, this virtue goes to the extreme but, according to right reason, it is a mean.⁷¹ Similarly, virginity goes to the extreme regarding sexual pleasure but it is nonetheless a mean according to right reason, enabling the contemplation of the truth. Finally, virginity does not abstain from all pleasures, but

⁶² *EN* 3.6.1106b36.

⁶³ *EN* 3.12.1119a33.

⁶⁴ *EN* 10.4.1174b23–25.

⁶⁵ *EN* 10.10.1118a29.

⁶⁶ *EN* 3.12.1119a15.

⁶⁷ See René-Antoine Gauthier, "Trois commentaires 'averroïstes' sur l'Éthique à Nicomaque," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale Et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 16 (1947–1948): 298.

⁶⁸ See Hissette, *Enquête*, 299–300.

⁶⁹ *EN* 2.2.1104a22; 1.8.1098b12; 10.7.1177a12.

⁷⁰ *EN* 2.6.1107a1.

⁷¹ *EN* 4.3.1123b31.

from those regarding sexual intercourse, and she does so, as has been said, according to right reason. Aquinas's response to this debated question is an excellent example of his mastery of Aristotle's texts, which enables him to confront philosophically objections to the specifically Christian virtue of virginity.

Turning now to the vice of libidinousness in question 153, a first observation to be made is that, although one cannot think of anything while absorbed in sexual intercourse, as Aristotle says, this does not render it illicit.⁷² Aristotle is absent in the following articles on lewdness except for a final remark: intemperance corrupts prudence.⁷³ He also is quoted to remind us that noble thoughts while one is awake may make dreams cleaner while one is sleeping.⁷⁴ In the twelve-article-long question 154, on the different species of lasciviousness, there is one more quotation from the *Nicomachean Ethics*: should bestiality as a vice against human nature nevertheless be regarded a species of *luxuria*? Thomas esteems that it must be reduced to the same genus.

Continence and Incontinence

Question 155 deals with continence, a disposition that Aristotle does not consider a virtue.⁷⁵ The earliest Latin commentators on the *Nicomachean Ethics* at the *Artes* Faculty in Paris in the last quarter of the thirteenth century strictly followed Aristotle on this point.⁷⁶ Unsurprisingly then, the 1277 condemnation contains precisely the sentence that "continence is not essentially a virtue" (*non est essentialiter virtus*).⁷⁷ It is more likely that Thomas had Albert the Great's commentary in mind, the *Super ethica*, the first complete Latin commentary of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, written 1250–1252, at a time when Thomas was Albert's assistant in Cologne. For, it is in this commentary on *EN* 7.1 that Albert inquires into the "essence of virtue" (*circa essentiam virtutis*) and claims that continence is not a virtue in the proper sense of the word.⁷⁸ Thomas proceeds very carefully. He recalls the opinion of some Church Fathers (e.g., Augustine) for whom perfect continence is iden-

⁷² *EN* 7.11.1152b18.

⁷³ *EN* 6.5.1140b13.

⁷⁴ *EN* 1.13.1102b9.

⁷⁵ *EN* 7.1.1145a17.

⁷⁶ See Gauthier, "Trois commentaires," 300.

⁷⁷ See Hissette, *Enquête*, 297–98.

⁷⁸ Albertus Magnus, *Super Ethica* 7.1, ed. W. Kübel (Münster: Aschendorff, 1987), 517 (Ins. 89–90: "Non sunt proprie et substantialiter virtutes"; Albert is referring to both continence and heroic virtues).

tical to virginity, the virtuousness of which, as we recall, he defended also on Aristotelian grounds. He also here recalls Aristotle's position, which he identifies with that of other Church Fathers such as Jerome, for whom continence "does not attain to the perfect nature of a moral virtue" because the habituation is not strong enough to prevent vehement passions from arising. With regard to this meaning of the term, Thomas can agree with Aristotle that continence is a "mixture" of virtue and passions, and therefore falls short of virtue properly speaking. However, in a broader sense (*largius accipiendo*), one may call it a virtue, since it is the principle of praiseworthy actions. Continence has the same object as temperance in that it allows one to control the pleasures of touch, in particular in the field of sexuality, but it does not relate to the pursuit of wealth unless one uses the term in a broader sense.⁷⁹ Thomas explains that continence is not in the concupiscent appetite one is struggling with, but in the will that decides not to follow certain desires of the sensitive appetite.

The opposite disposition is incontinence (question 156). Does it have its seat in the soul rather than in the body? Two texts from Aristotle seem to favor the latter position. In particular, there is the fact that incontinence is consequent on bodily dispositions, such as being choleric and so on. Yet, since we do not assign it to animals, it must have its seat in the soul.⁸⁰ Incontinence is blamed more than simple sins, since it has a certain malice.⁸¹ The excuse that one can overcome incontinence only by divine help and not by oneself does not hold, for as Aristotle says, what we can do with the help of friends, we can also do in some way by ourselves.⁸² An interesting question is whether an incontinent person is more guilty than an intemperate one who sins. Aristotle says that an incontinent acts more against his conscience, since he knows that what he is going to do is bad. However, the incontinent regrets what he has done, while the intemperate enjoys it. The incontinent is a better person than the intemperate, since he still knows what the end is he should attain.⁸³ Is it worse to be incontinent in one's anger than in one's lascivious desires? It would seem easier to fight against concupiscence than against anger. However, one who is in anger somehow still listens to reason, while a person who gives

⁷⁹ EN 7.5.1148b34; 7.4.1148b10; 7.4.1147b29; 7.5.1149a1.

⁸⁰ EN 7.7.1550b25; 7.3.1147b5.

⁸¹ EN 7.3.1112b27.

⁸² EN 3.4.1148a2.

⁸³ EN 7.1146b22; 7.7.1150b29; 7.81151a24.

in to his sensuality does not, and so his attitude is more disgraceful, although anger may make us cause greater evils.⁸⁴

Clemency, Meekness, Anger, and Cruelty

In question 157, Thomas studies clemency and meekness. Are they the same virtue? Virtues are concerned with passions and actions, as Aristotle says.⁸⁵ Virtues that moderate passions may attain the same effect as those that moderate actions. Meekness, for example, reduces anger, and so may contribute to diminish punishment, something that clemency also does.⁸⁶ Both are virtues, since both subordinate the appetite to reason and make one act reasonably in their respective fields. A quote from the *Nicomachean Ethics* says that every man is dear to every other, such that it is sheer madness to be delighted in punishing others.⁸⁷ In this question, Seneca is quoted nine times.⁸⁸

Regarding the question whether anger is a vice (question 158), Aquinas starts with Aristotle's remark that anger does not listen well to reason, as is the case also with envy.⁸⁹ Thomas explains that anger and the other passions are movements of the sensitive appetite and may be regulated by reason; they are not necessarily bad. In the questions about the sinfulness of the vices, Thomas resorts to the authority of Christian authors. Aristotle seems to say that a person who acts in anger acts with pain, so that one might think that he acts unwillingly.⁹⁰ But, Thomas comments, if such a person acts with pain, he does so because of the injustice done to him. As we have seen before, according to Aristotle, being incontinent in respect of sensual desires is worse than being incontinent in one's anger.⁹¹ But, in view of the massive condemnation of raging anger by the Church Fathers, Thomas adds some distinctions: considering what a person

⁸⁴ EN 7.7.1150b6; 2.3.1105a7; 7.6.1149b1.

⁸⁵ EN 2.3.1104b13.

⁸⁶ In EN 5.1138a3, reducing punishment is said to be the task of *epiikeia*, reasonableness. Thomas says that reasonableness applies to judging about what the legislator has in mind when he made the law, but here, we speak of a mild mood in punishing someone.

⁸⁷ EN 2.6.1106a15; 1.13.1103a1; 8.1.1155a22.

⁸⁸ Seneca's classical text is *De clementia*. See Michel Spanneut, "Influences stoïciennes sur la pensée morale de saint Thomas d'Aquin," in *The Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Leo Elders and Klaus Hedwig (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1984), 50–79.

⁸⁹ EN 7.6.1149a26; 2.6.1107a9.

⁹⁰ EN 7.6.1149b20.

⁹¹ EN 7.6.1149b2.

in anger wants to reach (punishment of the other), the object is less bad than what an envious person seeks to attain. What a person in anger wants is some justice, which is more valuable than what one who is lascivious desires to reach, as Aristotle confirms.⁹² But, concedes Thomas, with regard to the inordinate way in which the angry person acts, anger exceeds by its vehemence and its quickness the way a lewd person goes about his pursuits. In *EN* 4.5, Aristotle distinguishes between choleric and sulky people who, when in anger, react differently. He also mentions a type of anger of bad-tempered people that cannot be appeased until punishment has been inflicted.⁹³

Cruelty (question 159) is also a species of intemperance, as it is opposed to clemency, wanting as it does to inflict fierce punishment on others who are guilty. It exceeds, however, the right measure in punishing. Savageness is an excess of cruelty and is opposed to a more excellent virtue (*superexcellentiore virtus*), a virtue that Aristotle called “heroic” or “godlike,” which “according to us” (*secundum nos*), Thomas says, is a Gift of the Holy Spirit, the particular Gift of Piety.⁹⁴

Modesty, Humility, and Pride

We now pass to another species of temperance, modesty (question 160). Modesty, as Aquinas describes it, is a virtue that makes us keep the right measure in doing things, eventually even finding some pleasure in those that do not normally exercise a very strong attraction and are easier to control. Thomas distinguishes four domains where this virtue is active through its subordinated species: esteem of one’s own excellence (humility); desire of knowing (studiousness); correct bodily posture; decency and modesty in the way one dresses. Thomas notes that Aristotle added pleasantness and being ready-witted to these

⁹² *EN* 7.6.1149b2 and 7.6.1149b2b23: anger can be conquered by argument

⁹³ *EN* 4.5.1126a28.

⁹⁴ *EN* 7.1.1145a20. Contrary to what he does elsewhere, Thomas does not refer here to a special book of the *Ethics*, which means that he is quoting by memory. The passage of Aristotle provided a sort of opening toward supernatural grace, as do some other sentences in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and in the *Liber de bona fortuna*, a collection of texts from the *Eudemian Ethics* and the *Magna Moralia*. See Thomas Deman, “Le Liber de Bona Fortuna dans la théologie de S. Thomas d’Aquin,” *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 17 (1928): 38–58, and more recently, Valérie Cordonier, “Sauver le Dieu du Philosophe: Albert le Grand, Thomas d’Aquin, Guillaume de Moerbeke et l’invention du ‘Liber de bona fortuna,’” in *Christian Readings of Aristotle from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed. Luca Bianchi (Turnhout, BE: Brepols, 2011), 65–114.

subspecies of modesty,⁹⁵ which are the correct attitude with regard to the pleasure we derive from games and playing, says Aquinas, which seems to add to what Aristotle writes.

In discussing humility (question 161), one is faced with the following difficulty: a virtue is the disposition of one who is perfect while humbleness seems characteristic of imperfect people. Moreover all virtues are concerned with actions and the passions, as Aristotle says,⁹⁶ but humility is not mentioned as one of the virtues controlling the passions, nor does it come in under justice, which directs actions. Drawing on Christian spiritual theology, Thomas affirms that humility is a virtue, defining it, perhaps for the first time in moral theology, as the virtue that refrains us from immoderately tending to noble and lofty things. He explains its absence in the *EN* as due to the fact that Aristotle's intention was to treat of the virtues in civil life, where the subordination of a citizen to others is regulated by law. Humility, however, as a special virtue, concerns man's submission to God, and so even to others.⁹⁷ Thus, Thomas indicates that the use of Aristotle's ethics in Christian moral theology is limited. Therefore, it is not surprising that the only references to Aristotle in this question concern technical points, such as whether humility is part of temperance or of modesty. Thomas quotes a text from Aristotle in which, where we would speak of humility (*quem nos humiles dicere possumus*), Aristotle writes of one who tends to small objectives in conformity with his capacity, one who is temperate.⁹⁸

The vice of pride is studied in question 162. As is to be expected, there are hardly any references to Aristotle's ethics in the eight articles of this question. Thomas is drawing his material from Christian authors, but he tries to pinpoint the vice at the other extreme of pride, as Aristotle says there must be one, for a vice is not just opposed not only to the contrary virtue but also to a vice at the other extreme of this disposition.⁹⁹ This vice, Thomas writes, is a kind of pusillanimity in so far as it means that one is busying oneself with things below one's dignity. Further references to Aristotle are few. In ad 3 of the fifth article, Aristotle defends the possibility that a virtue may

⁹⁵ *EN* 2.7.1108a24–27.

⁹⁶ Aristotle, *Physics* 7.3.246a13 (virtue is a certain perfection); *EN* 7.3.1104b13; 2.7.1107a28.

⁹⁷ *ST* II-II, q. 161, a. 1, ad 5.

⁹⁸ *ST* II-II, q. 161, a. 4; *EN* 4.3.1123b5. In article 5, we hear Aristotle say that justice is the most excellent of the virtues.

⁹⁹ *EN* 2.8.1108b13.

become the cause of a vice by accident, as when a person is proud of his humility.¹⁰⁰ Is pride the most serious sin? A text of Aristotle that suggests a negative answer provides the occasion for a further elaboration: from the point of view of its object, pride is not the worse sin there is, but considered as an aversion from the Good, God, it is.¹⁰¹ In article 7, Aristotle writes that pride may make one behave as if he were strong and courageous.¹⁰²

Original Sin and Its Consequences

Arrived at this point of his study of pride, Thomas adds three questions about the sin of the first man and its punishment (questions 163–65). Obviously the idea is that this sin was a sin of pride, and so, on account of its enormous consequences, it deserves to be studied after the articles on pride as the first of all sins. With regard to what precisely was the object of this pride of Adam, Thomas adds further details. Desiring to acquire the knowledge God has is as such not sinful, but rather natural to man, who seeks knowledge, as Aristotle says,¹⁰³ but desiring to become similar to God in an inordinate way is a sin. One hardly expects to find references to Aristotle's works in this study of the history of salvation. Yet, in the article on whether the transgression of the first parents has been the greatest of sins of mankind, Thomas invites Aristotle to remind us that the first principles of eternal things are most true: what gives other things their content has itself this content in the highest possible way.¹⁰⁴ The statement fits in a Platonic scheme of ontological dependence of first perfections (such as the ideas). But Thomas answers that the principle does not apply in a series of such things as sins, which have no intrinsic order to one another.

Studiosness and Curiosity

In question 166, the virtue of studiosness is examined. The Greek term for *studiosus*, which is *σπουδαῖος*, is used to characterize virtuous people in general, and so studiosness does not seem to be a special virtue.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, we can use the term in a more specific sense.

¹⁰⁰ Aristotle, *Physics* 8.1.251a29.

¹⁰¹ *EN* 8.10.1160b3. It is difficult to avoid it, but even more so because it comes so easily (*EN* 2.3.1105a7).

¹⁰² *EN* 3.7.1115b29.

¹⁰³ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.1.980a21.

¹⁰⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 2.1.993b24.

¹⁰⁵ Thomas says that Aristotle often uses the term in this general sense. The editors of the Leonine edition refer to: *EN* 1.13.1102b10; 9.4.1166a13; 8.1169a35.

All men desire to acquire knowledge.¹⁰⁶ A special virtue, studiousness, regulates this desire and the efforts one makes in this respect. The wider use of the term *σπουδαῖος* can be explained insofar as this regulating of the desire of knowledge is close to prudence, a virtue of the intellect, which intervenes in all virtuous acts.¹⁰⁷ In his answer to the third difficulty of article 2, Thomas refers again to Aristotle, who writes that we are drawn to do the things that most appeal to us.¹⁰⁸ Question 167 explains the opposite vice, curiosity. A first objection uses a saying of Aristotle to argue that, as regards intellectual knowledge, one cannot go wrong, since it is something good by itself.¹⁰⁹ The answer is that the virtue of studiousness concerns the appetite of learning. In pursuing the knowledge of certain things, there may occur a disorder insofar as it makes more difficult acquiring knowledge of the highest truth¹¹⁰ and determining more precisely which pursuits of knowledge are to be avoided. Aristotle appears to attach some value to our attending theater performances and games.¹¹¹ Thomas gives detailed answers with regard to the moral aspects of such activities.

Modesty and Play

Modesty, insofar as it is concerned with our behavior in our posture and way of dressing, is the objection of question 168. Can there be any virtue in our outward bodily movements if much in these spontaneous movements are natural to us, as Aristotle says?¹¹² To the extent to which these movements can be directed by reason, they are the object of a virtue. Inasmuch as we order them in view of helping or pleasing our fellow men, they come in under the virtue of friendship or affability. However, insofar as these outward movements signal an inner disposition, they fall under the virtue of truthfulness or sincerity, which makes us show in our outward appearance what we are in our inner self, a distinction proposed by Aristotle in the *EN* 4.6–7.

Thomas next devotes three articles to the issue of plays or games.

¹⁰⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.1.980a21.

¹⁰⁷ *EN* 6.13.1144b30.

¹⁰⁸ At this place, the Latin text of the *Nicomachean Ethics* used by Thomas (to become virtuous one must do the things to which his nature inclines him most) does not quite express the Greek in 1109b1, where Aristotle writes that we must drag ourselves away and go to the contrary of what we desire most.

¹⁰⁹ *EN* 2.6.1107a8.

¹¹⁰ *EN* 10.7.1177a19.

¹¹¹ Aristotle, *Poetics* 4.1448b9.

¹¹² *EN* 2.3.1103a23.

Church Fathers such as St. Ambrose and St. John Chrysostom are quite severe in their judgments about going to the games that were a form of amusement in their days. Aristotle says that people do go to the games and theater for the sake of the pleasure they find in them, but he is rather severe in his judgment: we are injured rather than benefitted by them, since they make us neglect our bodies and our property.¹¹³ Yet elsewhere, Aristotle points to the virtue of εὐτραπεία, which makes us adopt the right attitude with regard to amusement.¹¹⁴ In article 3, excessive amusement is said to be against the rule of reason, but there is also the possibility that one has no interest in entertainment whatsoever, an attitude that Aristotle calls blameworthy.¹¹⁵ Such persons are uncivilized.¹¹⁶ But, since amusement is not sought for itself, not caring about it is a lesser vice than seeking too much of it.¹¹⁷ A certain reserve may be an attitude related to kindness or friendliness, yet insofar as it restrains superfluous pleasure seeking, it comes in under temperance.

Modesty in the way one dresses is the subject of question 169. Thomas first points out that variety in the way one dresses according to the changes in fashion during one's lifetime is not an object of virtue or vice. He lets Aristotle remind us that we have a natural aptitude for virtue, such that what people ordinarily do—he apparently means here the way people dress—seems to be morally neutral.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, certain ways of dressing can be unbecoming, as Aristotle says, and are a matter of extravagance. There can also be negligence in the way one dresses.¹¹⁹ The outward appearance should be an expression of one's inner being, and so controlling it comes in under the virtue of truthfulness, which includes not only words but also deeds.¹²⁰

¹¹³ EN 10.6.1176b9; 2.4.1105a31.

¹¹⁴ EN 2.7.1108a24. Cf. EN 4.8.1128a10.

¹¹⁵ EN 2.7.1108a25; 4.8.1128b2.

¹¹⁶ EN 4.8.1128a4.

¹¹⁷ EN 10.6.1176b34; 9.10.1170b28.

¹¹⁸ EN 2.7.1107a28; 2.1.1103a25.

¹¹⁹ EN 7.7.1150b3; 4.7.1127b28. The attention that St. Thomas devotes to the *decorum* is also due to Roman influences, in particular to Cicero. See G. Verbeke, *The Presence of Stoicism in Medieval Thought* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1983), 16.

¹²⁰ EN 4.7.1127a23 and a33.

Conclusion

It is noteworthy that, in St. Thomas's systematic exposition of the virtue of temperance, as we have seen, Aristotle occupies a central place in providing definitions, divisions, and arguments. In short, St. Thomas accepts his doctrine of this virtue as a truthful account of the nature of temperance, as full of human experience and wisdom and resulting from extremely keen observation and careful analysis. If one wonders why, in a theological study of the virtues, Aristotle's ethical doctrine does have a central place, the answer is that the infused virtues are, in their operation, similar to the acquired virtues,¹²¹ And in order to determine the nature of the former, we must resort to the latter.

Secondly, St. Thomas was convinced that Aristotle had given a correct analysis of the basic categories of thought by which we can define the nature of the virtues and the vices. One might quote here the words of John Henry Newman at one of his conferences intended to lay the groundwork for studies at the planned Catholic university in Dublin: "While the world lasts, will Aristotle's doctrine on these matters last, for the great Master does but analyze the thoughts and feelings, views and opinions of human kind. 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 no, though we may not know it."¹²²

The somewhat scattered references to Aristotle in the questions following the basic treatment of the virtue of temperance itself show that St. Thomas had present in his mind the works of Aristotle. One feels tempted to say that, having read them once, he could with great ease quote them to clarify difficult or obscure aspects to the benefit of getting a clearer view of theological questions laying in the background. In this way, he reminded his students of an important natural truth: the order of grace does not do away with the order of nature, but builds on it and perfects it.¹²³ N-V

¹²¹ *De veritate*, q. 6, a. 5, ad 3: "The acts of the infused supernatural virtues greatly resemble the acts of the acquired natural virtues [Actus autem virtutum gratuitarum habent maximam similitudinem cum actibus virtutum acquisitarum]" (trans. Robert W. Mulligan, S.J. [Chicago: Henry Regnary, 1952]).

¹²² John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, discourse 5, no. 5 (New York: Longmans and Green, 1947), 97.

¹²³ See Leo Elders, "Faith and Reason: The Synthesis of St. Thomas Aquinas," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 8, no. 3 (2010): 527–52.

Revisiting Maritain's Moral Philosophy Adequately Considered

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Introduction

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE of the Catholic philosopher is fraught with a number of complications foreign to those experienced by his or her non-Christian counterparts. In this article, I would like to pose a single problem that might at first strike the reader as coming from another era but that I believe is important for philosophical reflection, namely Jacques Maritain's contested thesis concerning "adequate consideration" of moral philosophy. Maritain's two most well-known (and complete) treatments of this problem are found in his *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*¹ and *Science and Wisdom*.² In these works, he expresses the view that moral philosophy must be subalternated to theology in order to be a true science. This is due to moral philosophy's status as a *practical science* aiming to guide actions (if only from a distance) in view of the true human good. Developing John Poinsett's account of subalternation,³ Maritain concluded that, in isolation from certain theological data, moral philosophy⁴ cannot adequately address

¹ See Jacques Maritain, *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, trans. Edward H. Flannery (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), 38–49, 61–100.

² See Jacques Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, trans. Bernard Wall (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1944), 137–214.

³ See John of St. Thomas, *The Material Logic of John of St. Thomas*, trans. Yves R. Simon, John J. Glanville, and G. Donald Hollenhorst (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1955), 510–518 (q. 26, a. 2).

⁴ Precisely as a *philosophical-scientific* body of knowledge concerning practical principles and the conclusions that can be drawn from them. See Maritain,

matters ultimately bearing on the direction of human actions. Such data would include, for example, knowledge of man's true final end as attainable only in a higher, supernatural order, the state in which the human person was created and now exists as fallen and redeemed, and so on—in other words, data pertaining to the existential state in which man finds himself presently.

Commentators such as Ralph McInerny saw this position as an unfortunate blurring of the proper lines of natural and supernatural truths, likely to ignore things like the preambles of faith that are properly assigned to the practical order of natural reason.⁵ Other critiques of Maritain's position come from the perspective of contemporary discussions about the problem of "pagan virtues."⁶ Though a fruitful terrain for investigation, this route will not be my focus in this article.⁷

Instead, I will take as my point of departure a remark registered

Science and Wisdom, 162: "But the prescription of good acts [which purely philosophical moral science would do] is not enough to form a practical science, a true science of the use of freedom, a science which prescribes not only good acts, but which also determines how the *acting subject* can live a life of consistent goodness and organize rightly his whole universe of action. . . . On the plane of speculatively-practical science, as on the plane of practically-practical science, this is the object which moral philosophy sets before itself—so far as it is proper to a study which is not that of the *iudicium practicum* and of the *imperium*, but of general truths known and organized in the light of causes and principles and elaborated according to a speculative mode or according to a practical mode of definition."

⁵ Ralph McInerny, *The Question of Christian Ethics* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1993), 55–69.

⁶ See Angela McKay Knobel, "Aquinas and the Pagan Virtues," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 51 (2011): 339–54. See also Brian J. Shanley, "Aquinas on Pagan Virtue," *The Thomist* 63, no. 4 (1999): 553–77.

⁷ An ultimate evaluation of these recent discussions must be adjudicated in light of Maritain's remarks concerning "inadequate" consideration of moral philosophy, as well as his remarks concerning the moral virtues when they exist as virtues in a state of being somewhat unstable dispositions enabling the accomplishment of nondifficult moral actions (*in statu dispositionis facile mobilis*). See: Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 166–67; Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 65; Jacques Maritain, *An Introduction to the Basic Problems of Moral Philosophy*, trans. Cornelia N. Borgerhoff (New York: Magi Books, 1990), 94. To address the latter point adequately, one would need to undertake a careful study of Maritain in light of Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses, and Charles René Billuart; see Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, "L'instabilité dans l'état de péché mortel des vertus morales acquises," *Revue thomiste* 43 (1937): 255–62. Also, an excellent response to Shanley and Knobel can be found in Thomas M. Osborne, "Perfect and Imperfect Virtues in Aquinas," *The Thomist* 71 (2007): 39–64.

in Denis Bradley's criticism of Maritain in his *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good*.⁸ Although Bradley rejects Maritain's solution to this matter, I believe he quite insightfully touches upon the central point of the entire issue—namely, in these two disciplines (i.e., moral philosophy and moral theology), we are confronted by two unique and incommensurate formal objects. According to Maritain (and the Thomist school that he represents), moral theology is a unified science, at once speculative and practical (though primarily speculative), having the *Deity as such* as its formal object. Moral philosophy, in contrast, is a practical discipline concerned with human acts *considered as, free, human acts conforming to the natural rule of morality*.

The task of this article is merely to explain this distinction as clearly as possible. To Bradley, it was a “distinction without a difference.”⁹ To Maritain, however, it was pivotally important. On one side, there is moral theology, which really should be understood as a study of human acts *as revealing God, the Principle of Everlasting Life*. On the other side, there is moral philosophy, which is concerned with *human acts* considered precisely as *human acts*. Because such human acts are, in fact, enlivened by a supernatural existential state, Maritain believed it necessary to subalternate moral philosophy to theology. However, insofar as the formal object in question is *not* the *Deity* but *human acts* instead, the science remains proportionate to the light of human reason (and not reason as instrumentally illuminated by faith).

In what follows, I will focus on describing the character of these two sciences. Given that this lofty conception of theology is perhaps underemphasized today, I will stress Maritain's conception of theology. However, in so doing, I will explain the substantial differences between the formal perspective of theology and that of moral philosophy. I will close by indicating some of the issues that will need to be discussed in a future article, particularly regarding the technicalities pertaining to the relation between faith, theology, and moral philosophy in such an “adequate consideration” of the object of moral philosophy.

The Theological *Habitus*

At the very end of Bradley's monograph, he takes up the problem of the paradox of philosophical ethics for Thomists, stressing the incom-

⁸ See Denis J. M. Bradley, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good: Reason and Human Happiness in Aquinas's Moral Science* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 495–506.

⁹ Bradley, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good*, 504–5.

pleteness of human nature and nature's inability *as natural* to sate man's natural desire for happiness.¹⁰ I believe that such reflections are quite important from a Thomistic perspective, given the dominating indifference of the will faced with any finite good. Natural felicity may be *true* felicity when achieved, but it is only a kind of "felicity in motion."¹¹ While Maritain's use of this expression is perhaps a bit flowery, it accords with the Stagirite's position that happiness must be an activity and Aquinas's distinction between perfect and imperfect happiness.¹² Speculative wisdom is indeed the highest form of natural virtue for an Aristotelian, but this is quite distant and mutable in comparison with true beatitude considered as the participated eternity experienced in the Beatific Vision of the Divine Essence. Without denying the possibility of natural metaphysical wisdom, Aristotle did not disdain to observe: "Hence the possession of it might be justly regarded as beyond human power; for in many ways human nature is in bondage."¹³

I have a great deal of sympathy and agreement with Bradley's conclusions in this regard. For my part, I believe that many insights can be derived from the distinction between the natural teleology of the human person and the supernatural end to which the human person is called,¹⁴ particularly in light of postmodernity's awareness for the open-

¹⁰ See Bradley, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good*, 513–44.

¹¹ See Jacques Maritain, *Integral Humanism*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (New York: Scribner, 1968), 136–37. See also Maritain, *An Introduction*, 107–15.

¹² See: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1174a13–1175a22; Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [ST] I-II, qq. 3–5. Indeed, from a purely Aristotelian perspective, we should always remember that the Stagirite insists that the happiness for which we should aim is only as much as is possible for us humanly. The heights of contemplation are a quasi-divine and true end, but we are beset in many ways with limitations.

¹³ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 982b29–30, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, trans. W. D. Ross, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

¹⁴ Clearly, the reader can sense my sympathies for the excellent work of Lawrence Feingold, which has helped to invigorate the old, clear Scholastic distinction between the natural and supernatural orders; see Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2010). This was a point stressed again and again throughout the career of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange. That which is supernatural *quoad substantiam* is truly divine in a way that is incommensurable to anything created (or creatable). Indeed, it is even beyond a natural event miraculously accomplished by a supernatural agency. The theme is repeated in many places in his corpus, but an excellent précis of it can be found in Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Sense of Mystery*, trans. Matthew K. Miner (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2017), 199–216.

ness of human existence (a point that is important for Bradley as he closes his monograph). *Qua human*, our intellectual and moral lives are cultural and historical.¹⁵ However, as the reader will well note, it is far beyond the scope of this paper to argue on behalf of such agreement!

Among the critiques presented against Maritain's position, Bradley partially agrees with those registered in the 1934–1936 articles by Fr. Santiago Ramírez¹⁶ that such a “moral philosophy” makes no sense as a type of “philosophy.” The critique holds that the proposed solution problematically applies the method of subalternation—originally pertaining (i.e., in the *Posterior analytics*¹⁷) to speculative sciences of the natural order, such as astronomy and harmony—to practical sciences. For the non-Christian, there would be no science superior to the purely natural, philosophical point of view, thus preventing the reception of principles from a higher science. It would seem that an act of faith—an act that is moved by supernatural motives of assent—would be required to constitute the formal object of such a science.¹⁸ Bradley rightly notes that the matter hinges upon Maritain's

¹⁵ This theme continually recurs in Maritain's reflection on the natural law. For an important text, see note 56 below. One of the best formulations concerning this topic can be found in Anton Pegis's incredibly illuminating *At the Origins of the Thomistic Notion of Man* (New York: MacMillan, 1963). Equally excellent is Armand Maurer, *St. Thomas and Historicity* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1979). Both texts are worth reading, but see in particular Pegis, *At the Origins*, 47, and 52:

If man is a historical sort of being, indeed the only being in the universe that is historical by nature, this trait belongs to the soul before it belongs to man. History is the signature of the soul's intellectuality, for the human soul is an intelligence living by motion at the level of intelligibility found in matter. That is why it is a man, temporal spirit, engaged in an incarnated intellectual life. . . .

The human soul, which is a spiritual substance *as* the form of matter, is an intellectual creature destined by nature for a historical existence, for an incarnate and therefore temporal duration, in order to express and to realize the intellectuality proper to it. The human soul, in other words, is in an entirely unique way an intelligence that can *be* itself only by *enacting* within itself a personal history; it is the only intellectual creature that needs to experience a duration subject to time and motion in order to find and to build its very nature.

¹⁶ See Bradley, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good*, 502–6.

¹⁷ See Aristotle, *Posterior analytics* 78b34–79a16 and 87a31–b17.

¹⁸ On this point, an insightful anonymous reader of this article remarked that this matter should be addressed at greater length in a companion article, one addressing the following question: “Whether the moral philosopher so

treatment of the distinction in formal objects between the sciences of moral philosophy and theology. So much should not be very surprising, given Maritain's vein of Thomism, which comfortably deploys distinctions taken from Cajetan and John of St. Thomas regarding the constitution of formal objects of the sciences.¹⁹

For the tradition of interpretation undergirding Maritain's position, a locus classicus regarding the nature of theological science is Aquinas's discussion in *Summa theologiae* [ST] I, q. 1, Cajetan's comments on these articles, and Poinset's disputation on the topic in *Cursus theologicus*, t. 1, q. 1, d. 2.²⁰ In the aforementioned question in ST, Aquinas establishes the status of theology as a science, its necessity, its separate nature from philosophical wisdom, and its primarily speculative character.²¹ In particular, this last point is reaffirmed in ST I, q. 1, a.7, ad 2, in which Aquinas repeats that all the conclusions of theology are comprehended under the formal aspect of the Divinity.²² Even moral theology is thus related to the Godhead as such, *not*

described ought also be a moral theologian and not allow even his audience the illusion of comfort that all has been existentially addressed in moral philosophy?" This matter is closely allied to our concerns in this article, but it does require specific technical discussions regarding the assent involved in the subalternation in question. As will be noted in the final section of this article, I intend to address this question in a future article.

¹⁹ I refer here to the notions of *ratio formalis objecti ut res* (*ratio formalis quae*) and *ratio formalis objecti ut objectum* (*ratio formalis sub qua*), which come up throughout his treatments of the specification of the sciences in general (in many places throughout his corpus of works). For the most condensed exposition of this distinction, see Jacques Maritain, *The Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Imelda C. Byrne (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 125–35.

²⁰ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus* (Paris: Vives, 1883), 442–528 (*De scientia theologiae*, q. 1, d. 2). See also, the recent English edition: John of St. Thomas, *On Sacred Science*, trans. John P. Doyle, ed. Victor M. Salas (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2018). This debt is clear in *Science and Wisdom* and *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, but it is also *amply* attested to in his chapter "The Deposition of Wisdom" in his *The Dream of Descartes*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (London: Poetry Editions London, 1946), 46–82.

²¹ See ST I, q. 1, a. 4. As will be stated below, it is formally and eminently speculative and practical, a participation in God's own knowledge whereby he knows both himself and his works.

²² See ST I, q. 1, a. 7, obj. 2 ("Hence, all the things about which conclusions are reached in a given science are included under that science's subject. Now, in Sacred Scripture [*sic*] conclusions are reached about many things other than God, for example, about creatures and about moral matters pertaining to man. Therefore, God is not the subject of this science") and ad 2 ("To the second objection, it must be said that all the other things about which conclusions

the direction of human actions as such.²³ This does not mean that God is merely “kept in mind” in all of theology’s disquisitions or that theology considers revealed data in a purely philosophical light.²⁴

are reached in sacred doctrine [*sic*] are included under God, not as parts or species or accidents, but as ordered in some manner to Him”; my translations from the Leonine edition). We will not discuss in detail the distinction between formal revelation (i.e., as pertains to faith) and virtual revelation (i.e., as pertains to theological knowledge), though the topic will be operative in what follows.

²³ This point is succinctly and clearly explained in Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, “Du caractère métaphysique de la Théologie morale de saint Thomas, en particulier dans ses rapports avec la prudence et la conscience,” *Revue thomiste* 30 (1925): 341–55. A translation is to be published in a future issue of *Nova et Vetera* (English).

²⁴ It was against this that Maritain wrote persuasively in (e.g.) the chapter from *The Dream of Descartes* cited above in note 18. Likewise, see Jacques Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Gerald B. Phelan (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 268–69:

Now this God of faith, Deity as such, not seen, but believed, or attained to in the testimony of first Truth and by means of dogmatic definitions, is also the object of theology. Theology envisages it from the point of view of “virtual revelation,” as it is called; in other words, from the point of view of the consequences that reason, when enlightened by faith, can draw from formally revealed principles.

This is not the place to go into any lengthy development concerning the nature of theological wisdom. All that needs to be noted is that theology is quite a different thing from a simple application of philosophy to matters of revelation: that would truly be a monstrous conception; it would submit revealed data to a purely human light and subordinate theological wisdom to philosophy. There exists no genuine science or wisdom unless within the soul there be a genuine intellectual virtue proportioning the light of discrimination and judgment to the proper level of the object. To an object which is the depths of revealed divinity, insofar as it can be exploited by reason, there must necessarily correspond, as its light in the soul, not the light of philosophy, but a proportionate light, the light of supernatural faith taking up and directing the natural movement of reason and its natural way of knowing. Thus, theology is not a simple application of natural reason and of philosophy to revealed data: it is an elucidation of revealed data by faith vitally linked with reason, advancing in step with reason and arming itself with philosophy. That is why philosophy, far from subordinating theology to itself, is properly the “servant” of theology in the immanent use theology makes of it [i.e., not in purely philosophical disquisition]. Theology is free as regards philosophical doctrines. It is theology that chooses among these doctrines the one that will in its hands be the best instrument of truth. And let a theologian lose theo-

As a speculative *habitus*, theology is not coterminous with faith, for it proceeds in a discursive manner from principles to conclusions through the industry of human ratiocination.²⁵ However, while theological science is naturally acquired, it necessarily presupposes a higher, supernatural light (i.e., faith) in which its data are scrutinized and ultimately resolved in light of the Godhead, a light conferred through the infused virtue of faith. Lacking this light, theology becomes a corpse of statements regarding the Deity, no longer united in light of the supernatural principles that alone enable it to be a unique discipline about God's intimate, mysterious life.

No matter how lofty it may be, metaphysical knowledge of the First Cause cannot "demand" direct (i.e., nondiscursive, intuitive) experience of that Cause.²⁶ To know the First Cause with immediate evidence is no longer to know him *as Cause*. Instead, it is to know God according to the intimate reality of the *Deity as such*.²⁷ The

logical faith; he still can keep the whole machinery and conceptual organization of his science, but he keeps it as something dead in his mind; he has lost his proper light.

²⁵ Although there is a certain rationalistic tendency in the traditional presentations of this doctrine, an admirable (though introductory) account given by M. D. Chenu shows the vitality of such a conception of theological thinking in his little text *Is Theology a Science?* It should be noted that, for whatever might be said about the controversies surrounding Chenu and his critiques of Garrigou-Lagrange's Thomism, this volume finds Chenu still indebted to the spirit of Garrigou-Lagrange's spiritual theology, as becomes evident in a number of passages (*Is Theology a Science?* trans. A. H. N. Green-Armytage [New York: Hawthorn, 1959]). On the nature of theology, one can profitably read: Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The One God*, trans. Bede Rose (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1944), 39–93; Garrigou-Lagrange, *Reality*, trans. Patrick Cummins (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1950), 53–60. Also, see the text by Emmanuel Doronzo cited below, as well as Charles Journet, *The Wisdom of Faith: An Introduction to Theology*, trans. R. F. Smith (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1952).

²⁶ See the forceful defense of this traditional position in Garrigou-Lagrange, *Le sens du mystère*, 157–205.

²⁷ A profound reflection on this can be found in the chapter entitled "The Eminence of the Deity, Its Attributes, and the Divine Persons" in Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Sense of Mystery*, 171–197. Also, one can consult Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *God: His Existence and His Nature*, trans. Bede Rose (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1949), 3–32, 224–45.

In words that recall Cajetan's own remarks as recounted by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, much light is shed on this point in the brief but profound text found in Emmanuel Doronzo, *Introduction to Theology* (Middleburg, VA: Notre Dame Institute Press, 1973), 48: "*Deity* means God considered in his most intimate essence, or according to what makes God to be God and distinguishes

words of Maritain express this well:

To know the First Cause in its essence, or without the intermediary of any other thing, is to know the First Cause otherwise than as First Cause; it is to know it by ceasing to attain it by the very means by which we attain it, by ceasing to exercise the very act which bears us up to it. The natural desire to know the First Cause in its essence envelops within itself the indication of the impossibility in which nature is placed to satisfy it.²⁸

It is natural for humans to desire to know the cause that explains a given effect—perhaps most especially when that effect is existence itself. However, it is beyond the nature (i.e., as apart from the gratuity of supernatural grace) of any created intellect, whether angelic²⁹ or human,³⁰ to have immediate experience of the Divine Essence. However, theology, if it is indeed rooted in the theological virtue of faith, does hold the promise of *intuitively seeing*³¹ that supernatural

him from all creatures. Hence, Deity is something different from and beyond all those divine attributes which are in some way common to creatures, such as being, one, true, good, intelligent, willing, potent, acting, etc. All such attributes are really found in creatures, although in God they are in an infinite manner proper to God, and, in this sense of infinity, they are proper to God. But infinity itself is a negative concept, that is, absence of limit in a positive perfection; hence it cannot be the intimate and proper essence of God. All the other positive attributes of God, as those we just mentioned, are only analogical concepts taken from creatures, and therefore they do not express the proper and inner essence of God. This essence, rather than being, unity, truth, goodness, intelligence, will, power, is *something above being, unity, truth, etc.*, which founds and explains all such attributes in an infinite and simple way. *That something is what we call Deity.*"

²⁸ See Jacques Maritain, *Approaches to God*, trans. Peter O'Reilly (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), 110.

²⁹ See *ST I*, q. 56, a. 3.

³⁰ See *ST I*, q. 12, and I-II, q. 5, a. 5.

³¹ The distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition was at best inchoate in the works of St. Thomas. By the time of Bl. Duns Scotus, it began to play a pivotal role, one that would have significant outcomes in all of the *scholae* of the later middle ages and beyond, especially in nominalism. According to the position accepted by Maritain, the distinction between abstractive and intuitive cognition can be simply understood as pertaining to the distinction between knowing something without or with the physical presence of that which is known. It is one thing to know intellectually a tree's essence; it is another for a tree to be present *here and now*. Intuitive cognition adds no

Godhead in whose Light it reasons. It is a science at once formally-eminently speculative and practical (though more speculative in character than practical), a science that is a participation in God's own knowledge, though, in this life, it looks to the Beatific Vision only in the mirror of faith. Indeed, it does so only in a human manner (*modo humano*³²), through the effort of human reasoning syllogistically connecting principles to conclusions, although in a manner that is objectively illuminated by faith.³³ However, because theological science presupposes the light of faith (in order to scrutinize its objects in a manner befitting theology's concern with the Deity as such), it knows that what is promised in faith is something to be lived in charity and ultimately *seen* directly in the Beatific Vision. Thus, just as faith "demands to be completed still further by the gifts of intelligence and wisdom, and becomes the disciple of love"³⁴ in mystical

quidditative note to what is known; it adds only attention to the existential presence of what is known. In our current state, such presence is known only through our senses. Indeed, this is what makes the external sense powers unique: they form no expressed concepts, something that *is* required for the imagination, memory, estimative/cogitative power, and intellect. Thus, short of the Beatific Vision (which is possible only with the light of glory elevating our intellects), we have no *strictly intuitive knowledge of God*. For some of the philosophical reasoning behind the Thomist position on these matters, see John of St. Thomas, *Material Logic*, q. 23, a. 1.

³² Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 232.

³³ Though it also must be said that theology *also* scrutinizes and defends its own principles in a theological manner, fulfilling the tasks of a true kind of wisdom: "Theology like every science *simpliciter dicta* knows its own principles by turning back on them. Even when the matter concerns a truth of faith theology knows it, not insofar as it is a mystery of faith which transcends theological science but insofar as it is an object to which this science returns to examine it, and explain it and make it more definite in the light of virtual revelation" (Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 236–37). While emphasizing the *sapiential* character of this kind of undertaking, Doronzo expresses this matter with helpful clarity, explaining both the illative-deductive scientific work of theology and its sapiential concern with both its own principles and the other, inferior sciences (*Introduction to Theology*, 21–24).

³⁴ Maritain, *Dream of Descartes*, 49. See also Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 268: "An essentially superhuman formal object; a human mode of knowing: here lies, as we may note immediately in passing, the reason why faith will perpetually strive to exceed its own way of knowing. That is why faith, as distinct from metaphysics, will of itself place in the soul, at least radically, an unconditional desire for mystical contemplation properly so called, which, although it is contained within its own proper sphere, faith is nevertheless not adequate to procure all by itself." He goes on to cite Aquinas, *De veritate* q. 14, a. 2; q. 18, a. 3, and q. 18, a. 3, ad 1.

experience, so too does theological science demand completion (so to speak) in supernatural adoration of God.³⁵

Theology is thus distinguished from faith, as well as from the quasi-experiential gift of wisdom.³⁶ Nevertheless, theology scientifically explains the nature of this experiential wisdom (insofar as its object is God known in himself), as well as the nature of the means by which one arrives at this experiential wisdom (insofar as contemplative wisdom experiences God here below)—though theological science is not itself that same mode of knowledge.

In his commentary on *ST* q. 1, a. 4, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange lays out a position that, as expected, follows Cajetan regarding the subject of theological science. The science is *formally and eminently* speculative and practical. As the simple perfections “in” the Godhead are formally and eminently one with the Deity as such, and as the human soul is formally and eminently sensitive, vegetative, and rational, so too does theology contain both the speculative and the practical order in a formal and eminent manner—both at once, but as a single, loftier reality. It cannot be practical in the strict, philosophical sense of a practical science. Practical knowledge perfects the intellect with regard to the directing actions to be done or artifacts to be made (in a broad sense—*agibile* and the *factibile*).³⁷ Inasmuch as we under-

³⁵ See Jacques Maritain, “No Knowledge without Intuitivity,” in *Untrammelled Approaches*, trans. Bernard Doering (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 345n49: “[In contrast to philosophical contemplation,] in theological contemplation the central concepts concern articles of faith—and that the light used by the mind is not only the light of reason but also, and primarily, that of faith—and finally that what accompanies this contemplation is not the natural love of God, but the love of charity, not a natural adoration, but a supernatural adoration inseparable from charity.”

³⁶ See *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3, and *ST* II-II; q. 45.

³⁷ Though one should be careful not to overstate the case here. The speculatively practical knowledge of moral philosophy is different from prudence, which rectifies the practical intellect with regard to counseling, judging, and (most especially) commanding the sorts of actions that should be done in the *hic et nunc*. Practical knowledge in its most practical manifestation is found in the command of prudence, which truly directs action. A similar point could be made with regard to art as well, though the case is slightly different. On this, see “Appendix VII” in Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 481–89. Some clear-headed reflections on these matters can be found in Philip Neri Reese, “The End of Ethics: A Thomistic Investigation,” *New Blackfriars* 95 (May 2014): 285–94. Note, however, that Reese seems to treat speculatively practical moral philosophy in a manner that is *slightly* too speculative, but that is a matter outside our immediate concerns.

stand the “practical” in this natural sense—which is the standard account of *phronesis* (*prudentia*) and *techne* (*ars*) as opposed to the purely speculative intellectual virtues—it is inappropriate to consider theology as being “practical” (at least according to Garrigou-Lagrange and the general Thomistic tradition). It is concerned not with actions to be done so much as the Godhead to be contemplated (through revelation, grace, the gift of wisdom, and in the light of glory).³⁸

The whole of the moral “part” of theology is about God.³⁹ It is not about moral acts *in themselves*. It is about *moral acts insofar as they are directed to the final supernatural end—namely, to the Beatific Vision*. Here too, in moral theology, our formal viewpoint is the Deity—God revealed as the Principle of the supernaturalized moral life. Yes, it is about “how God’s life is shared with man.” Nonetheless, the axis in theology is *always* God.⁴⁰ This point cannot be proclaimed too emphatically, for man—well accustomed to the difficult ways of the world and used to discoursing about matters much more quotidian—will always be tempted to make a theology (and an entire philosophy) that is made to man’s measure.

The “circuit” of theological wisdom retains the perspective of God’s intimate self-knowledge as revealed in faith and lived in hope and charity (as well as through the infused moral virtues and under the inspiration of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit). Thus, the lofty end of theology is the Beatific Vision, both *in via* (as lived in the life of grace that flowers in supernatural acts of love and of infused contemplation) and, ultimately, *in patria*. For, whatever might be said for this view (one with a long history in Christian spirituality), it certainly is the

³⁸ See Garrigou-Lagrange, *The One God*, 61. See also *ST I*, q. 1, a. 4.

³⁹ On this important point, see Garrigou-Lagrange, “Du caractère métaphysique de la Théologie morale,” 341–55.

⁴⁰ This point is well expressed in Doronzo, *Introduction to Theology*, 16: “This property of theology [its specific unity] follows from the specific and indivisible unity of its formal object, the concept of Deity, which is constantly and equally considered in all the parts and treatises of this science. In fact, such treatises may be given the following formal titles: On the One God; On the Trinity in God; On God creating and Elevating; On God sanctifying through grace; . . . On the sacraments, sanctifying instruments of God; On God the Rewarder, or the Last Things. This is the reason why the divisions of theology into its various parts or treatises is not an essential division, that is, a division into specifically distinct treatises. It is only an accidental division, that is, into integrative or complementary parts which make up one total and single science.”

view that was inherited by Maritain during his formation, which owed much to Garrigou-Lagrange.⁴¹

The *Habitus* of Moral Philosophy

In contrast with the theologian's concerns, the moral philosopher engages in a number of problems that are not of ultimate interest to the moral theologian, though the moral theologian may benefit from the development of such matters pertaining to moral philosophy. Certainly, "the Gospel . . . brings salvation and general freedom even to temporal realities,"⁴² for the supernatural order supervenes on the natural to perfect the latter. The supernatural is not a block extrinsically stacked upon the tier of natural finalities. For this reason, theologians (and the magisterium) have legitimate interests regarding temporal, political, and historical matters. All of this is pertinent to the order of salvation, but we must be careful not to confuse the unfolding of grace in history and the (often simultaneous) elevation of natural (and of *solely intra-historical*) finalities by grace.⁴³

It is helpful to consider the very mixed situation of the human agent and how we might consider even one and the same act. For example, in a given society that has reached a state of political and economic sufficiency, it might be judged cogent that, in certain clear-cut cases, workers' rights should take some determinate form within

⁴¹ This is quite evident when Maritain discusses these matters rather directly in a section of *Degrees of Knowledge* explicitly dedicated to Garrigou-Lagrange ("Mystical Experience and Philosophy," in *The Degrees of Knowledge*, 263–309). In spite of their sad falling out, he never lost respect for Garrigou-Lagrange. See Jacques Maritain, *Notebooks*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (Albany, NY: Magi Books, 1984), 168–69: "I transcribe my notes of 1937 without attenuating anything in them; I insist only on remarking that our differences in political matters never diminished the affection and the gratitude which Raissa and I had for him [i.e., Garrigou-Lagrange]. (And he for his part, even when he found fault with me, did what he could to defend me.) This great theologian, who was little versed in the things of the world, had an admirably candid heart, which God finally purified by a long and very painful physical trial, a cross of complete annihilation, which, according to the testimony of the faithful friend who assisted him in his last days, he had expected and which he accepted in advance. I pray to him now with the saints in Heaven."

⁴² See *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, trans. Libreria Editrice Vaticana (Washington, DC: United States Council of Catholic Bishops, 2005), §2.

⁴³ On this, see Jacques Maritain, *On the Philosophy of History*, ed. Joseph W. Evans (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), 119–63.

the structures of society. According to the conception of theology noted above, this sort of concern would seem to be rather extrinsic to the lofty ends of the Beatific Vision, perhaps even bearing witness to the tenuousness of a monastic “otherworldliness” at the heart of such a view of theology. However, let us recall that Aquinas was willing to ask himself at (e.g.) *ST* I-II, q. 7, a. 2, whether or not the theologian should consider the circumstances of acts. The first of his reasons is most pertinent for my example. The theologian considers the circumstances insofar as they are related to supernatural beatitude.⁴⁴ A “theology of work”⁴⁵ can exist as a theological task *only* insofar as it has an eye toward grace, charity, mystical contemplation, and ultimately, the Beatific Vision. Insofar as it is truly a task of *theology*, it will not be primarily concerned with the progress of justice in human, cultural history—at least not as the ultimate concern that formally specifies and guides its reflections.

However, there is room for such a concern, and it is here that we find the true role for moral philosophy. We can (and should) inquire concerning such workers’ rights with an eye strictly focused upon the intra-historical finalities toward which they contribute: the progress of civilization and the amelioration of the human condition, at least inasmuch as that is possible.⁴⁶ Inasmuch as nature and temporal history *are in fact real and have intelligibility*—quite real indeed, the philosopher will argue—such matters will need to consider the good of the human agent *as a collaborator in human history*. History is indeed directed toward the Beatific Vision, but the order of nature is a unique order of reality, lived in the actions of the humans and

⁴⁴ See *ST* I-II, q. 7, a. 2, resp.: “I respond that it must be said that circumstances pertain to the theologian’s consideration for three reasons. First, indeed, because the theologian considers human acts inasmuch as man is led to beatitude through them. However, everything that is ordered to the end [i.e., all the means] must be proportioned to the end. Now, the act is proportioned to the end according to a kind of commensuration, which comes about through due circumstances. Whence, a consideration of circumstances pertains to the theologian” (my translation from the Leonine edition).

⁴⁵ A questionable expression at best, for it is not a science that is separate from theology itself (at least on the Thomistic view concerning the matter).

⁴⁶ The reader will likely note that this kind of caveat (i.e., “at least inasmuch as that is possible”) is a mark of the sorts of things that a Christian anthropology brings to bear on a full consideration of moral matters. The Christian, having pondered the words of revelation and accounts such as those concerning the tower of Babel, knows well the limitations of human historical achievements.

having its own inner practical (or intentional) consistency.⁴⁷ Supernatural life does not abrogate the civil and cultural life⁴⁸ that is the finest flower of human nature (for, the common good is more divine than the private).⁴⁹ This falls to the domain of philosophical ethics, which considers human actions with regard to the *temporal* common good, even if that temporal good is subordinate to a further end that is eternal and supernatural.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Indeed, history (as the intentional existence of *human actions, makings, and knowledge*) is found truly *in* the actions that are either potentially or actually undertaken by human persons—though this presence is intentional, not *in esse physico* or *ens naturae* (at least strictly speaking). However, the defense of this claim would require a discussion of moral being, practical signification, and many other matters that are outside the bounds of this article.

⁴⁸ See Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 179, 181–82, and 211:

But the natural and temporal ends of human life are not pure means in relation to the life of grace and glory. They are ends—intermediate or infravalent ends—and in this respect they are not specified by the supernatural last end. . . . And the last natural end of human life is not eliminated. It is realized *in excess* by and in the last supernatural end. . . .

It is clear that this phrase has to do not with the delimitation of a given material field in isolation from the rest of human conduct, but with the assignment of a formal point of view or formal aspect in accordance with which the whole matter of human conduct may be brought under consideration. The *convictus politicus* or *vita civilis* (that is, life in the order of temporal culture and civilization) like the acquired moral virtues is absolutely inseparable from human life in general and the whole order of the virtues. . . .

As grace does not destroy nature, nor supernatural life destroy “civil” life, when the soul has acquired the natural moral virtues, these natural moral virtues coexist in the just soul with infused virtues.

⁴⁹ See Aquinas, *In I eth.*, lec. 2, no. 30.

⁵⁰ See Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 117, 180n1. This theme regularly comes up in Maritain when he discusses the non-instrumental (“infravalent”) end uniquely characterizing the natural end of the human person (see: *Science and Wisdom*, 127 and 219; *Integral Humanism*, 136–37 and 167–77; *On the Philosophy of History*, 130–132; and Jacques Maritain, *Freedom in the Modern World*, trans. Richard O’Sullivan [New York: Gordian Press, 1971], 106–7).

In particular, consider Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 182 and 184: “Temporal life and temporal ends point out the formal aspect in which the whole field is considered, with all its concrete ends both natural and supernatural, and with all its actual order of virtues, whether acquired or infused. . . . And even when we are concerned with problems that in material terms are identical, *they still differ in their formal perspective of investigation and demonstration*. So that when dealing with moral philosophy adequately considered *we are dealing with a web of scientific conclusions different from* but subordinated to the conclusions of moral theology” (emphasis added).

The philosopher asks quite different questions from the theologian, for his or her gaze is directed ultimately on the meaning of human acts *as temporal human acts*. In moral philosophy, it is not *human act as supernaturally ordered to God* that is the perspective considered (as it is in theology). The moral philosopher considers human acts as temporal realities in relation to culture, history, political life, and so forth.⁵¹ Unless we are willing to reduce the questions of (e.g.) political rule to a kind of political theology, we require a manner of reflecting on human actions so that the primary, *formal* concern (i.e., the *formal light under which it is considered*) is not eternal happiness.⁵² The question “What is the correct manner to educate the youth in this kind of political regime?” is not one that necessarily should be answered from within theological science.⁵³ Yes, to address it correctly, the moral philosopher will need to reflect on the supernatural destiny of humanity, and hence, moral philosophy requires some sort of subalternation to theology. However, the matter does not have an immediate supernatural bearing. It is concerned with a human act pertaining to an intra-historical, sociopolitical act, ultimately to be elicited by *natural political prudence*.

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- ⁵¹ For example, the philosopher turns his gaze toward wounded nature. “But he is interested in our wounded nature, like the novelist and unlike the theologian, for its own sake: and the notion of a wounded nature awakens in his wisdom other echoes than those that are stirred in the theologian. The same may be said of the notion of nature redeemed. In these notions he can study the problems which are his own, for instance of concrete psychology and of character, or the history of philosophy, or political philosophy, or the philosophy of the world and of culture, the historical development of the enigma of the human being and the phases of man’s factual situation which are typical for different moments of civilization” (Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 185).
- ⁵² Of course, the latter perspective is still the province of the theology, which remains superior and will have to exert an external rule (like any super-ordinate wisdom does upon its inferior—as in the case of metaphysics vis-à-vis natural philosophy and the particular sciences). Also, it will need to exert an internal rule if moral philosophy indeed does subalternate itself to theology, accepting theological conclusions about these matters so as to constitute itself as a truly practical science. Nonetheless, the *Deity as such* (which illuminates, structures, and orders *all* of theological science) will not be the formal perspective of such a separate *practical philosophy*.
- ⁵³ Technically, it is a question for political *prudence*. However, it bears witness to a domain of cultural and *intra-historical* moral facts that would be bleached out of view (or, at best, distorted as regards their *natural finalities*) if they were considered *only* as pertaining to the domain of the theologian.

In *On the Philosophy of History*, Maritain expressed all of this as follows:

And I would suggest that Christian moral philosophy is more disposed than theology to feel the proper importance of time and the temporal order. It is more disposed to see that they have their own finalities and their own created values, even though they are means in relation to eternity. Christian philosophy is concerned with the direction of human history, not only in relation to the work of eternal salvation, on which history has an impact, but also and primarily in relation to that very work accomplished in human history which is in itself terrestrial and immanent in time.⁵⁴

Adequate Consideration of Moral Philosophy: An Invitation

As is obvious at this point, I am supportive of the general élan of Maritain's broader proposals regarding adequate consideration of moral philosophy. However, I am not unaware of the difficulties it involves. First, it requires a careful explanation of the way that theological knowledge can become part of the demonstrative "warp and woof" of a philosophical science addressing the concerns of reason *as such* (and not *reason as instrumentally elevated by faith*, as it is in theology). A second, related point arises in light of the question of pluralism and the possibility of discussing matters of moral philosophy with philosophers who do not formally assent to matters of supernatural faith. Neither of these problems can be resolved in this article, though I intend to take them up in the near future.⁵⁵ For now, I will propose some partial reflections regarding the "way forward," assuring the reader that these important matters will not go unaddressed.

Joseph Owens once perspicuously argued that the moral universal of Aristotelian ethics is closely tied to cultural development—a point about which Maritain was quite sensitive.⁵⁶ Claims regard-

⁵⁴ Maritain, *On the Philosophy of History*, 39–40.

⁵⁵ They have been anticipated by Maritain, who *has* provided a good deal of technical explanation on this matter, especially in *Science and Wisdom*. However, the issues need concerted and organized treatment. Regarding how I intend to take up these matters in the future, see my remarks in note 18 above.

⁵⁶ See Joseph Owens, "The Ethical Universal in Aristotle," *Studia Moralia* 3 (1965): 27–47. See also, e.g., Maritain, *On the Philosophy of History*, 104–11 and Jacques Maritain, *Loi naturelle ou loi non écrite*, ed. Georges Brazzola (Fribourg, CH: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1986), 183–224.

ing moral universals are parts of traditions that incorporate within themselves sedimentations and strata of practical intelligibility. Here, the general framework of Alasdair MacIntyre's thought—that is, that the advance of discussion can be based upon the ability of one conceptual scheme to accommodate its own paradoxes as well as those of others⁵⁷—may well provide some a model by which the Catholic philosopher can engage with nonbelievers when particular historical/existential data must be considered (e.g., those related to the fallen *state* of the moral agent, the supernatural effects of grace active in the human person, etc.)⁵⁸

Note that I have *not at all* denied the fecund common ground of generally philosophical moral questions that are accessible to believer and nonbeliever, prescinding from any consideration of these aforementioned theological matters. However, when the Catholic philosopher passes to certain classes of existential questions, he or she is not permitted to wear the light laurels of an earlier state of pre-revelation cultural existence.⁵⁹ If he or she acknowledges the existence of *another, higher* wisdom—that of Beatific Wisdom and theological wisdom—he or she cannot but affirm the relation of philosophical disciplines and practical ends vis-à-vis those orders of wisdom. However, *for philosophers*, these premises can be accepted in a manner akin to that by which the physicist accepts mathematical concepts from the pure mathematician. Such an assent is more like an act of “trust” regarding the theological assertion, and it is one that is not the same as an assent of supernatural faith. One thus accepts “on trust” data from another science for ends that are not those of the higher science.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ See, e.g., Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2008).

⁵⁸ See the profound remarks in Maritain, *An Introduction*, 115–19, esp. 117–19. See also Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 98–99.

⁵⁹ See Maritain, *Dream of Descartes*, 68–69.

⁶⁰ For some length of discussion on this, see Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 188–209. A compact text that explains the issue, though needing further discussion, is found in 196n1: “Every subalternated science (other than theology) makes use of *credulitas humana* with regard to the subalternating science. It is not surprising that the communicated virtue of faith can produce an act of natural and human assent in the mind of the philosopher with regard to theological science, for this communicated virtue reaches its goal through an inference and through a judgment which is not the act of belief but an effect of the act of belief, as John of St. Thomas points out with regard to quite another problem (*Cursus theologicus*, vol. 7, disp. 2, a. 1, n. 27 and 28), which bears on a subject of the human order (‘the supernatural mysteries enclosed

Of course, in a pluralistic world, arguments with nonbelievers will greatly benefit from the humility that should be inspired by the methods proposed by MacIntyre. However, there is nothing necessarily “anti-philosophical” about the approach discussed above. Such is the paradox of the history of salvation, is it not? For the moral philosopher most especially, questions of final ends require some answer: yes, no, or “not important.” How to formulate those matters to those who do not accept the premises of the Catholic faith is no easy matter. Perhaps the remark is a bit too hopeful, but Maritain’s general recommendation rings true, I believe: “The theological truths received by moral philosophy adequately considered present themselves to the nonbelieving philosopher as superior hypotheses from which one starts to work.”⁶¹

In some cases, discussions with nonbelievers are perhaps less complicated. For example, there are many topics that are merely “expanded” by the demands that theology makes upon philosophical science. Consider the length and detail of Aquinas’s treatise on justice in the *Summa theologiae*, which contains much purely “natural” wisdom.⁶² Other topics, such as the effects of the Fall, will need arguments of a more rhetorical and dialectical character to be made to those who do not share the light of faith.⁶³ Here, the data of

in human life are known by faith, theology is the science of faith, therefore it is reasonable to trust theology on this question’). We should notice moreover that the conclusions of the theologian which proceed from faith, but through the medium of a natural *discursus*, are not an object of faith but of human science.” This matter will be central in a later article concerned with these matters.

⁶¹ Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 197.

⁶² See *ST* II-II, qq. 57–122. Other examples could be cited at length, of course. However, the treatise on justice is a striking instance of such expansion and clarification concerning naturally knowable topics.

⁶³ This should not be surprising for any Aristotelian account of ethics, for the Stagirite himself was keenly aware of the limits and difficulties of moral-philosophical discourse, as amply evidenced in the first book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Perhaps G. K. Chesterton provides a great example of how to present such a rhetorical argument, for example, in *Orthodoxy*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 1, ed. David Dooley (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 321:

This startling swiftness with which popular systems turn oppressive is the third fact for which we shall ask our perfect theory of progress to allow. It must always be on the lookout for every privilege being abused, for every working right becoming a wrong. In this matter I

anthropology likely can help provide telling parallels to the Christian account. The same would go for higher claims regarding the ultimate supernatural end of the human person, which has stimulated effects that are of keen interest to the sociologist and anthropologist.⁶⁴

It is part of the specific vocation of the philosopher to be concerned with realities that are not *directly* the province of the theologian *qua theologian*. Theological science should always have its eye toward eternity, toward the inner mystery of the Deity as such. That is *not* the formal object of the moral philosopher's science. This is not to reduce all theological speculation to a form of otherworldliness, but it is a recognition that there is an *extramundane, gratuitous, supernatural, divinizing* end to which all supernatural knowledge is ordered: the Beatific Vision. Perhaps—I repeat, *perhaps*—philosophers are temperamentally better suited to assert the rights of nature—not to usurp the supernatural, but to be clear concerning this pivotal point: nature, history, culture, and politics are true realities. There is an intra-temporal, natural finality to human life,⁶⁵ and the theologian

am entirely on the side of the revolutionists. They are really right to be always suspecting human institutions; they are right not to put their trust in princes nor in any child of man. The chieftain chosen to be the friend of the people becomes the enemy of the people; the newspaper started to tell the truth now exists to prevent the truth being told. Here, I say, I felt that I was really at last on the side of the revolutionary. And then I caught my breath again: for I remembered that I was once again on the side of the orthodox.

Christianity spoke again and said: "I have always maintained that men were naturally backsliders; that human virtue tended of its own nature to rust or to rot; I have always said that human beings as such go wrong, especially happy human beings, especially proud and prosperous human beings. This eternal revolution, this suspicion sustained through centuries, you (being a vague modern) call the doctrine of progress. If you were a philosopher you would call it, as I do, the doctrine of original sin. You may call it the cosmic advance as much as you like; I call it what it is—the Fall."

A task of a future article will be to distinguish this sort of argument from an apologetic argument concerning motives of rational credibility for assenting to truths of faith.

⁶⁴ See the profound remarks in the sections entitled "Signs and Indications Provided by Experience" and "The Sociology of the Last End" in Maritain, *An Introduction*, 115–29.

⁶⁵ See Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 211, 213, and 215:

As grace does not destroy nature, nor supernatural life destroy "civil" life, when the soul has acquired the natural moral virtues, these natural

deals with this temporality only in light of his or her own particular supernatural concerns. The ontological density of moral history—*qua historical and temporal*—remains on the philosopher's plane. It was for this reason that Maritain once wrote:

Were we to refuse thus to differentiate moral philosophy adequately considered from moral theology, we should, I believe, either be failing to form a sufficiently elevated idea of theology, or else subjecting philosophy to a certain violation of its inherent rights. Moral theology, in point of fact, is not just a superelevated moral philosophy; indeed, it is much more than that. And yet there ought to be a superelevated moral philosophy. In the first place, it is an essential requirement of human reason that a moral philosophy be set up which will stand as a counterpart of speculative philosophy in the primary division of finite knowledge. Then again, this moral philosophy would not be adequate to its object unless it were elevated, and the necessary and sufficient condition of this is subalternation to theology. Hence the practical philosophy adequately considered, the *ratio formalis sub qua* of which we have pointed out above.⁶⁶

moral virtues coexist in the just soul with infused virtues. . . .

To push the analysis further we would need to distinguish, in the soul itself and in the moral life of the person two zones or domains corresponding to the classical distinction between the spiritual and the temporal, between the kingdom of God and the “political” world or the world of culture. . . .

The initiative is with the acquired virtue in regard to its own ends which are civil and temporal; though the acquired virtue has need of the infused virtue so as to be borne beyond its natural point of specification (*ultra suum specificum*) as is proper in the case of a rightly directed ordered civil or temporal life, that is, a civil or temporal life referring indirectly to the supernatural last end. For of itself civil life belongs to the natural order. But this natural order of civil life is exalted by way of participation from the fact of its reference (which may be explicit or implicit “as life is lived”) to the supra-temporal ends of human persons; without such a reference the civil or temporal order has not the rectitude proper to it.

This remains, in my opinion, the great insight that undergirds Maritain's “integral humanism” and that lends it staying power in spite of whatever might justly be said to be its limitations. Though, as noted earlier, the Christian also has the sobering account of revelation to remind us of the limits of temporal progress. This is an important moral datum as well!

⁶⁶ Maritain, *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 73.

In what we have discussed in this article, I have attempted to emphasize the loftiness of moral theology in Maritain's account. In so doing, I likewise have attempted to draw attention to the fact that this is *quite* different from a speculatively practical reflection on moral *human acts as such*, considered as acts ruled by reason's *natural finalities* (and not as *supernaturalized* human acts in tendency toward a supernatural terminus in the Beatific Vision). The sciences of theology and moral philosophy must not be confused, for their subjects are radically different: one is God in the inner mystery of the Deity (in which we participate through the life of grace and glory), and the other is the free human act as *free*, as *moral*, and especially as *human*. Also, I have taken for granted a general agreement that the supernatural order has repercussions on the natural order, both for good (in elevating the natural order itself) and for ill (insofar as defection from the supernatural end leads to wounds in nature itself). In so doing, I have at least opened a space for Maritain's "adequate consideration" of moral philosophy in light of theological data. What remains as a goal for a future article is the more detailed technical question of how a practical *philosophical* science can assent to revealed data without thus becoming part of theology. At this point of the discussion, we can say only that, if indeed such an assent is possible (as I intend to show it to be), it most certainly cannot consider the human act *sub ratione Deitatis* in the manner of theological knowledge.⁶⁷ N V

⁶⁷ I would like to thank James Bryan, Michael Krom, and an anonymous reader for helping me add precision to my thoughts on the matters covered in this article.

Journet on the Impossibility of Christian Holy War

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WHETHER THE MEDIEVAL CRUSADES can be deemed justified still elicits debate. Thus, when President Obama cited the Crusades as evidence of wrongful Christian violence in the past (as a strategy for explaining how Islam as a religion should not be singled out for blame on grounds that it is especially prone to violence),¹ friends of the Crusades stepped forward to defend the noble spirit of self-sacrifice that animated the Knights Templar and other Christians who had sought to protect their co-religionists from harm and to regain the inheritance of Christ from Muslims.² Indeed, if we survey the vast literature on the Crusades, it can be normatively divided between those who paint this religiously motivated warfare in dark strokes (as premised on a misguided belief in divinely sanctioned violence) and others who express their admiration for the high values that motivated the crusaders and even hold it up as an example of Christian behavior that could be applicable in all times and places. Thus, the theological apologists around General Franco encouraged his prosecution of the Spanish civil war (1936–1939) on grounds that this war against

¹ Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President at the National Prayer Breakfast,” The White House, February 5, 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/05/remarks-president-national-prayer-breakfast>.

² See Elizabeth Bruenig, “Conservatives Have Stooped to Defending the Horrific Crusades,” *The New Republic* (digital edition), February 9, 2015, <https://newrepublic.com/article/121008/obamas-crusades-remark-generates-conservative-backlash>.

Republican “unbelievers” who were endangering the Catholic identity of Spain was a spiritual continuation of the medieval crusade against the infidel Moors.³ And in our own day, some have criticized Pope Francis’s conciliatory stance vis-à-vis Islam and have instead suggested that a fifth “crusade” should be initiated in the Middle East in order to protect fellow Christians from attack by the Islamic State and other militant groups.⁴ Echoes of this thinking may be discerned in a 2014 Vatican address⁵ by Steven Bannon (former chief strategist for the Trump administration) when he stated: “If you look back at the long history of the Judeo-Christian West’s struggle against Islam, I believe that our forefathers kept their stance, and I think they did the right thing. I think they kept it out of the world, whether it was at Vienna, or Tours, or other places. . . . In like manner, it is incumbent on all of us . . . to really think about what our role is in this battle that’s before us.”⁶ From the context, it is made abundantly clear that this is a war to defend the “Judeo-Christian West” and its values. This is what, in earlier times, was known as a defensive holy war, “a crusade.”

A Normative Viewpoint on the Crusades

Determining the normative status of the Crusades—vis-à-vis the past but also as mode of Christian action that could be undertaken today—was a central topic of theological inquiry for Charles Journet in the years 1937–1939. As can be gleaned from his correspondence with Jacques Maritain, it was the outbreak of civil war in Spain that had prompted the Swiss abbé to reflect on this issue. In May of 1937,

³ See Gregory M. Reichberg, “Jacques Maritain: l’Espagne et la guerre sainte,” *Revue thomiste* 115, no. 2 (2015): 215–33.

⁴ William Kilpatrick, “Needed: A New Church Policy toward Islam [Pt. 2],” *Crisis Magazine*, February 4, 2015, <http://www.crisismagazine.com/2015/needed-new-church-policy-toward-islam-pt-2/>; “The Fifth Crusade? – Pope Francis Calls For Armed Christian Crusades Against Islam,” *The Last Refuge*, August 11, 2014, [http://theconservativetreehouse.com/2014/08/11/the-fifth-crusade-pope-francis-calls-for-armed-christian-crusades-against-islam.](http://theconservativetreehouse.com/2014/08/11/the-fifth-crusade-pope-francis-calls-for-armed-christian-crusades-against-islam/)

⁵ J. Lester Feder, “This Is How Steve Bannon Sees The Entire World,” *Buzz Feed News*, November 16, 2016, [https://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/this-is-how-steve-bannon-sees-the-entire-world?utm_term=.rtL0DpaeV#.hogNOy9GA.](https://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/this-is-how-steve-bannon-sees-the-entire-world?utm_term=.rtL0DpaeV#.hogNOy9GA)

⁶ Earlier in the address, Bannon emphasized: “There is a major war brewing, a war that’s already global. . . . We’re at the very beginning stages of a global conflict, and if we do not bind together as partners with others in other countries this conflict is only going to metastasize.”

Journet read the first draft of Maritain's polemical essay "De la guerre sainte"⁷ ("On Holy War"), which aimed to discredit theological claims that the Nationalists were rightly engaged in a "holy war" to defend Christendom.⁸ Several months later, Journet published his own essay on this topic, "Le pouvoir indirecte de l'Église: les Croisades" ("The Indirect Power of the Church: the Crusades").⁹ In it, we find mention neither of the bloodletting in Spain nor of the ongoing attempts to justify it by reference to the "holy" medieval Crusades. As its title indicates, Journet's piece was written as a dispassionate theological examination of a question relative to Church jurisdiction: did Popes such as Urban II, Eugene III, or Gregory VII issue a crusading call to arms by virtue of their canonical role as supreme shepherds over Christ's Church? Or did they do so by virtue of another role, say insofar as they were temporal rulers themselves? In raising this question, Journet sought to discern whether the Crusades were a direct expression of the popes' spiritual ("canonical") power or, inversely, whether this power was only "indirectly engaged." If the former was found to obtain, the Church, Christ's mystical body on earth (the very embodiment of Christianity) would bear direct responsibility for the Crusades and these should be deemed an authentic instance of a divinely sanctioned "holy war." By contrast, if the latter alone was to hold, the Crusades would represent an initiative for which temporal rulers should be credited with the primary and constitutive authority. Such wars might very well be termed "just," but it would be improper to call them "holy."¹⁰

As we shall see, Journet opted unequivocally for the second of these alternatives. Beginning in 1937 within the pages of *Nova et Vetera*, he wrote on this topic at some length over the next two years.

⁷ Soon after, it appeared in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* 49, no. 286 (July 1937): 21–37. The essay later formed part of Maritain's preface—"Considerations françaises sur les choses d'Espagne"—to the French edition of Alfred Mendizabel, *Aux origines d'une tragédie: La politique espagnole de 1923 à 1936* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, September 1937).

⁸ In a letter written May 28, 1937, Journet comments on a draft of Maritain's essay: "Your effort to destroy the myth of holy war seems to me eminently healthy and purifying. It is completely in the logic of your theology of history which passes from [a regime] of a sacral sort to one of a profane kind" (Charles Journet and Jacques Maritain, *Correspondance*, vol. 2, 1930–1939 [Fribourg, CH: Editions Universitaires, 1997], 656–60 [letter no. 603]; translations from *Correspondance* are my own).

⁹ Charles Journet, "Le pouvoir indirect de l'Église: les Croisades," *Nova et Vetera* 12, no. 4 (1937): 437–58.

¹⁰ Journet lays out these two alternatives in "Le pouvoir indirect," 452–53.

His correspondence with Maritain provides a valuable window on the *status quaestionis* as it appeared to him during this period. The outcome of this reflection was a section in the first volume of *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*,¹¹ which Journet completed in 1939 (although, due to the outbreak of war, it was not published until 1941/2). As indicated by the work's subtitle ("Essai de théologie spéculative"), Journet did not view himself as engaged in apologetics.¹² His point was not to explain Christian participation in violence simply by attributing it to error or human failing on the part of the Church hierarchy. Rather, his aim was *doctrinal*: to delineate, based on a reading of Scripture and other authoritative sources, the exact standing of the Church in relation to violence. Could the apostolic faith provide the Church with any valid justification for resorting to violence? Or should such resort be rejected in principle as incompatible with the Church's identity and mission?

In this undertaking of a doctrinal assessment of the Church's standing in relation to violence, historical facts would need to be examined. Indeed, Journet attended closely to historical research on the Crusades.¹³ But, in so doing, he made clear that these facts would

¹¹ Charles Journet, *L'Église du Verbe Incarné: Essai de théologie spéculative*, vol. 1, *La hiérarchie apostolique* [henceforth, EVI-I], in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 1 (Fribourg, CH: Editions Saint-Augustin, 1998), 618–74. The English translation is by A. H. C. Downes in *The Church of the Word Incarnate*, vol. 1, *The Apostolic Hierarchy* (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 304–30. In what follows, citations from EVI-I will give the pagination of the French edition first, followed by the corresponding pages of the English translation (often modified in my longer quotations) in brackets. The first half of this section on the Crusades appeared earlier in "La guerre sainte et la croisade," *Nova et Vetera* 14, no. 3 (1939): 290–306, and was reproduced verbatim in EVI-I, 618–648 [304–19].

¹² See Journet's comment to this effect in EVI-I, 13–15 [xxix–xxx]. On the genesis of *L'Église de Verbe Incarné* and its relation to Journet's earlier writings, see Jacques Rime, *Charles Journet: Vocation et jeunesse d'un théologien* (Fribourg, CH: Academic Press, 2006).

¹³ In "Le pouvoir indirect," Journet cites chiefly from René Grousset, *Histoire des Croisades et du royaume franc de Jérusalem* (Paris: Plon, 1934). In EVI-I, Carl Erdmann's *Die Entstehung des Kreuzzugsgedankens* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1935) is also frequently cited. Journet's other sources include H. Pissard, *La guerre sainte en pays chrétien: Essai sur l'origine et le développement des theories canoniques* (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1912), and a set of lectures that Michel Villey had delivered in Beirut (a copy of which was conveyed to Journet) under the title *La Croisade dans l'histoire et le droit du moyen âge*. These lectures were later taken up in Villey's doctoral thesis, *La Croisade: Essai sur la formation d'une théorie juridique* (Paris: Vrin, 1942).

have to be interpreted *theologically*; in and of themselves, they cannot decisively confirm or disconfirm a theological proposition. History could show, for instance, that a pope had commanded resort to violence, but theology alone could establish on what grounds he had done so and by virtue of which specific role or mandate. But beyond researching holy war as a phenomenon within Church history, Journet was also intent on determining the viability—the “legitimacy,” as we would say today—of holy war for Christians of the present age. While he does not mention the possibility of a militant Islamic advance on the Christian communities of the West or Middle East, he does expressly ask whether the future defense of Christianity against the onslaught of militant atheism (then represented by an expansionist Soviet Union) could justify a new sort of “holy war,” analogous to the medieval Crusades. Some Catholic voices were soon to speak in this way,¹⁴ but Journet steadfastly maintained that this phraseology should be rejected, for reasons that will be explained below.

In considering the possibility of Christian holy war, Journet acknowledged that the data of history would have to be carefully weighed. In fact, some six months after first reading “Le pouvoir indirect,” Maritain questioned whether Journet had adequately accounted for the manifest fact that the medieval Popes had deliberately induced temporal rulers to engage in religiously motivated warfare.¹⁵ “Culturally, during the middle ages,” Maritain wrote: “*The Church did use the [temporal] city as an instrument in the broad sense— sending people to war against Islam— how, is it possible to deny this?*”¹⁶ For

¹⁴ For instance, the French Cardinal Alfred Baudrillart (rector of the Institute Catholique in Paris) created a stir in 1941 when he was reported to have issued a declaration that the German invasion of the Soviet Union was a “holy war.” Allusion to this appears in a letter written by Yves Simon to Jacques Maritain on November 6, 1941 (Jacques Maritain and Yves Simon, *Correspondance*, vol. 2, *Les années américaines [1941–1961]*, ed. Florian Michel [Paris: Editions CLD, 2012], 80 [letter no. 439]). I have not been able to find a published version of the declaration in question, but in his posthumously published diary, Baudrillart comes close to affirming as much. Writing on July 8, 1941, he exclaims that “now it is a question of a crusade against the Soviets; a crusade, please God that it be that and that one can count on France to be engaged and present on the Russian front” (Alfred Baudrillart, *Les Carnets du Cardinal: 1941–1942* [Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1999], 115).

¹⁵ This issue was first raised by Maritain in a letter written on May 20 or 27, 1938 (Journet and Maritain, *Correspondance*, 2:725–27 [letter no. 630]).

¹⁶ Jacques Maritain, Letter of [probably] June 2, 1938, in Journet and Maritain, *Correspondance*, 2:732 (letter no. 632; emphasis original).

Maritain, to say that the Church had employed the “heavy means” of the temporal sphere as instruments of its spiritual action was equivalent to placing primary responsibility for such action—including the inevitable bloodletting—on the Church. Although the Popes and other prelates might not have taken part in the fighting themselves, this was nevertheless done at their instigation, and hence, in a fundamental sense, it was directly imputable to them and ultimately to the Church under whose authority they issued their crusading appeals. Despite agreeing with Journet that formal distinctions are necessary in order to preserve a correct understanding of doctrine, Maritain cautioned nonetheless that, “if these distinctions are used to deny historical facts, they will take on the appearance of an evasion [*un échapatoire*].”¹⁷

The correspondence with Maritain reveals how, behind the calm exterior of a theologian discoursing on the proper jurisdictions of Church and state, Journet found himself anguishing over the exact relationship of Christ’s Church to violence.¹⁸ Indeed, Journet set the bar for his analysis very high. Two truths about nonviolence he deemed inherent to the Christian faith, and these correspondingly served as premises for his theological argument on this topic: (1) Jesus Christ made it abundantly clear that he would have no active part in violence and that his disciples should not defend him by violence, and by extension, the Church, Christ’s mystical body on earth, should likewise refrain from all active participation in violence; (2) by exercising supreme leadership over Christ’s Church on earth, the popes, by their canonical power (namely, the power conferred on them as successors of St. Peter), can have no direct role in war or violence of any sort.

The problem confronting Journet was accordingly to reconcile the second of the premises with the wide historical record of papal involvement in wars, the medieval Crusades in particular. Is it not obvious, for instance, that Pope Urban II and his successors issued a call to arms for the retaking of Jerusalem? Did not the inquisition to free the South of France from “Catharism”—an inquisition resulting

¹⁷ Maritain, Letter of June 2, 1938.

¹⁸ Thus, after laying out his position in a letter written on May 30, 1938, Journet states that, “unless some clear statement of authority obliges us to trace the effusion of blood to the Church as such, why not seek an explanation in the direction that I have marked out?” Later, in the same letter, he expresses some self-doubt, asking whether “I should modify my starting point?” (Journet and Maritain, *Correspondance*, 2:730 [letter no. 631]).

from a papal bull issued by Innocent III—authorize a war against the Albigensians?

It what follows, I examine the strategy adopted by Journet for reconciling evangelical nonviolence with the historical record concerning papal involvement in war, the Crusades most especially. Journet's analysis was admittedly broader, as it was intended to cover the inquisition against heretics and related phenomena as well.¹⁹ But, to keep the present article within manageable proportions, I will focus on the Crusades, with only peripheral comment on these other issues.

It goes without saying that there has been a broad philosophical/theological output on the relation of Christianity to violence. Within this field, much of the discussion has focused on the compatibility of Christianity with the idea and practice of just war. This is not, however, the angle pursued by Journet. He does not question the soundness of the just war doctrine; he takes it to be perennial teaching within the Church.²⁰ His interest is rather to discern in what measure there can be such a thing as a war undertaken in the name of Christianity—a “holy” war. From a descriptive point of view, he does not doubt that numerous Catholic Christians, including leading theologians and prelates, have affirmed the justifiability of a war undertaken in defense of the faith. He recognizes that some have even believed that infidels could rightly be compelled to the faith

¹⁹ Several months before “Le pouvoir indirect” appeared, Journet published a related article on the inquisition: “Le pouvoir coercitif de l’Eglise,” in *Nova et Vetera* 12, no. 3 (1937): 303–46. A section of EVI-I was subsequently devoted to this issue (530–618 [262–304]).

²⁰ Among some Catholic theologians, there was a trend in the early 1930s to seek a revision of the traditional teaching on just war. A declaration to this effect was issued in Fribourg, Switzerland, (hence it was termed the “Fribourg Conventus”) in October of 1931 and published six months later as “Le problème de la moralité de la guerre” in the Dominican journal *Les documents de la vie intellectuelle* 3 (1932): 199–213. Then a professor at the Grand Seminary in the same city, Journet expressed his reservations about this initiative in a letter to Jacques Maritain on March 21, 1932 (Journet and Maritain, *Correspondance*, 2:215 [letter no. 391]). For indications on the doctrinal status of just war among Catholic theorists in the first three decades of the twentieth century, see Jean-Marie Mayeur, “Les catholiques français et la paix du début du XXe siècle à la veille de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale,” in *Les Internationales et le problème de la guerre au XXe siècle: Actes du colloque de Rome 22–24 novembre 1984* (Rome: Publications de l’École française de Rome, 1987), 151–64.

by force of arms.²¹ He was well aware that some cardinals and even popes have led troops into battle.²² In this descriptive sense, it cannot be affirmed that Christianity excludes holy war. Journet's project was nonetheless not situated at this level. His intention was normative: to assess, within the framework of theology understood as *sacra doctrina*, whether holy war is consistent with the teaching of the faith. In so doing, his focus was principally on defensive holy war, as this still remained an open topic of theological debate²³ (in contrast to forced conversion, or offensive holy war, an idea that had been definitively ruled out by the thirteenth century²⁴).

In mounting his argument against holy war, Journet proceeds from a reasoned conception of what Christianity is (including the Church as a divinely caused society of believers) and how violence can or cannot pertain to it. He recognizes that alternative theological viewpoints have been advanced (as we shall see, Suárez is mentioned in this connection), but he argues for the soundness of his own account.

²¹ In the letter on May 20 or 27, 1938, Maritain pointed out that, after the conquest of Saxony in 785, Charlemagne issued a capitulary informing the inhabitants that those unwilling to accept baptism would be put to death (Journet and Maritain, letter no. 630). Alluding to this issue in EVI-I, Journet conceded that “the old ideas of conversion by constraint, armed mission, forced baptism [have] haunted the imagination of many men of action,” but at the same time he emphasized how these ideas have “expressly been rejected by the Church, and [are] not to be imputed to it without injustice” (631 [310–311]).

²² See the documentary evidence amassed in D. S. Chambers, *Popes, Cardinals, and War: The Military Church in Renaissance and Early Modern Europe* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006).

²³ As already noted, in 1936–1939, the theologians who supported the nationalist side in the Spanish civil war argued for the ongoing validity of defensive holy war within Catholic teaching; see for instance, A. de Castro Albarrán, *Guerra Santo: El sentido católico del movimiento nacional Español*, preface by Cardinal Goma (Burgos, ES: Editorial Española, 1938).

²⁴ The theological consensus rejecting offensive holy war was authoritatively affirmed in a decretal (*Quod super his*) issued by Innocent IV (Pope from 1243 to 1254): “Infidels should not be forced to accept the faith, since everyone’s free will ought to be respected, and this conversion should [come about] only by the grace of God” (passage reproduced in Gregory M. Reichberg and Henrik Syse, *Religion, War, and Ethics: A Sourcebook of Textual Traditions* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014], 92). Thomas Aquinas made a similarly emphatic statement against forced conversion in *Summa theologiae* [ST] II-II, q. 10, a. 8. At that time, only more limited pockets of debate remained, such as the question of whether the children of Jews could be baptized against the wishes of their parents.

Given Journet's normative optic, his analysis is patently not situated within the history or sociology of religion. Yet, by advancing this explicitly theological treatment of holy war, he provides a valuable complement to these discussions. It is to make this contribution better known that the present article has been written.²⁵

Key Premises concerning the Church and Nonviolence

Before elucidating Journet's solution to the problem at hand—whether acts of violence can be attributed to the Church—let us first consider the two premises concerning nonviolence that inform his discussion. The first premise bears, on the commitment to nonviolence as was taught and exemplified by Jesus. Citing Matthew 26:52, John 18:11, and related verses by which Jesus prohibited any resort to arms for his own defense, Journet affirms that these words must be taken at face value. From this scriptural basis, he concludes that the idea of a “Christian holy war” is inherently contradictory. Armed force that is made instrumental to spiritual ends, and thereby harnessed to such service by spiritual authorities, is inconsistent with the core message of the Gospels. “Never has there been, nor will there ever be, a ‘holy’ war in the proper sense of the term.”²⁶

The crucial question, of course, is to delineate the exact scope of the Gospel prohibition of resort to armed force. Journet takes this to bear directly on Jesus's actions and, by consequence, those of his disciples, since these actions are expressive of the Kingdom of God. Indeed, Jesus renounced violence in self-defense precisely to show how his Kingdom is “not of this world” (John 18:36). Contrasting the Gospel law to the law of Mohammad in this respect, Journet concludes that the former was taught to show us how the rules that govern “God's Kingdom” are all intended to manifest the primacy of charity.²⁷ In this respect, they necessarily exclude all deliberate spill-

²⁵ There has been relatively little written on Journet's treatment of holy war. One exception are the suggestive comments advanced by James Turner Johnson in his survey article “Holy War,” *Nova et Vetera* (English) 10, no. 4 (2012): 1099–113 (see especially 1105–8).

²⁶ Journet, “Le pouvoir indirect,” 457.

²⁷ Journet, “Le pouvoir indirect,” 457–58. In this respect, Journet follows the analysis of St. Thomas; see for instance the latter's commentary on Romans 12:21 (“Do not be overcome by evil”), where he explains how the good man can vanquish over evil by drawing his enemy into the “circle of love” (Marietti ed., no. 1015). For an analysis of Aquinas's statements concerning nonviolence, see Gregory M. Reichberg, *Thomas Aquinas on War and Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 54–66.

ing of blood. This Kingdom, as Journet puts the point emphatically, “never takes up arms.”²⁸

What, and where, is God’s Kingdom? For Journet, it is the society of those who live according to the true knowledge and love of God. This society exists most fully in heaven among those who see God “face to face” (enjoy the beatific vision), but it also extends into our world among those who walk in faith, hope, and charity. While retaining its fundamental unity, the kingdom of God nonetheless exists under two states or conditions: wayfarers, on the one hand, and the blessed, on the other. “Church” (*Église*) is another name for the kingdom of God, provided, Journet clarifies, that the first term be taken in its *formal*, *ontological*, or *theological* sense.²⁹ It is of course possible, he acknowledges, to speak of the Church in a sociological or *material* manner, in which sense it designates that collection of human beings who are named under this single heading insofar as they are baptized members of the ecclesial community. Such individuals can remain faithful to their baptismal commitment or deviate from it. For this reason, historians and others who write from an “empirical” standpoint naturally speak of the Church as though it were inherently composed of men good and bad: “The actions of each,” as Journet puts it, belong “indiscriminately to the Church.” On this sociological understanding, “the Church is responsible for all the good and evil that its members produce in time; it is at once the source, and the scene, of all the high achievements and all the unworthy lapses of Christians.”³⁰ On this conception, there would be no impediment to saying that warfare is conducted by or for the Church—that there has been Christian holy war.

But it is not according to this sociological/empirical meaning that Journet denies, on the part of the Church, any possible engagement in holy war. Speaking instead from the ontological standpoint of specu-

²⁸ Journet, “Le pouvoir indirect,” 457; reproduced in EVI-I, 673 [330]. A slightly different formulation may be found in EVI, vol. 2, *Sa structure interne et son unité catholique* (Fribourg, CH: Editions Saint-Augustin, 2000; originally published 1951), 1571, where Journet notes that, in contrast to Christendom, “the Church as such does not raise armies.” In making this comparison to Islam, Journet drew on the standard medieval trope that Christianity has advanced “by the blood of martyrs” and Islam “by the tip of a sword.” On this background and the distortions it implied, see Jean-Pierre Torrell, “Saint Thomas et les non-chrétiens,” *Revue thomiste* 106 (2006): 17–49 (especially 34–42, on the Saracens).

²⁹ EVI-I, 9 [xxvii].

³⁰ EVI-I, 11 [xxviii].

lative theology, he argues that warfare is inimical to the very nature of the Church qua Kingdom of God. Looked at in this way, the Church contains only what is consonant with the law of the Gospel:

The frontier of the Church passes through each one of those who call themselves its members, enclosing within its bounds all that is pure and holy, leaving outside all that is stain and sin. . . . So that even below, in the days of her pilgrimage, in the midst of the evil and sin at war in each one of her children, the Church itself remains immaculate. . . .

We must resist every tendency to materialize, to confuse its real frontiers with those of the persons who belong to it, of the groups and parties in which they are enrolled. We must always be redrawing by faith its true and living frontiers *within* these persons, groups, and parties, indeed within our own proper selves.

Of this Church (which comes from God by way of Christ and the hierarchy, which is visible, which includes sinners and not their sins) we shall have to say that it is at once purer and vaster than is commonly believed; purer, because it rejects all stain of sin, and vaster because it draws to itself everything that begins to spring up in this world from the seed of grace.³¹

From the parenthetical comment in the last paragraph of the quote above, it is manifest that Journet does not subscribe to the idea that an “invisible” and “perfect” Church” stands apart from the visible and imperfect Church that is led by an all-too-fallible clergy in this world. Rather, on his teaching, one and the same Church is at once visible and invisible, in heaven and on earth, and it is altogether pure and without sin. That part of the Church that is on earth issues from Christ through the mediation of St. Peter, his successors, and the resulting hierarchy.³² This mediation is indispensable; it cannot be bypassed. Hence, with respect to the *essential* (constitutive) functions that Christ has deputed to the Church hierarchy, there can be no deviation from the truth or corruption by sin. These functions are twofold: on the one hand, there is the “sacerdotal power”³³ (an

³¹ EVI-I, 13 [xxix].

³² In Journet’s technical vocabulary, the Church hierarchy exercises a “ministerial efficient causality” vis-à-vis that part of the Church that is on earth (see EVI-I, 115–20 [46–50]).

³³ Also termed a “power of order” (as in “holy orders”).

extension of Christ's priesthood) by which the holy sacraments confer on us the life of grace; on the other hand, there is the "jurisdictional power"³⁴ (an extension of Christ's kingship) by which we are governed—led on the path of faith—within the kingdom of God.

Within the Church, the exercise of governance (jurisdictional power) is likewise twofold. First, there is the "declaratory power" by which we are transmitted an infallible instruction on the truths of faith (and are thereby told "what pronouncements are to be received on the immediate authority of God"³⁵). Second, there is the "canonical power" (also termed "legislative") by which we are directed to actions that are binding upon us as citizens ("members") of this distinctive society that is the Church:³⁶

[This power] prescribes acts that fall under human observation, namely external acts [by contrast with the declaratory power that prescribes internal acts of assent]. . . . And indeed what exterior acts should it command save those directed to the Kingdom of God. . . . The ecclesiastical law . . . is not in the least like the law of temporal kingdoms. Rather it is a . . . determination of the revealed principles of a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom of grace and truth. . . .³⁷

The declaratory power addresses itself to all men. The canonical power never bears on any but the baptized. On them it can lay new duties; and to what is already prescribed for them by the divine law—and directly affecting the internal forum—it can add a new canonical obligation directly bearing on external acts.³⁸

³⁴ Also termed a "pastoral" or "apostolic" power.

³⁵ EVI-I, 331–32 [160–161].

³⁶ The idea that the Church is a society analogous to but fully distinct from the temporal societies of the world is discussed at length in EVI-I. For a good treatment of this theme and a defense of Journet's conceptualization against some standard criticisms, see Benoît-Dominique de la Soujeole, "L'Église est-elle une 'société'?" *Revue thomiste* 114 (2014): 197–212.

³⁷ EVI-I, 372–73 [182].

³⁸ EVI-I, 374 [183]. For a list of acts ordained by the apostles by virtue of the canonical power conferred on them by Christ (Matt 16:19 or John 21:17), see EVI-I, 366–67 [179–80], which cites, among others: Acts 15:29; 1 Cor 5:5; and 2 Cor 8–9. For an example of canonical power as exercised by popes, Journet mentions that Pope Pius IX, after defining the Immaculate Conception as an object of divine faith, "invoked the *canonical* penalties provided by the law against those who would *outwardly* deny it" (EVI-I, 374 [183]).

This resumé of Journet's teaching on jurisdictional power in the Church leads us to the second of his two premises regarding the possibility of holy war.

(2) In exercising their canonical power, is it at all conceivable that the popes and others in the Church hierarchy should direct the faithful to participate in acts of war? Was it by his canonical power that Urban called a crusade to wrest the Holy Land from the infidel Muslims, or was it by canonical power that Innocent III instigated a military campaign to suppress heresy among the Albigensians? Echoing his earlier correspondence with Maritain, Journet formulates this question in terms of a theological dilemma:

We shall . . . have to discuss . . . the legitimacy of many measures taken by the medieval popes in the name of their powers: . . . transference of the imperial dignity, deposition of apostate princes, suppression of heresy, organization of crusades. If we maintain that these measures were justified, there seems to be a danger that those who thus work to save the full authority of the canonical power entertain the secret hope that one day all its medieval applications will be revived. And if, on the contrary, we disavow these measures, and consider them to have been usurpations on the part of the spiritual power, it seems as though we shall have to agree that in thus falling in with the methods of the kingdoms of this world the Church lost sight of its transcendence, yielded to the third temptation rejected by our Lord, allowed its sanctity to be eclipsed during long centuries and, by ambition, weakness, or ignorance, betrayed the mission that Christ had entrusted to it. Neither the theologian who simply asserts the divine character of the canonical power, nor the historian content to plead extenuating circumstances for an attitude he admits to be regrettable, will ever resolve these grave questions.³⁹

In working toward a resolution of this dilemma, Journet had no choice but to deny that the harsh measures listed above could have been directed by the popes by virtue of their canonical power. The actions that flow from the Church as Body of Christ and Kingdom of God are always spiritual in nature, and thus ecclesiastical penalties,

³⁹ EVI-I, 393–94 [193].

insofar as they are necessary for the Church as it exists in this world, “will always be spiritual by reason of their end.”⁴⁰ Consequently, even when these penalties “touch delinquents in their visible, temporal and material goods”: “[The penalties in question] will be distinct from those inflicted by civil society. They will have another measure . . . [and will not] go so far as the shedding of blood and the death penalty.”⁴¹ Similarly, fidelity to theological principles drawn from Holy Scripture required Journet to affirm that “preaching (and living) the Gospel” are “the sole means of conquest proper to the Church” and that, for this reason, it is never permitted to expand its boundaries by dint of war.⁴² Nor is the Church allowed to protect itself from outward attack by force of arms:

The sole means of defense proper to the Church as such, and arising from its nature as the visible Kingdom of God among men, remain spiritual in measure and aim, even when temporal in themselves. They do not consist in opposing blade to blade, bloody constraint to bloody constraint: “Behold, I send you forth as sheep among wolves” (Matt 10:16). . . . The only bloodletting for which the Church, as such, takes the full and immediate responsibility is that of the martyr.⁴³

Significantly, Journet resists the easy way out (the *échapatoire* alluded to above) of saying that, although the Church itself cannot shed blood, it can ordain civil authorities to do its bidding for its own ends. On his judgment, this reasoning will not work. Whoever orders an action is directly responsible for it. Although others may materially cooperate with the instigator in producing a particular result, it is he, rather than the auxiliaries, who bears the ultimate responsibility for the outcome. It was to foreclose this sort of strategy, which pretends that the Church remains faithful to its mission even when it uses the state as an instrument to carry out its “dirty work” (say by handing over heretics to the secular arm for execution) that Journet began his 1937 article on the Crusades with a

⁴⁰ EVI-I, 396 [194].

⁴¹ EVI-I, 396 [194–95]. This is a reference to the “soft” forms of coercion that the Church is entitled to exercise insofar as it is a perfect society. See also EVI-I, 530–65 [262–280].

⁴² EVI-I, 396 [195].

⁴³ EVI-I, 396 [195].

discussion of the Church's "indirect power" over temporal affairs.

Traditional in Catholic theology, the contrast between the Church's "direct" and "indirect" power derives in large measure from St. Bernard's doctrine of the "two swords," itself based on a reading of Luke 22:38 ("Lord, behold, there are two swords"):

Both swords, namely the spiritual and the material, belong to the Church, . . . and although only the former is to be wielded by her own hand, the two are to be employed in her service. It is for the priest to use the sword of the word, but to strike with the sword of steel belongs to the soldier, yet this must be by the authority [*ad nutum*] and will of the priest and by the direct command of the emperor.⁴⁴

Journet, who earlier had written a book on this topic,⁴⁵ emphasized how the distinction in question could be read in both good and bad ways. The bad way would be to take it materially: the Church engages in "direct" action whenever it acts solely by its own personnel; "indirect action," by contrast, is whatever it does by the mediation of temporal (secular) authorities, even if placing them at its service. Journet observes, however, that this is misleading, for when the Church has "recourse" to the secular authorities, it can do so in two different manners, either (1) by taking the primary initiative, and hence the responsibility, upon itself or (2) by leaving this initiative to the secular power, as when, for instance, ecclesial leaders remind princes of their duty to provide adequate security within their realms. But under the standard formulation, not only the second but also the first of these alternatives would count as indirect action. This is a confusing way of speaking and is even disingenuous. For, under this description, even an initiative that the Church undertakes of its own accord and for which it assumes the responsibility would still be classified as *indirect* if the action in question is carried out by the state in service of the Church's own purpose. Thomas Aquinas himself excluded this sort of phraseology when, apropos the parallel case of an executioner carrying out (in good faith) the unjust sentence of a judge, he noted that it is not the former

⁴⁴ St. Bernard, *Treatise on Consideration* 4.3, trans. a priest of Mount Melleray (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1921), 119–20.

⁴⁵ Charles Journet, *La juridiction de l'Église sur la cité* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1931).

who slays the innocent man, but the judge whose minister he is.⁴⁶

In Journet's eyes, the good way of understanding the doctrine of the two swords is to frame it in terms of whether or not the Church takes primary responsibility for the action in question. A *direct* action is any initiative that the canonical authority undertakes of its own accord. An *indirect* action, by contrast, is one that the canonical authority encourages or otherwise participates in, all the while leaving the initiative to the secular power that carries out the action in the manner it sees fit. Thus conceived, an action will be *direct* even when the Church, acting in view of the spiritual end for which it has primary responsibility, employs secular means (provided by the state) to achieve this purpose. On the other hand, an action will be *indirect* when the Church proposes an initiative that lies foremost within the ambit of the state. This the Church does when our spiritual welfare is impacted by measures that are temporal in kind, for instance the enactment of civil laws or the protection of the common good (including the practice of religion) against external threats. In this instance, the secular authority does what it is equipped to do, that for which it has been established, and even should it receive guidance from the Church, the state nonetheless operates as a "principle," hence noninstrumental, "cause."⁴⁷ Here the state retains the primary and immediate (i.e., *direct*) responsibility for what it does.

The Church thus has two swords, the spiritual sword that represents its primary *raison d'être* and *modus operandi*, and a temporal sword. In turn, the Church can avail itself of the temporal ("material") sword in two very different ways, in line with what we have outlined above. It can place functions provided by the state at the service of its canonical, spiritual activities, and in this manner the Church could administer coercive sanctions when needed. Journet does not deny that the Church, as a "perfect society," has within its mandate to impose such sanctions, for instance removal from a position, confinement to a determinate location, restrictions on teaching, and so on.⁴⁸ Here, clearly, the Church bears the primary responsibility, and for

⁴⁶ *ST* II-II, q. 64, a. 6, ad 3. The same reasoning would hold in the case of a culpable man who is put to death: formally speaking it is the judge who is the primary, and hence direct, cause of his death, the executioner being an instrument.

⁴⁷ To mark how the Church provides guidance, but without assuming the initiative or the responsibility for what follows, Journet says that the state exercises in this instance a "secondary principle causality" (EVI-I, 667 [327]).

⁴⁸ See EVI-I, 530–549 [262–72].

this reason, Journet is insistent that the temporal means it accordingly employs as instruments must be consistent with the canonical authority's spiritual purpose and mode of action. As Augustine had much earlier made clear, no "hard" means, certainly no capital punishment or spilling of blood, will here be apposite.⁴⁹ This, on Journet's view, is where Suárez erred: the Jesuit put forward as a "primary Catholic assertion" (*prima assertio catholica*) that the exercise of capital punishment against heretics is eminently just "from the power of the Church" (*ex potestate Ecclesiae*).⁵⁰ Journet does not dispute that capital punishment can in principle be allowed (at the time this was still a standard Church teaching), and so too, on occasion, resort to armed force, but he reacts strongly against Suárez's further statement that the power of inflicting the death penalty on heretics "resides principally and eminently in the ecclesiastical magistracy and above all in the Sovereign Pontiff; and . . . resides in kings, emperors, and their ministers as it were in a proximate manner and on dependence on the ecclesiastical power."⁵¹ To Journet's mind, this position is gravely mistaken. It confuses the essential characteristics of spiritual and temporal authority. The correct approach would have been to acknowledge that the Church wields the violent means of the material sword (capital punishment or engagement in just war) strictly in an indirect manner. This the Church does when it urges "the state

⁴⁹ See EVI-I, 581–83 [288–89], where Journet cites from Augustine, Epistle 133, to Marcellinus, and *Contra Cresconium* 3.55.

⁵⁰ Francisco Suárez, *De fide*, disp. 23, sect. 1, no. 2, cited by Journet in EVI-I, 512n170 [253n2].

⁵¹ Suárez, *De Fide*, disp. 23, sect. 1, no. 7, cited in EVI-I, 512n170 [253n2]. See also EVI-I, 586n269 [291n2]: "Suárez does not hesitate to throw the responsibility for the death of heretics on the Church" (with reference again to *De fide*, disp. 23, sect. 1, no. 7)]. Much more could be said about Journet's critique and positioning vis-à-vis Suárez. The Swiss theologian is at pains to differentiate Suárez's viewpoint from his own as well as from that of St. Thomas. Speaking of the Dominican saint, Journet notes that "there is nothing in his writings to oblige us to rank him among those who threw the judicial responsibility for the death penalty on the Church" (EVI-I, 586 [291]). That the position of Suárez was diametrically opposed to his own is made clear in a letter to Maritain on May 30, 1938, in which he comments that, if he is forced to admit (as had been suggested by Maritain) that "responsibility for the spilling of blood was ultimately traceable to the [medieval] Church," then his whole approach to the question of the Church and violence would be in doubt and he would be "thrown into the position I have attributed to Suárez" (Journet and Maritain, *Correspondance*, 2:730 [letter no. 631]).

to obey its own righteous temporal laws (and here we assume that recourse to war and the death-penalty can sometimes be legitimate)”:

In so doing the Church is in no way the cause of, and consequently in no way responsible for, the harsh and temporal character of the means employed or the effects sought. It can adopt and approve this character, if you like, for the sake of the state, never for its own sake. . . . The Church cannot err to the point of considering the means, even just means, freely used by temporal kingdoms, as suitable means for the Kingdom of Heaven; or of confusing the righteousness of Caesar’s business with that of God’s business. . . . So the Church does well to require things from states which are just for states, but would not be just for it.⁵²

If, in sum, the medieval Popes did not (and in fact could not) have called the Crusades by virtue of their canonical power, by what power, specifically, did they do so? As has already been noted, Journet did not deny that these Popes had in fact undertaken such initiatives. Nor did he chalk this up to their personal failings. On the other hand, however, were a pope to do so today, this would indeed constitute a grave fault against his office. To repeat the question: by what power did the medieval Popes call the Crusades, and why is that power no longer exercisable today?

The Temporal Power of Medieval Popes

In formulating a solution to the problem at hand, Journet indicates that he is not here concerned with papal modes of indirect action (in the proper sense), situations in which a pope (or another highly placed ecclesial authority) *reminds* civil authorities of their responsibility to provide an adequate defense against attacks upon their citizenry or other vulnerable persons. Providing such a defense would constitute

⁵² EVI-I, 510 [253]. For elaboration, see the related section “Style of the Church, Style of the State” (EVI-I, 612–14 [301–12]). Journet recognizes that cases, perhaps numerous, may be found in which Church authorities have called on the state apparatus to do things that are wrongful. The ecclesiastical condemnation of Joan of Arc and her subsequent consignment to state authorities for execution is but one famous example of such abuse. But when this has happened, it is the churchmen themselves—not the Church acting by its canonical authority—that is responsible “for the *malice* of the ends and effects sought.”

the core of what the Scholastic tradition termed “just war.” Journet adopts this terminology. Recent appeals to a “responsibility to protect” by John Paul II and his successors would fall into this category of indirect papal involvement in armed confrontation or even war.⁵³ Journet sees no obstacle to acknowledging that this should happen by virtue of the popes’ canonical power, as it falls within their spiritual mandate to safeguard, albeit indirectly, through teaching alone, the soundness of the natural order, including the attendant political and social realities. And as grace elevates nature but does not destroy it, these papal urgings in favor of the natural political order have often included blessings for the exercise of bravery in just wars and similar “meritorious” deeds in support of the common good. The conferral of such benefits does not change the essentially temporal character of the deeds in question:

Like all temporal activities that are morally legitimate, [these] just wars may, as such, receive the approbation of the Church. . . . The Pope may give his benediction, may order prayers or thanksgiving for the success of wars he considers just or which are represented to him as such; he blessed Charlemagne’s war against the Saxons, and sent a standard to William the Conqueror, which was raised at the battle of Hastings.

Supposing that these wars were just and conformed in all essentials with the requirements of Christian doctrine, are we to call them holy wars? No, they were in reality wars waged for the defense of secular interests, and had no immediate relation with spiritual things.⁵⁴

⁵³ For recent papal statements on the responsibility to protect, see, for instance, Pope John Paul II’s World Day of Peace address in 2000 or Pope Benedict’s address to the United Nations General Assembly in 2008 (reproduced in Reichberg and Syse, *Religion, War, and Ethics*, 131 and 138–39, respectively). The idea of humanitarian intervention was intimated in Pope Pius XII’s 1948 Christmas address, in which he wrote: “It is perfectly lawful to defend [goods of humanity] against an unjust aggression. Their defense is even an obligation for the nations as a whole who have a duty not to abandon a nation that is attacked” (Reichberg and Syse, *Religion, War, and Ethics*, 123). This, at any event, was how Journet read Pope Pius’s address; see his “La guerre et la paix selon l’enseignement de S. S. Pie XII,” *Nova et Vetera* 27 (1952): 15–31.

⁵⁴ EVI-I, 625–27 [308–9]. Later, Journet points out that, by the same canonical power, the popes could also condemn wars they viewed as iniquitous. He recognizes that, in approving some wars as just and disapproving others as unjust, the popes might nevertheless err and even sin. Such interventions “could be prompted by incomplete and one-sided information, not

In calling the Crusades to recover the Holy Land, the Popes assumed much more than the indirect role described above, for here they took the lead in instigating wars that were carried out by their bidding, for ends that they themselves set, and with the conferral of spiritual benefits (e.g., indulgences) that they alone could give.⁵⁵ By reason of their “special relationship . . . to spiritual things,” these wars undertaken by papal initiative represent a subcategory within the wider category of just wars. To mark out their distinctiveness, and with a nod to received usage,⁵⁶ Journet concedes that they may be called “holy wars,” albeit in a loose or improper sense of the term⁵⁷ (namely, insofar as they are directly undertaken by the Popes for a religious purpose). But if these wars are not imputed to the Popes by reason of their canonical power (hence, cannot be called “holy” with full appropriateness), on what other possible basis might they be explained?

to mention prejudice and passion, and raise terrible cases of conscience for Christians who found themselves fighting in good faith in the wrong camp” (642–43 [316]).

⁵⁵ EVI-I, 630–631 [310].

⁵⁶ Pissard, for instance, made ample use of this term: on his definition, “a pure holy war is one instigated and organized by the head of the Church, *in his capacity as spiritual sovereign*, who addresses himself to the faithful, in abstraction from their [different] nationalities” (*La guerre sainte en pays chrétien*, 27; my translation). Citing this definition, Journet reacted strongly against the italicized words, leading him to conclude that: “Such a war never occurred, not even against the Albigensians. And it *cannot* have taken place” (EVI-I, 631n318; my translation, as this footnote does not appear on the corresponding page, 310, of the English translation).

⁵⁷ Journet, “Pouvoir indirect,” 455 (“guerre sainte *au sens improprie*”). See also EVI-I, 630 [310]. It is noteworthy that Journet situates “holy war” (in this attenuated sense) within the wider category of “just wars.” He proceeds from the supposition that, even when military initiatives are undertaken by papal initiative, the ordinary rules pertaining to the conduct of war are not thereby suspended (see EVI-I, 628n315 [309n3], where Journet cites Cajetan to the effect that the mere fact that a pope declares or encourages a war does not ipso facto render it just). In other words, Journet does not subscribe to the idea, common in the scholarly literature, that holy war represents a frenzy of divinely mandated violence where excess is allowed precisely because the war is waged at God’s command. As an example of such a formulation, see Roland Bainton, *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1960), 148: “The crusading idea requires that the cause be holy, . . . that the war be fought under God and with his help, that the crusaders shall be godly and their enemies ungodly, and that *the war shall be prosecuted unsparingly*” (emphasis mine). On Journet’s understanding, there can be no sound theological basis for the idea of a holy war waged without *in bello* limits.

In seeking to identify an adequate response, Journet notes how this direct papal involvement in war or violence was not limited to military initiatives for the regaining of the Holy Land (“Crusades” in the narrow sense of the term). Already in this connection, we have mentioned the military initiatives that were directed against apostates and heretics (“the inner crusade”). In addition, there was armed action to repel Muslim invasion of areas under Christian rule, as well as wars waged for the preservation of the Papal States.⁵⁸

Of these pope-directed wars, the last-named category presents the least theoretical difficulty, since it can readily be argued that, in raising armies to protect the Papal States, the Popes did not exercise a canonical role, but rather a straightforward temporal, political role.⁵⁹ During the long period in which the Papal States were in existence,⁶⁰ the popes could assume two roles, one of them essential, by which they governed the Church, the other nonessential but nonetheless necessary under specific historical conditions, by which they ruled over a specific territory, on a par with other temporal princes. But this case aside, by what power, if not the canonical, did the Popes assume responsibility for military action—with the concomitant shedding of blood?

In response, Journet explains how these Popes exercised a distinctive role vis-à-vis the temporal, political sphere during the Middle Ages. In addition to their supreme leadership over the society of believers on earth, then, these Popes also enjoyed authority *within* civil society, where they were acknowledged to have a role as protectors (*tuteurs*) over the whole of Christendom. Thus, alongside their spiritual authority over Christians within the distinctive society that is the Church, these Popes also possessed a temporal authority over these same Christians insofar as they were assembled together within the Christian kingdoms and principalities of Europe. Composed of individuals who were also members of the Church, temporal society at that time was organized according to principles that were drawn from a shared Christian faith. So, while these Christians lived in

⁵⁸ Journet outlines this typology in EVI-I, 625–31 [308–10].

⁵⁹ “By reason of the *political power* conjoined with the apostolic the medieval popes could take, or cause to be taken, all the military measures needed for the defense of the states of the Church” (EVI-I, 644 [317]). Thus, Journet denies that these should be called “holy wars” even in the improper sense of the term.

⁶⁰ This state of affairs lasted from roughly the sixth century until 1870, when the popes lost the last remaining parcels of their territory to the newly unified Italian state.

independent political commonwealths, by virtue of their shared faith, they also viewed themselves as members of a wider Christendom. This Christendom derived its ultimate unity from the Church, but because it designated a mode of temporal, rather than spiritual, society, it should not be conflated with the Church. Christians were thus members of two overlapping but distinct societies, each with its own structure, powers, and mode of operation: the spiritual society of the Church and the temporal society of Christendom.⁶¹ Over the first, the pope was sovereign pontiff, acting as successor of St. Peter through his essential powers of order and jurisdiction. Over the second, Christendom, he was the chief “protector” (*tuteur*⁶²) of its unity, a function that was less formally constituted than the former, having more of a symbolic than an administrative character.⁶³ In times of crisis especially, in particular when vigorous authority was lacking on the part of kings or princes, or on those occasions when not just this or that part, but the whole of Christendom, was thought to be endangered, the popes could step into the breach and initiate military engagements that would ordinarily fall within the purview of the emperor or other purely temporal rulers. In this vein, Pope Sergius IV issued an appeal to avenge the Muslim destruction of the church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem in 1010, Pope Leo IX waged a war against the Normans in 1053 (to which end the first papal army was created, recruiting not only in Rome, but from wide afield in Europe), and Pope Urban II issued a call for the first Crusade in 1095. The examples could be multiplied.

In describing this medieval Christendom (and the special papal prerogatives that followed from it), Journet was intent on differenti-

⁶¹ As Journet later put the point in EVI-II, “le christianisme et la chrétienté n’ont pas le même corps [Christianity and Christendom do not have the same bodies]” (EVI, 2:1571; my translation). “L’Église divine, société visible surnaturelle, ne pourra jamais s’identifier aux nations, sociétés visibles temporelles [The Divine Church, a supernatural visible society, can never be equated with nations, i.e., temporal visible societies]” (EVI, 2:1573; my translation).

⁶² While “tutor” does not have this political connotation in English, in French, this term can signify someone who exercises a *tutelle*, namely a protectorate over a particular territory (on this usage, see “Tutelle” in *Dictionnaire de droit international public* [Brussels, BE: Bruylant, 2001], 1110–1111).

⁶³ Maritain had encouraged Journet to speak of the medieval Popes as “protectors” (*tuteurs*) rather than “heads” (*chefs*) of Christendom because, in that period, the kings of France never recognized any temporal rule above their own, and this prerogative went uncontested by the Popes (Journet and Maritain, *Correspondance*, 2:763 [letter no. 646]).

ating it from the Christian religion as such. Christendom (*chrétienté*) is clearly linked to Christianity (*christianisme*), but the two must be clearly distinguished from one another. The former represents the imprint of the latter within the temporal structures of society. “Christian civilization” would be an alternative name for “Christendom.” Christianity, by contrast, finds its full embodiment only within the Church. The Church, as we have already noted, is the society of those who live according to the grace of the New Law. The Gospel can provide inspiration for the social life of our temporal societies, but even should this happen, these societies will nonetheless be organized in view of a purpose that cannot purely and simply be equated to the transcendent end pursued by the Church.⁶⁴

Journet believes that Christianity—and by extension the Church—despite its many vicissitudes, nonetheless has retained its fundamental identity from its founding to the present day.⁶⁵ The forms of Christendom have, by contrast, varied dramatically in the course of history. There are multiple ways in which Gospel truths can inform the construction of civil society. During the Middle Ages, a form of

⁶⁴ Journet recognizes that, during the long period of sacral Christendom, theologians often inadequately distinguished Christianity from its embodiment within a particular form of Christendom, and for this reason they sometimes employed the term “Church” as an equivalent for “Christendom” (see EVI-I, 490–492 [242–43]). We should accordingly not expect to find in the writings of medieval theologians (Thomas Aquinas included) an explicit contrast between Christianity and Christendom. The contrast became apparent only in modernity, once it was recognized that one and the same faith (and Church) was compatible, over time, with different ways of applying this faith within the temporal sphere—different *Christendoms*. The medieval theologians knew of only one form of Christendom, the sacral, and this was, as it were, the air that they breathed. Hence, it is clear that conceptual articulation could come only later, once other possible modes had come to be recognized.

⁶⁵ For this reason, he reacted to Maritain’s claim that he (Journet) had idealized the Church of the Middle Ages. In response to Maritain’s further statement that, during this period, “there was a *holy war* recognized by the Church, and even *instituted* by it to secure religious and sacred ends, through the temporal as minister of the spiritual” (Journet and Maritain, *Correspondance*, 2:726 [letter no. 630]), Journet responded that “the Church of the Middle Ages, was it not also the Kingdom [of God]?” (2:730 [letter no. 631]), with the supposition that the fundamental identity of the Church remains constant over time; what is true in one period concerning its essential functions must obtain in other periods as well. The question of the Church’s unity over time is the express theme of the third volume of EVI (published 1969), subtitled *Essai de théologie de l’histoire du salut*.

Christendom emerged in which the bond of shared faith was assumed to be a condition essential for membership in the civil sphere. Journet follows Maritain in terming this a “sacral” Christendom.⁶⁶ Non-Christians could not be accepted as full-fledged members of the civil polity. They were accordingly assigned a marginal status.⁶⁷

During the Middle Ages, no one doubted that being a member of the Church was one thing and belonging to the kingdom of France was another: the first was essentially spiritual (and the door to admittance was conferral of a sacrament, baptism), while the second was temporal (with admittance being obtained by family lineage). By the same token, however, the former set a condition for the latter. There was more to being a member of a determinate polity than the simple fact of being baptized, but without that condition *sine qua non*, none of the prerogatives of membership would follow. Similarly, during the Middle Ages, it was understood that to be a schismatic was one thing, while being a seditionist was another. The first disrupted the unity of the Church, while the second tore at the unity of the body politic. But, when Christian faith was taken to be a precondition of membership in the civil polity, should someone call the faith into question by the commission of heresy (and be found guilty for such by the Church), he would also, and by extension, be suspected of sedition, and could be held liable for this crime by the state. Moreover, under the historical regime of sacral Christendom, the temporal common good was thought to have instrumental value only; its purpose was to facilitate

⁶⁶ Maritain introduced this term in his *Humanisme intégral* (Paris: Aubier, 1936). The idea that there can be multiple forms of Christendom, while Christianity maintains its fundamental unity throughout time, was first articulated by Journet in *La juridiction de l’Église sur la cité* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer), 13: “Le christianisme demeure, mais les chrétientés qu’il développe autour de lui se succèdent et disparaissent. Une seule Église est possible, mais plusieurs chrétientés sont possible [Christianity endures, while the Christendoms it develops around itself proceed one after another and disappear. A single Church is possible, but several Christendoms are possible]” (my translation). For the special characteristics of the medieval sacral political regime, see EVI-I, 489–530 [241–62].

⁶⁷ As evidence of the commonly held medieval supposition that shared faith was a key element constitutive of the body politic, see the topics addressed by Thomas Aquinas in *ST II-II*, q. 10, on unbelief. He asks, for instance, whether it is permitted to have contact with unbelievers (a. 9), whether unbelievers may have authority or dominion over believers (a. 10), and whether the rites of unbelievers ought to be tolerated (a. 1). Questions such as these could have application only within the context of a sacral Christendom.

passage to eternal life. Hence, anyone who contested the Christian identity of the temporal polity was, by this very fact, thought to be an obstacle to the salvation of its members, and obviously, this was deemed to constitute a very serious offense against God and religion.

By these and similar arguments, Journet seeks to explain how religious values could navigate from their “natural” locus within the life of the Church and become elements integral to civil society.⁶⁸ They would be assumed into the structures of temporal society, and in so doing, would take on distinctive meaning there, a meaning analogous to, but nonetheless distinct from, the parallel existence these very same values would have within the Church. Thus, whereas Jesus would not allow his disciples to defend him by force of arms and during the Middle Ages no ecclesial person could be allowed to resort to arms either, it was nonetheless thought to be justifiable (and even praiseworthy) that temporal princes should undertake an armed defense of ecclesiastical lives and property (including Christ’s inheritance in the Holy Land), since goods essential to temporal well-being would otherwise be endangered. So, whereas it would be nonsensical and perhaps even blasphemous to say that “Christianity wages war,” or that “war is waged in the name of Christianity,” no such obstacle stands in the way of saying this of “Christendom.” It would not be oxymoronic to say that medieval Christendom waged war against the Saracens, or that such a war was waged *in the name of* medieval Christendom. Journet is thus able to assert that:

Owing to the failure of the imperial power the Pope was compelled to accept the responsibility for the Crusade, not as Vicar of Christ and head of Christianity, but as protector of a sacral Christendom, being bound to act on account of the spiritual values then involved in the political order, values which therefore could and should be defended by political resources. Thus it was in virtue of a temporal extra-canonical power that

⁶⁸ This point is summed up nicely in the following passage from EVI-I, 505 [250]: “A special phenomenon appeared during the Middle Ages. In virtue of the principle that bases political unity on the unity of visible communion with the Church, a spiritual element descended into the civil order and became one of its components. . . . It could be defended not only as a value of Christianity, but also as a value of Christendom. To the degree in which the constitution of the medieval society recognized the faith as a value intrinsic to its common good, it is clear that the Church could require the faith to be defended with all the machinery used by cities in defense of their common good.”

the Pope then intervened, exercising authority over the princes considered as pure instruments for the common good of Christendom. To be responsible for a just war, for just bloodshed, was no sin for a temporal power; it was ethically good and so could be made meritorious by charity; but it would have been a sin for the Church. . . . The Crusade might very suitably be a war waged by *Christendom* against Islam. It could not be a war of *Christianity* against Islam, since Christianity does not go to war. If then a “holy war” is a war for which the Church takes the responsibility there has never yet been a holy war.⁶⁹

Impossibility of Crusades Today

In the foregoing, I have sought to explain why Journet held that *holy war* in the proper sense of the term—warfare waged by the Church on behalf of the Christian faith—must be deemed a contradiction in terms. Popes cannot engage in violence by virtue of their canonical power as successors of St. Peter. By the same token, however, Journet concedes that, if *holy war* is taken in an attenuated sense, as a war waged for the defense of Christendom, then it is true that the Popes, acting as protectors (*tuteurs*) of Christian Europe, did in fact engage in warfare of this kind. Theologically, there is no reason to deny that, in the past, Popes have indeed assumed such a role. But what Journet cannot accept is that popes might assume this protector role today. Why not? His argument is as follows.

It has already been noted that, even though it is itself a society, the Church nonetheless possesses an identity distinct from the temporal societies that compose the nations of the world (or the larger community that results from their agglomeration, as when we speak of the “society of nations”). Historically, the Church, and by extension Christianity, has stood in two quite different relations to the polities of this world. On the one hand, from Constantine to early modernity, visible membership in the Church was considered a prerequisite for membership in civil society. In other words, profession of faith was essential to the unity of the civil polity. Standing outside the Christian faith (pagans, Muslims, or Jews) or straying from the faith and its community, the Church (heretics, apostates, or schismatics), entailed separation from the civil polity.

Within this “sacral Christendom,” elements from Christianity exercised a formal role within the constitution of the body politic.

⁶⁹ EVI-I, 668–69 [328].

But this is not the only way that Christianity can influence temporal society. Other modes of influence are possible whereby Christian faith can inspire some members of a polity to implement Christian ideals indirectly within society. This is what Maritain termed “profane Christendom,” and it consists in a “the refraction” of Gospel values in the temporal sphere.⁷⁰ For instance, Maritain maintained (and is supported in this contention by recent historians such as Samuel Moyn⁷¹) that the post–World War II conception of human rights, while it is a secular idea, nonetheless has a Christian origin. This mode of influence is compatible with religious pluralism. Journet maintains that both modes of Christendom, “profane” and “sacral,” are valid, but he judges that the former represents an advance over the latter because, in it (the profane form of Christendom), the temporal and the spiritual, the “things of Cesar” and the “things of God,” are more perfectly distinguished. At the same time, with the severing of a formal connection between faith and the political sphere, a space is opened up for a more vital and spiritual link between the two orders. Journet also holds that history has a direction, and so to revert to the sacral model after the profane model has been introduced (if only imperfectly) would constitute a dangerous reversion. There can be no return to the past model of Church–state relations, and attempts at effecting such will necessarily result in corruptions of the political and oftentimes deep conflict (the Spanish civil war would be a case in point). Indeed, Pope Benedict XVI, in his 2005 address to the Roman Curia, affirmed the impossibility, and indeed the undesirability, of a return to sacral Christendom (the “confessional state”).⁷²

It would thus constitute an anachronism to expect that the modern popes should again assume a protector role over a temporally unified Christendom. In light of the “secular Christendom” that charac-

⁷⁰ In addition to his *Humanisme intégral*, see also *Man and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 154–62, where Maritain placed the contrast between sacral and profane Christian “civilizations” in the broader context of his analysis of human rights.

⁷¹ Samuel Moyn, *Christian Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).

⁷² Referring here to the Second Vatican Council, Pope Benedict notes that “it was necessary to give a new definition to the relationship between the Church and the modern State that would make room impartially for citizens of various religions and ideologies” (Benedict XVI, Christmas Address to the Roman Curia, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20051222_roman-curia_en.html).

terizes the aspirations of our modern age, there can be no sense in calling crusades to reestablish a Christian hegemony within the temporal, political space of Europe or the Middle East. Moreover, in relation to just war, with the disappearance of a sacral Christendom and the substitution, in its place, of secular forms of Christendom (or the aspiration thereof), no longer would there be any legitimacy in waging war for the defense of specific Christian interests, including the protection of Christians (say in the Middle East) from attack by non-Christians.⁷³ Under this new historical regime that is ours, there can be ample justification for mounting an armed defense of vulnerable Christians, but not specifically because they are Christians. They, and all others who are subjected to violence because of their religious affiliations—whether Shia, Sunni, or Yazidi—should receive protection by reason of their humanity. In other words, the foundation for the “responsibility to protect” must lie in fundamental human rights. This is how the popes understand this responsibility today.⁷⁴ Purely confessional reasons for according protection are no longer admitted.

⁷³ This is in line with Journet’s comment that, “in a sacral regime, temporal princes ought, on their own responsibility—whether they act spontaneously, or are called to their duty by the canonical power—to draw the sword in defense of their Christian subjects against those who attack them in their Christian faith or life” (EVI-I, 627 [309]). In the corresponding footnote (note 312 [2]), he suggests that, in a secular regime, this should not happen except insofar as the state protects religious liberty qua temporal good.

⁷⁴ The turning point from the sacral to the secular conception of armed force can be traced to the pontificate of Pius XII. When speaking “to the Spanish nation” at the end of the Spanish civil war (1939), he adopted the language of sacral Christendom: “With an immense joy we address you, our very dear sons of Catholic Spain, to express our paternal congratulations for the gift of peace and victory by which God has deigned to crown the Christian heroism of your faith and charity. . . . We acknowledge also our duty of gratitude toward all those who sacrificed themselves heroically on the field of battle *for the defense of God’s inalienable rights and of religion* (“Con inmenso gozo, Radio address to the Spanish Nation,” April 16, 1939; my translation from the French of the Solesmes edition listed just below; emphasis added). In the same address, he likewise affirmed the importance of “defending the ideals of the faith and of Christian civilization.” But nearly a decade later (addressing members of the U.S. Congress on October 7, 1947, appropriately the anniversary of the battle of Lepanto), we find him reframing nearly the same assertion in terms of the “the rights of God and of man.” Both passages are reproduced in an anthology of papal statements on war and peace: *Les Enseignements Pontificaux: La Paix Internationale*, vol. 1, *La guerre moderne*, ed. the Monks of Solesmes (Tournai, FR: Desclée & Cie, 1956), 203–6, and 457, respectively.

Conclusion

Journet did not reject appeals to holy war on pacifist grounds. We have seen that he admitted the ongoing validity of just war. He nonetheless took care to emphasize that war is inherently a temporal reality. Christians can take part in it solely by virtue of their membership in temporal society. Ultimately, then, if the Crusades can be justified, at least within a determinate historical context, it is only insofar as they represent a special variant of just war—namely, just war for the protection of Christendom. It would be wrong to justify the Crusades precisely as a divinely mandated expression of the Christian faith.

By thus attributing the Crusades to *Christendom* (the “things of Cesar”) rather than to Christianity (the “things of God”), Journet relativizes the Crusades both historically and religiously. As to the first, he offers reasons why the Crusades had warrant only within a particular historical context, the sacral political regime of medieval Christendom.⁷⁵ Such a context is no longer operative today, and hence, under the conditions of Christian modernity, a reversion to crusading ideals, as happened during the Spanish civil war, merits disapprobation. But, because the Crusades did have a proper warrant in times past, under the very different set of cultural expectations that were operative in the Middle Ages, there is no need to make amends for them today (except in the measure that they involved misdirection or excess, as in the 1204 sack of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade), in contrast to the regrets that have rightly been expressed vis-à-vis the mistreatment of the Jews or the condemnation of Galileo. Indeed, Journet thinks that the crusading élan represented a nobility of spirit that is to be admired. But, despite affirming this moral goodness, he is keen to relativize the religious content of the Crusades: insofar as they involved warfare, they were not—and in fact could not be—a direct expression of the Christian theological virtues. Nor, rightly understood, were they an initiative of the Church, which must be committed to nonviolence within its own sphere of action, a commitment that was as binding in the past as it is today.

Journet’s theological argument on the impossibility of Christian holy war builds on complex set of elements: the fundamental rejection of violence by the Gospels; the Church as a society coextensive

⁷⁵ “Holy wars are bound up with the existence or survival of a sacral type of Christendom” (EVI-I, 619–20 [395]).

with the Kingdom of God that retains its identity throughout time, a society in which there can be no sin; a differentiation between the popes' canonical and extracanonial (political) powers; the justifiability of just war for temporal society and its unjustifiability for the Church in its own sphere of action; the difference between Christianity and Christendom; and finally, the two historical regimes of Christendom, sacral and profane. On each of these points, Journet's reasoning could be challenged, and in fact often was. But it was in bringing these elements together—explicitly detailing the key assumptions—that he provides a compelling theological examination of the Crusades qua Christian holy war. He digs into the entrails of this question to a degree unprecedented in Catholic theology.

What I find most appealing in Journet's approach is his commitment to the Gospel teaching on nonviolence. He believes that this teaching is compatible with a doctrine of just war, but unlike Vitoria, Suárez, and later just war theorists in the Church, Journet does not confine evangelical nonviolence to the far margins of theological inquiry. On the contrary, he thinks it has a central role to play in our thinking about the Church's activity in the world.⁷⁶ It is not an uncomfortable teaching that should be explained away or passed over in silence. Jesus's words must serve as a norm for Christians. Journet nonetheless maintains that, when understood well, this norm does not exclude the possibility of just war.

Journet's argument against the possibility of Christian holy war, which, as we have seen, takes Jesus's commitment to nonviolence as its starting point, can serve as a useful corrective to contemporary Catholic discussions on the uses of armed force. The tendency nowadays is to assume that adherence to the Gospel "precepts of patience"

⁷⁶ The point is put nicely when Journet writes: "In the Christian outlook peace, in itself, is a higher, nobler, stronger work than [just] war" (EVI-I, 624 [307]). The idea that "nonviolence" is not merely about inaction, but also and especially designates a mode of action (a characteristic set of peaceful deeds) that exceeds in perfection anything that can be accomplished by just war, was explored at some length by Maritain in a section of *Du régime temporel et de la liberté* (1933) that praised the example and teaching of Gandhi. This work was dedicated to Journet and provided a context for his discussion of nonviolence in EVI-I. For the details of Maritain's teaching on this theme, see Gregory M. Reichberg, "Jacques Maritain: Christian Theorist of Nonviolence and Just War," *Journal of Military Ethics*, January 19, 2018, <http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/FzQUCxw72wEEemF4346tx/full> (forthcoming in no. 3 of print vol. 16 [2018]).

(as Gratian called them) is incompatible with the traditional doctrine of just war: to the degree the one is talked up, to that same degree the other must be talked down. There results a visible discomfort and strained reasoning wherever occasions arise when resort to armed force seems necessary (for instance to protect civilians against the attacks of the Islamic State). But, because the language of just war has been rejected, articulating theologically how there may be an obligation to provide this military assistance has become well-nigh impossible. Journet provides an alternative and more coherent template for thinking about these matters, and for this reason, we would do well to read him today.⁷⁷ N-V

⁷⁷ Work preparing this article was supported by “Tracing the Jerusalem Code,” a research project hosted at MF Norwegian School of Theology (Oslo) and funded by the Research Council of Norway.

Faith, Reason, and Incarnation in Irenaeus of Lyons

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Introduction

IN HIS REGENSBURG LECTURE on “Faith, Reason, and the University,” Pope Benedict surveys some of the decisive fluctuations in the relation of faith and reason within the Christian tradition. In the course of this broad overview, he presents the early Church’s performance of this relation as paradigmatic and normative, indeed as “part of faith itself.” But he contrasts this exemplary synthesis with later developments within the Christian tradition in which this synthesis is distorted through either a conception of faith that abstracts entirely from human reason or a conception of reason that precludes any positive continuity with faith. He identifies the former relation with the voluntarism of the medieval theologian Duns Scotus, in which God’s transcendence and otherness are affirmed at the expense of any analogical reflection in human reason. On the other hand, he diagnoses in modern theology, going back at least to the liberal Protestantism of Adolf von Harnack, a reduction of the scope of reason to the apprehension of the mathematical structure of matter and to experimental verification. This “reduction of the radius of science and reason” not only excludes the question of God from the scope of rational enquiry but also precludes the possibility of rational enquiry into the most fundamental questions of human origin, destiny, and meaning. Pope Benedict concludes his lecture with a call for a renewal of the synthesis of faith and reason in the modern context, a renewal in which the decisive element would be the enlargement of the scope of reason itself.

It would stand to reason, in terms of the logic of Pope Benedict's Regensburg lecture, that the Christian renewal of the proper synthesis of faith and reason should draw upon the resources of the paradigmatic and normative instantiations of this synthesis in the early Church. In this essay, I would like to implement this strategy by reflecting on one significant example of this synthesis in the theology of the great second-century bishop and theologian Irenaeus of Lyons. There are strong grounds for identifying Irenaeus as the first Christian systematic theologian, the first Christian thinker who explicitly conceived of Christian faith as a coherent body of truth whose very coherence and consistency should be the object of disciplined reflection. Irenaeus's attentiveness to the systematic wholeness of the Christian proclamation was provoked in reaction to what he considered to be the false doctrine of the heretical "gnostics." Irenaeus attacked the gnostics both for their misuse and neglect of human reason and for their mischaracterization of both the material contents and the formal character of Christian faith. He derided what he called their "knowledge falsely so-called" as a perversion of both faith and reason. In opposition to this gnostic system, Irenaeus elaborated a conception of authentic Christian knowledge as a synthesis of faith and reason that is grounded in the simultaneous difference and relation between the Creator and the creation and comes to full maturity in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

In attempting to retrace the synthesis of faith and reason in Irenaeus's theology, this paper will proceed in three main parts. First, I will attempt to draw out some main elements of Irenaeus's critique of the gnostics on rational grounds. Second, I will demonstrate how Irenaeus's construal of the God-world relation determines his own characterization of the proper capacities and limits of human reason. And, third, I will show that Irenaeus's understanding of authentic Christian knowledge presumes that the synthesis of faith and reason is consummated only through the Incarnation of Divine Reason in the person of Jesus Christ and is authentically proclaimed only within the communion of the visible and hierarchical Church.

Irenaeus's Rational Critique of the Gnostics

Irenaeus often criticizes his opponents for not making sense. But, at the beginning of his five-book treatise *Against the Heresies*, he also seems to suggest that previous defenders of Christian doctrine against the gnostics did not succeed precisely because they precipitously dismissed

gnostic teaching without probing its *seeming* intelligibility and plausibility, and without acknowledging its demonstrable attractiveness and appeal, even to many Christians.¹ For his part, Irenaeus intends to show that the gnostics do not make sense by directly engaging and refuting the sense they seem to make. Therefore, he spends the entire first book of his five-book treatise on the narration of gnostic doctrine. There, he tells us that the particular group of gnostics with whom he was most directly in conflict, called the Valentinians, conceived of a divine realm called the “fullness,” or *pleroma*, in Greek. There are thirty beings, called *aeons*, within the *pleroma*, arranged in male and female pairings that emanate from the first principle, one of whose names is the “Primal Father.” At the center of the gnostic narrative is the account of the misadventures of the youngest member of the *pleroma*, who is called Sophia (Wisdom). Sophia succumbs to an inordinate desire to know the incomprehensible nature of the Primal Father, and this disordered passion results in the generation of a formless substance called “Achamoth.” Achamoth is expelled from the *pleroma*, but is eventually healed and restored to the divine sphere. For the gnostics, the constitution and arrangement of this world is directly the result of the drama of Achamoth’s passion and restoration. Achamoth’s fear, grief, and anxiety during her exile from the *pleroma* give rise to material substances. Her repentance resulted in the formation of the Demiurge, who is the creator of the intermediate “soul” element within the world, and her post-restoration ecstasy brought forth spiritual substances. Corresponding to this threefold ontological hierarchy are the three different kinds of human beings: the material, who are inescapably destined for corruption; the “soul-ly” (*psychic*), whom the gnostics identify as ordinary Christians and who are capable of ascending to an “intermediate space” between this world and the *pleroma*; and the “spiritual” (*pneumatics*), who contain a divine element that is destined to be awakened by knowledge of its true origin and end and that ultimately will be restored to the *pleroma*. Despite variations in detail, a fundamental common ground between various gnostic accounts is that, as a whole, this world is not the direct product of the true and highest god within the *pleroma*. Rather, its creator is the “Demiurge,” who was produced from Sophia’s delinquent passion.

Having outlined, in prodigious detail, the particularities of the various versions of gnostic lore in his first book, Irenaeus proceeds in

¹ Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* [AH] 1.preface.1–2.

the second book to criticize gnostic teaching on predominantly rational grounds before moving on to a positive exposition of Christian faith in the succeeding books. Among the many criticisms Irenaeus directs against the cogency and plausibility of gnostic teaching, we can discern three major critiques that characterize gnostic teaching as simply lacking the form of rational discourse. Each of these critiques presses the point that gnostic doctrine is irrational and nonsensical, and each of them is correlated with a comparative statement of the superior cogency and rational plausibility of Catholic Christian faith. A brief exposition of each of these critiques and their corrective correlate in Christian faith will thus afford us with a preliminary view of Irenaeus's presentation of the rationality of Christian faith.

(1) The criticism we should take to be foundational for Irenaeus's program of presenting gnostic doctrine as irrational is that there is simply no evidence for their god in this world. Now, in making this criticism, Irenaeus's complaint is *not* that the gnostic "god" cannot be proved on the basis of reason alone. His complaint is that the content of the gnostic belief system precludes a priori any knowledge of God through creation simply because this creation is not considered to be the work of the true God. Consequently, there can be no epistemological ascent from the apprehension of created reality to any kind of knowledge of the true God. The criterion of rationality that Irenaeus posits in making this argument is that of "witness" or "testimony" (*μαρτυρία/testimonium*). The god of the gnostics simply cannot provide any testimony on his own behalf because, in their account, there is an ontological disjunction between the realm of creaturely testimony and the realm of the true god. For Irenaeus, this account of the God–world relation necessarily makes gnostic doctrine pervasively and irredeemably irrational. To speak rationally of the true God requires that we ascribe a certain truth to creation as providing evidentiary testimony to the God whose very act of creation inscribes a certain knowledge of himself within the very being of creation. To say that God is the creator of this world, for Irenaeus, means to say that "the universe shows forth the One who formed it, and the handiwork suggests its Maker, and the world manifests the One who arranged it."² On the other hand, the gnostic god "has no witnesses"

² AH 2.9.1: "Ipsa enim conditio ostendit eum qui condidit eam, et ipsa factura suggerit eum qui fecit, et mundus manifestat eum qui se disposuit" (Irenaeus of Lyon, *Contre les heresies Livre II*, critical text and trans. [French] Adelin Rousseau and Louis Doutreleau, S.J., Sources chretiennes [SC] 294 [Paris:

in the realm of creation. Therefore, he concludes, “it is completely irrational [*irrationale*] to set aside the one who is truly God, to whom all things render testimony, in order to inquire whether there is above him another one who does not actually exist and has never been proclaimed by any one.”³

In weighing the import of this criticism, we should consider well that the force of its refutation extends beyond the distinctly gnostic belief that this material world is not the product of the true God. Whenever the analogy of being between this created world and the true God is denied, whenever divinity is construed as disclosed only in the realm of individual interiority or depicted in strictly negative terms as simply other than creation, then the essential force of Irenaeus’s criticism retains all its power. The discourse that posits such a divinity, insofar as it categorically abstracts from seeking evidentiary testimony for the divine from the realm of creaturely being, is, in Irenaeus’s terms, foundationally irrational. By positive contrast, for Irenaeus, authentic Christian faith is “reasonable,” in the first place, because it seeks to discern creation’s testimony to the God who created it. For the second century bishop of Lyons, we cannot speak rationally of God without speaking of God primarily as “Creator” and as the one who implants into his creation, and then solicits from it, testimony to himself.

(2) A second critique through which Irenaeus seeks to manifest the unreasonableness of gnostic doctrine is contained in his complaint that the gnostics simply make things up. He attributes the proliferation of the maddening variety of detail within gnostic accounts to a fundamental epistemological disposition that makes a virtue out of inventiveness of doctrine: “Since they differ so widely among themselves both as respects doctrine and tradition, and since those of them who are recognized as being most modern make it their effort daily to invent some new opinion, and to bring out what no one ever before thought of, it is a difficult matter to describe all their opinions.”⁴ Irenaeus reiterates this complaint several times in the course of

Édition du Cerf, 2011], 84; when SC 294 is specifically cited, English translation is my own from the Latin there; otherwise, I use the English translation from *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* [ANF], vol. 1 [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994], 309–567).

³ AH 2.10.1: “Perquam itaque irrationale est, praetermittentes eum qui vere est Deus et qui ab omnibus habet testimonium, quaerere si est super eum is qui non est et qui a nemine umquam adnuntiatus est” (SC, 294:86).

⁴ AH 1.21.5 (ANF, 1:347); cf. 1.28.1.

his narration of gnostic doctrine, saying in another place, “every one of them generates something new, day by day, according to his ability; for no one is deemed perfect who does not develop among them some mighty fictions.”⁵ The irrationality of this attitude resides in its lack of external and objective accountability, its sheer arbitrariness. It seems that a person can propose as revealed truth just whatever one can dream up. To demonstrate the inherent irrationality of this license to generate doctrine, Irenaeus takes up the mantle of a gnostic teacher himself and mockingly suggest the following doctrine:

There is a certain “pre-beginning,” royal, surpassing all thought, a power existing before every other substance, and extended into space in every direction. But along with [this pre-original power] there exists another power which I term a *Pumpkin* and along with this Pumpkin there exists a power which I call *Utter-Emptiness*. This Pumpkin and Emptiness, since they are one, produced . . . a fruit, everywhere visible, eatable, and delicious, which fruit-language calls a *Cucumber*. Along with this Cucumber exists a power of the same essence, which again I call a *Melon*. These powers, the Pumpkin, Utter-Emptiness, the Cucumber, and the Melon, brought forth the remaining multitude of the delirious melons of Valentinus. For . . . if any one can assign these names at his pleasure, who shall prevent us from adopting these names?⁶

We can, I think, discern a logical consistency between Irenaeus’s first and second critiques. His first criticism was that the gnostic system claimed access to a revealed teaching that dispensed with any evidentiary testimony from the realm of creation. His second criticism is really a transposition of the first criticism from the level of ontology and metaphysics to that of human community. Just as the gnostics are happy to dispense with the universal testimony of creation to their claimed revelation, so they put little stock on the value of a universal testimony to that revelation on the part of the community of faith, the Church. By contrast, the reasonableness of Catholic faith is manifest in the correspondence between positing the universal witness of creation to its Creator and performing a universal witness to that revelation in the communion of the Church.

⁵ AH 1.18.1 (ANF, 1:343).

⁶ AH 1.11.4 (ANF, 332–33; translation slightly altered).

The fundamental contrast can be further reduced to that between positing “hiddenness” as the essential formal characteristic of truth, both in the realms of faith and reason, and identifying the essential character of truth with openness, transparency, and communicability. Catholic faith manifests the openness and accessibility and communicability that characterize all truth through the universality and unanimity and consistency of its witness to revealed truth. That is why the continuity of Catholic faith across time and space is, for Irenaeus, an indispensable sign of the cogency and reasonableness of that faith. Faith knowledge shares with reason the formal characteristic of generating universal attestation. Thus, for Irenaeus, authentic and perfect knowledge, *gnosis*, can be found only in the universal witness of the Church that can demonstrate its continuity with the Old and New Testaments and with the apostolic preaching and that enacts this universal witness in the communion of all the Churches and their common reference to the bishop of Rome. Communion is thus a constitutive characteristic of rationality and truth.⁷ It is universal (catholic) communion, a communion that is generated and safeguarded by love rather than by mere inventiveness, which is the hallmark of the true knowledge of the Catholic faith:

True knowledge is [that which consists in] the doctrine of the apostles, and the ancient constitution of the Church throughout all the world, and the distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place, and has reached even to us, being guarded and preserved without any forging of Scriptures, by a very complete system of doctrine, and neither receiving addition nor [suffering] curtailment [in the truths which she believes]; and [it consists in] reading [the word of God] without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy; and [above all, it consists in] the pre-eminent gift of love (2 Cor 8:1; 1 Cor 13)

⁷ For a modern treatment of this theme from an Orthodox Christian perspective, see John Zizioulas, “Truth and Communion,” in *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), 67–122. Zizioulas presents some cursory reflections on Patristic resonances of this theme, including some comments on Irenaeus, but does not attend to Irenaeus’s concrete ecclesiology.

which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and which excels all the other gifts [of God].⁸

As with Irenaeus's first critique, it is not hard to see the relevance of his critique of gnostic sensibilities for our own times. Ultimately, the question comes down to whether there is such a thing as an objective truth that can transcend the differences between individual subjectivities, not by negating them but by gathering them into communion. If there is not such an objective truth that enfolds individual subjectivities, then inventiveness, in the mode of concoctions of narratives and explanations that reflect and generate subjective experiences, becomes the primary epistemological virtue and the animating principle of discourse. But if there is such a communion-forming objective truth, then it would naturally manifest itself through a universal witness that transcends the limitless multiplicity of narratives and explanations that individual subjects inevitably project onto reality. Such a universal witness is objectively caused by the self-disclosure of truth, and it is subjectively maintained through love, which binds together all those who bind themselves to the truth. Irenaeus presumes that a self-standing objectivity is essential to truth and rationality and that such objectivity manifests itself subjectively in the mode of communion and unanimity of witness. Therefore, the rationality of authentic Catholic faith is bound up with the universal witness of the Church.

(3) A third critique through which Irenaeus seeks to press his characterization of the gnostics as only seeming to make sense is his complaint that their accounts of the sordid goings-on in the realm of the divine *pleroma*, or fullness, are clearly projections of human experiences onto the divine sphere. The story of Sophia's inordinate desire to know her father, her giving birth without her male companion, and her grief, fear, and perplexity are indeed compelling. If this story seems to make sense, if it seems to carry a certain plausibility, Irenaeus intimates, it is only because it mirrors human experiences and projects them onto the divine. Irenaeus is surely right that much of the popularity of gnostic lore, then and now, is due to its success in projecting onto a transcendent scale primal human experiences of unrequited desire, alienation, escape, and reconciliation. It is a great story line: Sophia is a single mother with an absent father who gives

⁸ AH 4.33.8 (ANF, 1:508).

birth to a delinquent son but then finds her way back to the divine suburbs of the *pleroma*.

The gnostic strategy of making sense out of human experiences of suffering and alienation by projecting them directly onto the realm of the divine is arguably also operative in some strands of modern Christian theology that follow the Hegelian program of making human suffering and alienation constitutive of a dramatic unfolding of divine life. Against this impulse as manifested in its original gnostic form, Irenaeus insists that the perception of God that is innate in human reason gives testimony to the indefectible integrity of divine transcendence: “His invisible reality, being powerful, bestows on all a great mental intuition and perception of His sovereign and all-powerful supereminence.”⁹ Irenaeus thus distinguishes between the seeming sense, the pseudo-rationality of mythology, which projects human psychodrama onto the divine sphere, and the authentic rationality of metaphysical insight, which always factors in the radical difference between God and creation, even as it ascends from knowledge of creation to acknowledgment of the Creator. Genuinely rational metaphysical insight ascends from created to uncreated reality precisely by seeing divine being as the transcendent ground of creation and not merely a part of creation. Consequently, Irenaeus not only insists that creation discloses God but also protests that creation does not mirror God. Created things, he says, are not the direct and symmetrical images of divine things; otherwise, God would be corporeal and simply part of creation, rather than its transcendent ground. It is because the gnostics ignore this fundamental principle that they end up projecting the drama of human flux and suffering onto the divine sphere:

These things may properly be said to apply to human beings, since they are compound by nature, and consist of a body and a soul. . . . They are thus describing the affections, and passions, and mental tendencies of human beings, while being ignorant of God. By their manner of speaking, they ascribe those things which apply to human beings to the Father of all . . . while, at the same time, they endow Him with human affections and passions. But if they had known the Scriptures, and been taught by the truth, they would have known, beyond doubt

⁹ AH 2.6.1 (SC, 294:60).

that God is not as human beings are; and that His thoughts are not like human thoughts (Isa 55:8). For the Father of all is at a vast distance from those affections and passions which operate among human beings. He is a simple, uncompounded Being, without diverse members, and altogether like, and equal to Himself, since He is wholly understanding, and wholly spirit, and wholly thought, and wholly intelligence, and wholly reason, and wholly hearing, and wholly seeing, and wholly light, and the whole source of all that is good.¹⁰

Let us now briefly summarize the three features of the rationality of Christian faith that Irenaeus posits as counterpoints to the irrationality of gnostic lore. Christian faith is rational in the first place because it seeks and finds the testimony of the real world, as we know and experience it, on behalf of the God who is its Creator. To dispense a priori with such testimony, says Irenaeus, is to preclude the possibility of any kind of evidence for one's claims, which is fundamentally irrational. Secondly, Christian faith is rational because it also refers to the testimony of a universal community that manifests a unanimity across space and time. Again, to dispense a priori with such a community of witness is to disavow the essential character of Truth as a reality that transcends individual subjectivities and brings them into a communion of knowledge, speech, and action. Thirdly, Christian faith is rational because it apprehends created realities as revelatory of their transcendent ground without making that ground simply a mirror of these created realities, whereas the conflation of the ground of being with the contingent realities brought forth from that ground bears the character of mythology rather than rationality.

It might seem, however, that there is a certain tension, if not outright contradiction, between Irenaeus's insistence that creation gives witness to God and his caveat that creation does not mirror the Creator. But, for Irenaeus, this tension simply coincides with the structure of rationality itself, which is determined by the real relation between divine and created being. Let us now look more closely at Irenaeus's understanding of this ontological relation—which he presumes to be determinative for the possibilities and limits of human knowledge—and at its intrinsic openness to divine revelation.

¹⁰ *AH* 2.13.3 (*ANF*, 1:373–74).

The God–World Relation and the Structure of Human Reason

For Irenaeus, the most exalted conception of divine transcendence dictates that God is both intimately present to creation and irreducibly other than creation.¹¹ Irenaeus's equally emphatic insistence on both aspects of this dialectic was not directed only against the Gnostics; it was also antithetical to some fundamental principles of the Greek philosophy of his time. Though the lavish mythological veneer of gnostic lore can seem far removed from the rigorous dialectical exercises of Greek philosophy, one important tenet of Greek philosophy that was foundational for the gnostic systems was the belief that the highest divinity is not directly involved with the affairs of this world. Aristotle concluded that it was strictly rational to posit a transcendent ground for contingent being but also that this divine being, who was the Unmoved Mover and Self-thinking Thought, can preserve its perfection only by not attending to any realities inferior to it.¹² In the course of his polemic against the gnostics, Irenaeus tirelessly belittles this kind of conception of divine transcendence. Such a so-called "God," whose transcendence is defined as sheer otherness and lack of involvement with the world, would be "a feeble, worthless, and negligent being."¹³ For his part, Plato had maintained that divine goodness is generous and does not begrudge sharing its perfections with lesser beings.¹⁴ Irenaeus evokes this Platonic principle in order to insist that a conception of divine transcendence, conceived most radically as goodness, must entail God's direct engagement with the world. Such divine goodness remains transcendent not by being distant from the world, but by containing the world and enfolding it within divine agency. Irenaeus presents this understanding of diving transcendence as self-evident on strictly rational grounds: "That which contains is greater than that which is contained. But then that which is greater is also stronger, and in a greater degree Lord; and that which is greater, and stronger, and in a greater degree Lord—must be God."¹⁵ That God contains all things means, for Irenaeus, that God made creation some-

¹¹ I have dealt with the structural importance of this theme and its formative influence on the theology of Athanasius in my *Athanasius: The Coherence of his Thought* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 18–24.

¹² Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1072b14.

¹³ *AH* 5.4.1 (*ANF*, 1:530).

¹⁴ Plato, *Timaeus* 29E–30A.

¹⁵ *AH* 2.1.2 (*ANF*, 1:360).

how “in himself.”¹⁶ This does not mean that creation alters divine being in any way, but rather that the ultimate forms and intelligible identities of created things have their ground in God’s own life: “This God, the Creator, who formed the world, is the only God, and there is no other God besides Him—He Himself receiving from Himself the model and figure of those things that have been made.”¹⁷ It is because of this unfathomably intrinsic relation of created things to God that creation reveals God and gives testimony to his intelligence, power, and goodness.¹⁸

Yet, for Irenaeus, this grounding and containment of creation in God can never annul the irreducible difference between contingent created being and the transcendent being of the Creator. In fact, the two aspects of the relation between God and creation are not at all in competition, but are strictly correlative. The difference between God and creation is entirely constituted by God’s positive relation to creation as its ground and the source of its ontological sustenance:

The things established are distinct from Him who has established them, and what have been made from Him who has made them. For He is Himself uncreated, both without beginning and end, and lacking nothing. He is Himself sufficient for Himself; and still further, He grants to all others this very thing, existence; but the things which have been made by Him have received a beginning. But whatever things had a beginning, and are liable to dissolution, and are subject to and stand in need of Him who made them, must necessarily in all respects have a different term [applied to them].¹⁹

It stands to reason, for Irenaeus, that this ontological difference must have epistemological consequences. Indeed, he maintains that the proportion of difference between created and uncreated being must always persist in any creaturely effort to come to knowledge of God: “In the same proportion as he who was formed but today, and received the beginning of his creation, is inferior to Him who is uncreated, and who is always the same, in that proportion is he, as

¹⁶ AH 2.3.1: “He himself created it who formed it beforehand in himself” (*ANF*, 1:362).

¹⁷ AH 2.16.3 (*ANF*, 1:380).

¹⁸ AH 2.9.1.

¹⁹ AH 3.8.3 (*ANF*, 1:422).

respects knowledge and the faculty of investigating the causes of all things, inferior to Him who made him. For you, O human being, are not an uncreated being.”²⁰ Not only that, but since the ultimate truth about created things resides within the divine life itself, human beings cannot of themselves attain to a full understanding of even created being:

Inasmuch as we are inferior to, and later in existence than the Word of God and His Spirit, we are on that very account destitute of the knowledge of His mysteries. And there is no cause for wonder if this is the case with us as respects things spiritual and heavenly, and such as require to be made known to us by revelation, since many even of those things which lie at our very feet (I mean such as belong to this world, which we handle, and see, and are in close contact with) transcend our knowledge, so that even these we must leave to God. . . . On all these points we may indeed say a great deal while we search into their causes, but God alone who made them can declare the truth regarding them.²¹

Thus, given the simultaneity of positive relation and difference between God and the world, human reason also exhibits a capacity for discerning the presence and activity of God through creation but falls short of the vision of God that it naturally seeks. Moreover, it must always be on its guard against a false similitude of this vision concocted by presuming that created realities directly mirror divine reality. But the good news of Christian faith is that this vision is finally attained when the Word and Reason of God, the Son of the Father, who fully shares in the being of God, becomes human and thus reveals to humanity both God and creation, as well as the relation between them.

Perfect Knowledge and the Incarnation of the Word

As one would expect, Irenaeus and his gnostic opponents offered very different interpretations of the prologue of the Gospel of John.²²

²⁰ AH 2.25.3 (ANF, 1:397; translation slightly altered).

²¹ AH 2.28.2 (ANF, 1:398–99).

²² For a thorough treatment of Irenaeus’s treatment of the Gospel of John, see Bernard Mutschler, *Irenäus als johanneischer Theologe*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 21 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004). For an analysis of the Valentinian interpretation of the prologue of John’s Gospel, see Tuomas

The gnostics, with their penchant for projecting multiplicity onto the divine realm, take the different divine titles in the prologue as designating different beings: God, Beginning, Word, Only-begotten, Life, Light, Grace, and Truth are all different beings in the gnostic system. Moreover, gnostic Christologies typically distinguished between an earthly Jesus, who is created by the Demiurge, and a divine being, called Christ or the Savior, who descends upon Jesus from the *pleroma* and then returns to the *pleroma*. According to different gnostic accounts, this divine being descended on Jesus during his baptism or during the crucifixion; in some accounts, he is laughing at the side of the Cross while the earthly Jesus is being crucified.

For Irenaeus, however, the key disclosure of the Johannine prologue is that the divine Word and Reason, who always coexists with the Father, has consummated the union of Creator and creation in his becoming flesh. Irenaeus is well aware of the variations in the various gnostic systems, but for him, the key touchstone of orthodoxy, whose denial makes them all equidistant from authentic Christian revelation, is to be found in John's prologue. After outlining the variations in gnostic Christologies, he concludes: "But according to the opinion of no one of the heretics was the Word of God made flesh."²³ The epistemological consequences of the Word becoming flesh are central to Irenaeus's concern. We have seen that, for him, the difference between God and creation means that human beings can never attain to knowledge of God by their own efforts; they cannot even fully comprehend created realities. At the same time, for Irenaeus, humanity has never simply been left to its own devices in its efforts to know the truth of God and creation. On the one hand, Irenaeus contends that "God cannot be known without God."²⁴ On the other hand, throughout human history, God has been making himself known through God, according to the Trinitarian pattern of divine self-disclosure. And Irenaeus finds the foundations for this Trinitarian structure of divine self-communication in the prologue of John, which identifies Jesus as the divine Logos or Intelligence. Irenaeus presumes this identification as indicating the fullness of the

Rasimus, "Ptolemaeus and the Valentinian Exegesis of John's Prologue," in *The Legacy of John: Second-century Reception of the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Tuomas Rasimus (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 145–71.

²³ *AH* 3.11.3 (*ANF*, 1:427).

²⁴ *AH* 4.6.4 (*ANF*, 1:468).

Word's divinity, since "God is all intelligence, all Word."²⁵ John's prologue says: "No one has seen God. The only-begotten Son has made him known" (John 1:18). Irenaeus seems to be merely paraphrasing this Johannine verse when he declares: "Since it was impossible, without God, to come to knowledge of God, He teaches human beings through his Word to know God."²⁶ For Irenaeus, the Son's pedagogy of divine self-disclosure reaches its apex when the Word becomes flesh: "For in no other way could we have learned the things of God, unless our Master, existing as the Word, had become human."²⁷ Going beyond the prologue of John, and with special reference to the descent of the Spirit on Jesus at his baptism, Irenaeus explains that, through the Incarnation, the Son receives the Spirit humanly on our behalf and, in this way, the Spirit of God becomes "accustomed to" dwell in human beings. Thus, the Trinitarian self-communication is complete when the Spirit "furnishes us with the knowledge of the Truth."²⁸

While the Incarnation brings about the fullness of divine disclosure, it also simultaneously validates creation itself. Against the gnostic claim that this material world is the product of a delinquent semi-divine being, Irenaeus's persistent argument is that creation's capacity to be the bearer of spirit, truth, and salvation is fulfilled and demonstrated through the Incarnation. Only if this world bore the direct imprint of its divine Creator could it bear the full personal presence of divinity in the Incarnation of the divine Word and Reason, the Logos of the Father. If creation in general gives testimony to the presence and activity of God, we can say that God also, in the Incarnation, gives testimony and proof of creation's capacity to carry and communicate the divine presence:

How could that creation which was concealed from the Father, and far removed from Him, have sustained His Word? . . . How, again, could that creation which is beyond the Pleroma have contained Him who contains the entire Pleroma? Inasmuch, then, as all these things are impossible and incapable of proof, that preaching of the Church is alone true [which proclaims]

²⁵ *AH* 2.13.8: "Illum totum sensum et totum Verbum" (SC, 294:124); cf. *AH* 2.28.5.

²⁶ *AH* 4.5.1 (*ANF*, 1:466; translation slightly altered).

²⁷ *AH* 5.1.1 (*ANF*, 1:526).

²⁸ *AH* 4.33.7 (*ANF*, 1:508).

that His own creation bore Him, which subsists by the power, the skill, and the wisdom of God; which is sustained, indeed, after an invisible manner by the Father, but, on the contrary, after a visible manner it bore His Word.²⁹

Irenaeus's interpretation of the Johannine prologue is thus foundational for his conception of the relation between faith and reason. He interprets the Johannine prologue as identifying Jesus to be the intelligence of God, and thus, in keeping with Jesus's own words, as the Truth itself (see John 14:6). This identification enables him to apply the Johannine proclamation of the Incarnation to the psalmist's exclamation that "truth has sprung from the earth" (see Ps 85:11).³⁰ But if truth has sprung from the earth, this means that the divine ground of creation is now intelligible in a new way, since this ground has become manifest within creation itself. Moreover, if truth can spring up from the earth, this also means that the earth is a carrier of truth. Faith in the Incarnation, then, validates human rationality while also expanding it beyond its natural limits.

Conclusion

Irenaeus never reflected thematically on the relation between faith and reason in the way that Pope Benedict did in his Regensburg address. But, motivated by Pope Benedict's valorization of the synthesis of faith and reason in the theology of the early Church, I have tried to show how Irenaeus performed this synthesis in a way that is exemplary and indeed normative, as Pope Benedict claimed. In conclusion, I would like to suggest that a foundational category in Irenaeus's performance of this synthesis is that of "testimony." We have seen that Irenaeus derides the gnostic god as devoid of the "testimony" of reality as we know it. On the other hand, he sees the Catholic doctrine of creation as an embracing of creation's testimony to its Creator and the doctrine of the Incarnation as indicating the Creator's testimony to his creation.

If I may be allowed to follow the trajectory of the letter of Irenaeus's theology into the horizon of the spirit that animates it, I would propose that, at its heart, his theological vision presumes that the element of "testimony" or "witness" is intrinsic and even constitutive of rationality and truth, whether in the mode of faith or that of reason. Intelligence, understanding, reason—however we want to speak of

²⁹ AH 5.18.1 (ANF, 1:546).

³⁰ AH 4.5.1.

the mystery of the encounter with truth—all of this is, for Irenaeus, bound up with testimony and witness bearing. This fundamental intuition is distinctly Christian because it is ultimately Trinitarian. There is no element of testimony or witness that is constitutive of the conception of ultimate Intelligence as self-thinking Thought, which is Aristotle's understanding. But the Christian affirmation of Jesus's ultimate identity as the Logos or Reason of the Father who eternally exists with the Father and eternally "exegetes" the Father posits Divine Intelligence as intrinsically and constitutively and eternally a communion of testimony or "bearing witness." The Christian God is not merely Intelligence, but a communion in which the Son eternally bears witness to the Intelligence of the Father. As the Reason of the Father, the Son does not make the Father rational or intelligent; rather, his very person is testimony to the perfection of the Father's Intelligence, and the Son's generation from the Father is coextensive with that testimony.³¹ The Spirit too is called the "Spirit of Truth" in the Gospel of John, not because he makes the Son to be the truth and not because he makes the Father generate the truth of the Son, but because he bears witness to the Father's generation of the Son as his self-testimony and to the Son's responsive testimony to the Father, bearing witness also to the mutual love of Father and Son in their mutual testimony. This Trinitarian inter-activity of mutual witness is wonderfully expressed in the *troparion* for the Byzantine liturgy of Theophany that commemorates the baptism of Jesus: "When you were baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was revealed. For the Father's voice bore witness to you by calling you his Beloved Son, and the Spirit, in a form of a dove, confirmed the truth of these words. O Christ God, who has appeared to us and enlightened the world, Glory to You!" Many religions and thought systems envision the divine as intelligent or as intelligence itself. But only the Trinitarian faith of Christianity posits an inter-activity of testimony and mutual witness as *constitutive* of divine intelligence.

This emphasis on intra-Trinitarian testimony is, of course, deeply Johannine. It is in John's Gospel that Jesus declares that the Father testifies on his behalf (John 5:37) and that the Holy Spirit will also

³¹ In saying that the Son does not make the Father rational or intelligent, I am essentially reiterating St. Augustine's clarification that the Father is not just wise though begetting wisdom, but is himself Wisdom that begets Wisdom, such that the Father is begetting Wisdom and the Son is begotten Wisdom (see *De Trinitate* 4.1.2).

give witness to him (John 15:26). Irenaeus does not systematically explicate a theology of testimony based on the exegesis of these Johannine texts, but it seems to me that he presumes this Johannine grammar and that this presumption grounds and permeates his distinctive performance of the synthesis of faith and reason. Ultimately, the most radical differentiation he makes between Catholic Christians and the gnostics is that the god posited by the latter lacks universal testimony. Catholic faith, on the other hand, is not only a faith in a God who is “all Intelligence,” and thus the ground of all rationality, but it is faith in the God to whose intelligence and rationality witness is borne extensively throughout creation and intensively in the Church. The *true* God, for Irenaeus, is the God who can evoke this universal witness. We can further add that this true God can evoke this universal witness precisely because witness is eternally constitutive of divine intelligence and divine rationality. Both faith and reason bear witness to this God, and this witness is only a participation in the witness that God gives to himself, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As the Evangelist John tells us, “this testimony is true,” and in communion with Irenaeus, we can add: “this testimony *is Truth.*” N-V

A Cord of Three Strands Is Not Easily Broken:
The Transcendental Brocade of Unity, Truth,
and Goodness in the Early Franciscan
Intellectual Tradition

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Introduction

IN HIS UNJUSTLY INFAMOUS “Regensburg Address,” Pope Benedict XVI made this now famous observation:

One must observe that in the late Middle Ages . . . there arose with Duns Scotus a voluntarism which, in its later developments, led to the claim that we can only know God’s *voluntas ordinata* [ordained will]. Beyond this is the realm of God’s freedom, in virtue of which he could have done the opposite of everything he has actually done. This gives rise to . . . the image of a capricious God, who is not even bound to truth and goodness. God’s transcendence and otherness are so exalted that our reason, our sense of the true and good, are no longer an authentic mirror of God, whose deepest possibilities remain eternally unattainable and hidden behind his actual decisions.¹

¹ Pope Benedict XVI, “Faith, Reason, and the University: Memories and Reflections,” University of Regensburg, September 12, 2006, https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html.

Three features of this passage merit mention: (1) a concern about a conception of a deity whose nature is constituted by a will (*voluntas*) so radically free that it is constrained or determined by absolutely nothing; (2) a genealogy that locates the origins of this view in certain late medieval Franciscan thinkers, often dubbed “voluntarists”; and (3) an implied preference for a different God, whose will is in some sense “bound” by characteristics that human reason would recognize as truth and goodness. In short, the Pope explicitly worries about the pernicious legacy of a medieval Franciscan theology of “a capricious God” and implicitly invites speculation about what it might mean, alternatively, for God to be “bound to truth and goodness.”

The problem that worried the Pope is fairly well known. It begins with the concept, late medieval in origin, of a “voluntarist deity” whose nature it is to be absolutely free of everything, including any putative “divine nature,” fettered by absolutely nothing, constituted as and by its sheer freedom to will.² Entailed in this is the notion that a particular divine attribute, such as divine will (or power), could be conceived as in some sense primary, such that all other attributes could be relegated to a derivative status in relation to it. That is, one might conceive of truth and goodness as reducible to will, such that the true and the good could be “collapsed,” as it were, or subsumed into it. In this case, “true” and “good” would be defined on no other basis than what in fact God wills or does, and in principle, God could at any time will true and good to be other than “our [current] sense of the true and good.” This is a “capricious” deity, “unbound” by truth and goodness.

This account of the divine that Pope Benedict summarizes is part of an oft-repeated genealogy of modernity that locates its deep source in a late medieval intellectual tradition often associated with certain Franciscan thinkers, especially John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham, and recently dubbed “nominalism-voluntarism.”³ As of late, though, this “sinister genealogy” has come under critical scrutiny.⁴ Adjudicating this debate, however, is not the concern of this

² While Pope Emeritus Benedict fingers Scotus as the originator of this conception, as has much recent scholarship since the 1990s, especially that emanating from or associated with “radical orthodoxy,” it may well be rather later medieval thinkers, sometimes dubbed “nominalists,” who first conceived of God in this fashion.

³ See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 13.

⁴ In *Postmodernity and Univocity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014), Daniel

essay. What follows, rather, is an act of *ressourcement* that hopes to uncover in a high medieval theological tradition a distinctive model for conceiving of a deity “bound by truth and goodness.” The Pope’s comments above provide a fitting point of departure for this task. For, truth and goodness are not random divine attributes, but rather members of a triad of philosophical notions, along with “one,” or “unity,” that are known today as the “transcendentals”: universal properties of all of reality.⁵ A popular variation, “the good, the true, and the beautiful”—often mentioned in the promotional materials of liberal arts universities—is perhaps more familiar today. But “unity, truth, and goodness” is the original formula.⁶ And, as it turns out, these transcendentals figure centrally at a particularly important juncture in the development of medieval theology, a development that may provide inspiration, if not an actual framework, for conceiving of just such a God.

Although philosophers have been thinking for millennia about the meaning of unity, truth, and goodness (and others too) *individually*, this particular triad was first assembled in the early thirteenth century, as a unified intellectual framework for understanding all of reality in the most comprehensive manner possible. Ironically, noteworthy is the fact that it is the founders of the earliest *Franciscan* intellectual tradition (i.e., Alexander of Hales and his students, including St. Bonaventure,⁷ whose thought is sufficiently unified in itself and

Horan reconstructs the development of this “sinister genealogy” in what he calls “the Scotus story,” which blames Scotus for the ills of modernity etc., and which Horan then calls into question (see chs. 1–2). In *Aquinas and Radical Orthodoxy: A Critical Inquiry* (New York: Routledge, 2014), Paul DeHart challenges the “radical orthodoxy” scholarship’s idiosyncratic reading of Thomas as a proposed corrective to the ills of late medieval Franciscan metaphysics and its modern results. In a series of articles, Richard Cross defends Scotus’s metaphysics against Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and others (“Where Angels Fear to Tread: Duns Scotus and Radical Orthodoxy,” *Antonionum* 76 [2001]: 7–41; “Scotus and Suárez at the Origins of Modernity,” in *Deconstructing Radical Orthodoxy: Postmodern Theology, Rhetoric and Truth*, ed. Wayne Hankey and Douglas Hedley [Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005], 65–80).

⁵ Jan A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought: From Philip the Chancellor to Francisco Suarez* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 14: “While the scholastics believed the transcendentals to be the most general predicates of things, Kant said they are actually ‘nothing but logical requirements and criteria of all knowledge of things’ (Kant’s italics).”

⁶ On the question of beauty as a transcendental, see footnote 22 below.

⁷ Apropos the Seraphic Doctor, John Milbank’s most recent work argues that it was actually Bonaventure who paved the foundation for the voluntarist deity

distinct from later developments to warrant the label “Early Franciscan Intellectual Tradition,” or “EFIT,” for short), who (with aid from the medieval Arabic philosopher Avicenna) first deployed this transcendental triad as a way of conceiving not only of created reality but also of its creating Source. They thereby proffered a systematic paradigm for conceiving of a God “bound by truth and goodness.”

In what follows, the so-called *Summa Halensis* (*SH*) will be the central focus. Also known as the *Summa theologiae* of Alexander of Hales or the *Summa fratris Alexandri*,⁸ this massive work of early Franciscan theology is now assumed to be a composite work of both Alexander himself and his students, especially John of la Rochelle and (later, after Alexander’s death) William of Melitona.⁹ In light of these authorial ambiguities, the author will be designated the “Halensist.”

A Brief Introduction to the Transcendentals in the Middle Ages

To begin, a brief description of what the transcendentals are and how they enter the medieval conversation is in order. As Jan Aertsen has recently noted in his book *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, “transcendental philosophy” begins with the work of the Arabic

of the later medieval Franciscan tradition (*Beyond Secular Order: The Representation of Being and the Representation of the People* [Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014], 45).

- ⁸ The first truly critical edition was produced at Quaracchi between 1924 and 1948, the *Doctoris irrefragabilis Alexandri de Hales Ordinis minorum Summa theologica* [*SH*] (Quaracchi, IT: Ad Claras Aquas, 1924–1948). Other earlier editions include: Venice (1474–14755); Nuremberg (1481–1482); Papia (1489); Lyons (1515–1516); Venice (1575–1576); Koln (1622 reprint of Venice). A complete list is found in Irenaeus Herscher, “A Bibliography of Alexander of Hales,” *Franciscan Studies* 5 (1945): 434–54. All English translation of *SH* in this article will be my own translation done from the twentieth-century Quaracchi edition.
- ⁹ See Victorin Doucet, “Prolegomena in librum III necnon in libros I et II Summa Fratris Alexandri,” in Alexandri de Hales, *Summa theologica* (Quaracchi, 1948), who argues that books I and III of this *Summa* are largely the work of John of la Rochelle (360–361), while book II was likely written by an anonymous friar, drawing heavily on Alexander’s own writings (367). Books I–III were largely done by 1245, when John and Alexander died. In the mid-1250s, William of Melitona and others completed *SH* at the order of the Pope Alexander IV (334 and 359), but their work was probably limited to two insertions in the first and second books and to book IV, on the sacraments, which has not yet been published in a modern critical edition (337 and 356).

philosopher Avicenna (AD 980–1037).¹⁰ Avicenna noted that any and every thing that is, is; and everything that is, is one, otherwise it would not be knowable as something (e.g., even a loose assembly of concert listeners is in some way a single crowd). Accordingly, *ens* and *unum* are the most fundamental properties of all things, insofar as anything that is, both necessarily is and is necessarily one. In *Metaphysics of “The Healing”* 1.5, Avicenna named “being” (existence), “thing” (essence, or *quidditas*), and “necessary” as such properties, and in *Metaphysics of “The Healing”* 3, he added “one” to the list. These properties apply to all things whatsoever, and they transcend all other differences between things. This leads to the claim that “being” and “one” are “convertible” (initially made by Aristotle himself): they “run together,” and thus they are universal properties of reality. Avicenna also insisted, importantly, that, when the human mind knows any particular thing, what it actually knows first, even though implicitly, is being (*ens*), thing (*res*), and one (*unum*)—which he designated the “primary notions of the intellect.”¹¹ These are the seminal insights that flowered in the Western medieval doctrine of the transcendentals, and Avicenna is rightly seen as the original sower thereof.

¹⁰ In what Aertsen has called “the second beginning of metaphysics” (*Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, 75–76), Avicenna’s *De philosophia prima sive scientia divina* (which, in the form of a commentary on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, is actually “an independent and original account that gives first philosophy a new and comprehensive structure”) was translated into Latin in the second half of the twelfth century. Henceforth, it exerted no little influence on university Scholastics, including the EFIT, until the mid-thirteenth century, when eclipsed by Averroes (see Marie-Thérèse D’Alverny, *Avicenne in Occident* [Paris: Vrin, 1993]).

¹¹ Jan A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 22. Here Aertsen raises the question of whether Avicenna’s interests were largely logical and gnoseological and concludes that these are basically features and structures of the human mind—or at least they could be construed thus—and thus he notes that an interesting bridge to the transcendental philosophy of Kant emerges, accordingly: “In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (B 113) he points to the ‘Transcendental Philosophy of the Ancients’ and quotes the proposition ‘so famous among the Schoolmen: *quodlibet ens est unum, verum, bonum.*’ At the same moment, however, he distances himself from the traditional conception. ‘These supposed transcendental predicates of things are nothing else but logical requirements and criteria of all knowledge of things in general’ (B 114). ‘Transcendental’ in the Kantian sense is concerned with the mode of cognition of objects, insofar as this mode of cognition is possible *a priori.*”

Yet, it is important to note that Avicenna's "doctrine of the primary notions is not [yet] the theory of the transcendentals as it was developed in the [Latin] Middle Ages."¹² What is most significant for the present analysis is that Avicenna does *not* include truth and goodness in his list. That addition is a Christian, medieval contribution, and it is done in a rather self-conscious way, if Albert the Great is any indication. In his *Commentary on the Sentences*, the Dominican notes:

It should be said that, according to the Philosopher, "being" and "one" are before all things. For the Philosopher did not posit that truth and good are dispositions generally, concomitant with being, since he did not consider being insofar as it flows from the first, wise, and good being; rather he considered being [only] insofar as the intellect terminates in it by resolving the posterior into the prior and the composed into the simple.¹³

Presumably referring to book IV of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Albert goes on to contrast the Philosopher's oversight with the insights of certain *sancti*, "holy ones," who *did* consider being in relation to its origin from the first, true, and good being, and thus added "true" and "good" to "being" and "one."¹⁴ Strikingly, Albert here links the Western medieval introduction of "true" and "good" into the transcendental discussion to a distinctively Christian insistence on a doctrine of creation and its relationship to a Creator whose essential attributes include wisdom and goodness.

Albert does not name these *sancti* (he may have Dionysius in mind), but it seems that the crucial move of adding goodness and

¹² Aersten, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, 100.

¹³ Albert, *In I sent.*, d. 46, N, a. 14: "Dicendum, quod secundum Philosophum, ante omnia sunt ens et unum. Philosophus enim non ponit, quod verum et bonum sunt dispositiones generaliter concomitantes ens . . . Quia Philosophus non considerat ens secundum quod fluit ab ente primo et uno et sapientie et bono, sed ipse considerat ens secundum quod stat in ipso intellectus resolvens posterius in prius, et compositum in simplex . . . Et ideo sic generaliter considerando ista, ut consideraverunt Sancti, dicemus . . . Hoc autem ideo dico, quia ista a Sanctis prima ponuntur et in quolibet" (*Opera Omnia*, ed. Auguste Borgnet [Paris: Vivès, 1890–1899], 26: 450; translation mine).

¹⁴ Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, 21: "[Albert's] opposition of the *Philosophus* and the *sancti* shows his awareness that different traditions of thought (both the Greek and the Christian) and different motives affected the doctrine of the transcendentals, as it came to be developed by the *theologi*."

truth was first taken by two prominent and influential masters at Paris in the first third of the thirteenth century: William of Auxerre¹⁵ and, especially, Philip the Chancellor, in his *De bono*.¹⁶ Yet, while Philip initiates the conversation in influential ways,¹⁷ his “account bears the marks of a first draft; it is rather terse and sometimes little explicit.”¹⁸ One must in fact look to the *Summa Halensis* to find the first full-fledged account of the transcendentals¹⁹ in the Middle Ages.²⁰ While scholarship has long noted the expanded role that the transcendental triad of unity, truth, and goodness plays in the *Summa Halensis*, Aert-

¹⁵ See Boyd Taylor Coolman, *Knowing God by Experience* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 54–56 and bibliographical material in the notes there.

¹⁶ See Henri Pouillon, “Le premier traite des proprietes transcendentales, La *Summa de bono* du Chancelier Philippe,” *Revue Neoscholastique de Philosophie* 42 (1939): 40–77.

¹⁷ Lydia Schumacher writes: “Philip the Chancellor’s *Summa de Bono* (1225–8) is an important ‘transitional text’ mediating between Avicenna and his Franciscan receptors. Although Philip nowhere uses the term *transcendens* in the sense of ‘transcendental,’ referring instead to the *communissima* or *prae intentiones* or most common properties, he nevertheless provides the first systematic discussion of the transcendentals, which itself bears signs of the influence of Avicenna. The background to this first *Summa* centered on the good was evidently the dualist Cathar heresy—which posited a good God as the creator of spiritual being and an ‘evil’ God as the creator of matter—which was posing a serious threat to orthodoxy at the time. The first eleven questions of his *Summa* formulate the doctrine of the transcendentals as it came to be known subsequently. First and foremost, Philip codifies the list of transcendentals—the first of which is being, which is in turn ‘determined’ on his account by ‘one, true, and good’” (“The Early Franciscan Doctrine of the Transcendentals: Rethinking the Relationship between Medieval and Modern Thought” [unpublished manuscript]).

¹⁸ Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, 128.

¹⁹ Aertsen points out that the term *transcendens* in the sense of transcendental does not seem to be used in the thirteenth century, though an anonymous thirteenth-century text attributed to Bonaventure does seem to use the term in this way (*Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, 29; see also *Tractatus de transcendentalibus entis conditionibus*, ed. D. Halcour, in *Franziskanische Studien*, vol. 41 [1954], 41–106). Philip’s *Summa de bono* (1225–1228) uses the term *communissima*, not *transcendentia*. Nor was the term used in *SH*. Not until Scotus does the term become common.

²⁰ It should be noted, though, that the *SH* completely adopts Philip the Chancellor’s contributions: a distinction between intentional and extensional language, his insistence on one, true, and good as being the fundamental triad of transcendentals, his particular approach to defining them and the terminology of “concomitant conditions” of being (*Summa de bono*, prol., q. 7).

sen notes that the *Summa Halensis* “deserves more attention than it has received so far”²¹ and that, in it, “the evolution since the beginning of the doctrine of the transcendentals is remarkable.”²²

Before proceeding, a brief summary description of the medieval theory of the transcendentals as it evolved throughout the thirteenth century will be useful, even if some of that development occurred after the 1240s, as it will serve to clarify what sometimes remains implicit in the EFIT.²³ Generally speaking, the transcendental notions are real, formal, conditions of being that “escape classification in the Aristotelian categories by reason of their greater extension and universality of application.”²⁴ They are “formal” (as opposed to “virtual”), meaning “that the *ratio* [of e.g., truth] . . . *as such* is to be found *intrinsically* in the thing of which it is predicated.”²⁵ These conditions are not created by the mind, but rather discovered in actual things, and thus they are “predicated of real things” and they “signify some formal aspect or perfection characteristic of existing objects.”²⁶ Put otherwise, any existing thing “has a capacity of producing in our mind different concepts of itself,” even though “there is no actual distinction nor composition” in the thing.²⁷ This formal distinction “differs from the purely conceptual

²¹ Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, 135.

²² Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, 139–40. *SH* also contains the first scholastic treatise to raise the difficult question of the relation between the “the good” and “the beautiful” (no. 103), which became the point of departure for Scholastic reflections on *pulchrum* (Justin Shaun Coyle, “Is Beauty a Transcendental in the *Summa halensis*? An Aesthetic Aporia” [unpublished paper]).

²³ See Johann Fuchs, *Die Proprietäten des Seins bei Alexander von Hales* (Munich: Druk der Salesianischen Offizin, 1930), and especially Alan B Wolter, *The Transcendentals and Their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1946). The following account is drawn from Wolter’s text.

²⁴ Wolter, *Transcendentals*, 1.

²⁵ Wolter, *Transcendentals*, 7.

²⁶ Wolter, *Transcendentals*, 8. For this reason, they are sometimes called “first intentions.”

²⁷ This is where John Duns Scotus will apply his famous “formal distinction.” For him, there must be something real in a thing, something that is not equal to the entire reality of the thing itself, that gives rise to the formally and intentionally distinct concepts of one, true, and good, to which these transcendental notions correspond. The formal distinction provides an objective basis in things for real concepts. The formal distinction is something less than a real physical distinction (*realis simpliciter*) that exists between two or more

distinction in so far as the latter has no intrinsic basis in the thing itself for a difference of concepts.”²⁸ As conceived in the mind, the transcendentals “add to the notion of being certain formal aspects which are neither implicitly nor explicitly contained in the simple *ratio* ‘a being’”; in actual things, “they are formally distinct from one another and from the formal perfection signified by the quidditative concept, a being.”²⁹ In short, they are “formally distinct objective perfections” of being. Moreover, they are not actually added to a thing in a causal event distinct from the causal event that produces the thing³⁰—they are concomitant, and thus “coextensive with being.”³¹ So, “in every physical entity or *res* the perfections expressed by the concepts being, one, true, good are all *unitive contenta* in one real indivisible whole.”³²

The Triadic Structure of Being: “Intra-Entitative” Relationality

The *Summa Halensis* defines the transcendental notions in three different places, each of which affords insight into the EFIT’s understanding of them. In the first, the Halensist deploys the somewhat obscure notion of “in-division,” a lack of actual multiplicity or plurality, to make an initial claim about the presence of unity, truth, and goodness in every entity:

There is an in-division of principles so as to constitute something in being simply—and by this there is unity; and there is an in-division [of principles] so as to constitute something in

physical entities. At the same time, it is not a mere distinction created by the mind (*distinctio rationis*). The formality (transcendental notion in a thing) is not a physically distinct thing, but a positive something that is somehow less than a thing; the *ratio objectiva* of a distinct formal concept. Each formality has its own proper quiddity or *ratio*; no formality has a distinct existence, but rather exists by the existence of the thing of which it is an aspect; they therefore cannot be separated from the thing, even by the power of God (Wolter, *Transcendentals*, 21–23).

²⁸ Wolter, *Transcendentals*, 19.

²⁹ Wolter, *Transcendentals*, 100.

³⁰ Though they do “presuppose a subject which they modify or qualify” (Wolter, *Transcendentals*, 101).

³¹ As John Duns Scotus would later put it: “Of whatever ‘being’ is predicable *in quid*, ‘truth, unity, and goodness’ are predicable *in quale*” (Wolter, *Transcendentals*, 101).

³² Wolter, *Transcendentals*, 101.

cognizable being—and by this there is truth; and there is an in-division of principles by which they constitute something ordered to its end—and by that there is goodness.³³

Here, in what has been called the “negation strategy” of Philip the Chancellor, the Halensist distinguishes these three formal aspects of any being.

A second text goes further, by introducing a Chancellorian distinction between intention and extension³⁴ and by beginning to link the members of the triad to each other in order to offer a basic definition of each:

Although one, true, and good coincide in reality, their intentions differ. . . . For “one” adds in-division to being (*ens*): hence, unity is the in-division of *ens*; “true” adds the in-division of *esse* to the in-division of *ens*: hence truth is the in-division of *esse* and of that which is; but “good” adds the in-division of *bene esse* to the in-division of *ens* and of *esse*. Hence the good

³³ *SH I*, T3, Q1, M1, C2 (no. 73): “Est enim indivisio principiorum ut constituunt rem in esse simpliciter: et ab illa est unitas in rebus; et est indivisio secundum quod constituunt illam in esse cognoscibili: et ab hac est veritas; et est indivisio principiorum secundum quod constituent rem in ordine ad suum finem: et ab illa est bonitas.” The Halensist also states here here: “There is a distinction according to which a thing [*res*] is separated from another thing in being [*in esse*], and there is a distinction according to which a thing [*res*] is separated from a thing with cognizable being; for a thing is discerned from a thing insofar as it is and insofar as it is cognizable. Unity accomplishes the first distinction through itself; but truth [accomplishes] the second [distinction]” (“est discretio secundum quam separator res a re in esse, et est discretio secundumquam separator res a re ut habet esse cognoscibile; discernitur enim res a re in quantum est et in quantum cognoscibilis est. Primam discretionem efficit per se unitas, secundam vero veritas”).

³⁴ Philip deployed analytic tools from medieval terminist logic to distinguish between *intentional* and *extensional* language and to distinguish between what a term *supposits* (the reference of terms to any extra-mental entity) and what it *signifies* (the concept applied to the entity). “Professor of Theology” and “Director of Undergraduate Studies,” for example, are *intentionally* distinct, since “professor” and “director” are different notions. Yet, they could be *extensionally* identical if one and the same individual held both positions. In that case, “professor” and “director” would clearly *signify* differently, but they would *supposit* or refer to the same person. Similarly, “being” is convertible with “one,” “true,” and “good” with respect to what they *supposit*, but they are distinct conceptually and intentionally in what they *signify*.

is said to be the in-division of act from potency, and act is the completion or the perfection of the possibility of a nature.³⁵

Continuing to speak of “in-division,” this complex text distinguishes between *ens*, *esse*, and *bene esse* (these seem to correspond to the vague “principles” mentioned in the first text), which it associates with the adjectives—one, true, good—in order to provide a definition of the grammatical substantives: unity, truth, and goodness. Because *ens* is one, it has unity. Because *ens* is also true, *esse* is “added” to *ens*, and that is truth. Because *ens* is also good, *bene esse* is “added” to *ens* and *esse*, and that is goodness.

Insight into what precisely is meant here comes from the very last sentence. The good that is *bene esse* is the actualization of a potency or the realization of the possibility of a nature. The implication seems to be that *esse* corresponds to an entity’s nature and the potencies entailed therein. *Ens*, *esse*, and *bene esse*, accordingly, might be well-rendered as “simple being,” “being in potency,” and “being in act”—or again “one entity” (*ens*), “one entity of a specific nature” (*esse*), and “one entity of a specific actualized nature” (*bene esse*). Again, it should be noted that these are formal and conceptual distinctions, rather than real divisions. It is *not* the case that something is initially an *ens* and then *esse* and *bene esse* are subsequently added to it. Nor is there some *actual* progression in any given entity, from *ens* to *esse* to *bene esse*, as so many stages or phases of an entity’s existence. These are intentionally, not extensionally, distinct, and they are simultaneously, not sequentially, present in any being. Perhaps it could be said that: because being is one, it is an *ens*; because it is true, it also is or has *esse*; and because it is good, it also is or has *bene esse*.³⁶

³⁵ *SH* I, T3, Q2, M1, C2 (no. 88): “Bonum’ vero addit ad indivisionem entis et esse indivisionem secundum bene esse: unde bonum dicitur indivisio actus a potentia, et actus dicitur complementum sive perfectio possibilitatis, ad quam res nata est.” According to the Quarrachi editors, this definition of the good comes from Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono* II: “Item, alia [definitio boni] extrahitur ab Aristotele et aliis philosophis: Bonum est habens indivisionem actus a potentia simpliciter vel quodammodo” (“Again, another definition is drawn from Aristotle and from other philosophers: the good has an indivision of act from potency simply or in a certain way”; translation mine).

³⁶ See also *SH* I, T3, Q3, M1, C1, A3, ad 3 (no. 104): “Similarly, it should be said that the saying ‘the good is self-diffusive, etc.’ said absolutely, is about the highest good, yet [that saying] is contracted to every good substantially, since in every good substance there is an essence, from which [there is] a power,

Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that these formal dimensions of being constitute a real and particular relationship *between* the members of the triad. For the Halensist, being has a particular triadic structure and that structure can be described as the cumulative logical “layering” of the transcendental notions. The third definitional text makes this point explicit:

The intention of “being” naturally precedes the intention of “one,” and the intention of “one” [naturally precedes] the intention of “true” and “good”: for the intention of “being” is more absolute [*absolutior*] than the intention of “one”; . . . and the intention of “one,” which is of “being” considered absolutely, is more absolute [*absolutior*] than the intention of “true” and of “good,” which are of being in relation. Likewise, the intention of “true” is more absolute [*absolutior*] than the intention of “good,” as the being of a thing can be considered with or without its utility or order.³⁷

Here, we have a clear expression of the triadic transcendental structure of being couched in terms of a natural or logical order and of the odd-sounding “relative absoluteness.” The basic points are this: something must exist “before” it can be one, for one is always one thing; similarly, there must be one thing “before” it can exist as a specific kind of one thing; and a thing must exist as one certain kind of thing “before” it can express or realize its nature. The meaning of “before” here, of course, is of logical and formal priority, not temporal and actual.³⁸

and from which power [there is] an action, and the act leads to the end/goal” (“Similiter dicendum quod haec “bonum est diffusivum” etc. absolute dicta, est de summo bono, tamen contrahitur ad omne bonum substantialiter, quia in omni bono substantiali est essentia, a qua est potentia, et a potentia actio, et actio resultat in finem”).

³⁷ SH I, T3, Q1, M1, C2 (no. 73): “dicendum quod intentio ‘entis’ naturaliter praecedat intentionem ‘unius’ et intentio ‘unius’ intentionem ‘veri’ et ‘boni’: absolutior enim est intentio ‘entis’ intentione ‘unius’, sicut ostensum est et absolutior intentio ‘unius’, quae est entis in quantum consideratur absolutum, quam intentio veri et boni, quae sunt entis comparati. Item, intentio veri absolutior est intentione boni, sicut esse rei consideratum sine sua utilitate vel ordine, et esse rei cum sua utilitate et ordine.”

³⁸ From the vantage point of the later medieval Franciscan tradition, this Halensian interest in the logical ordering and relationships among the members of the transcendental triad appear to be both novel and short-lived. Scotus seems to have little to no interest in such (see Wolter, *Transcendentals*, 126–27).

In these three texts, the *Summa Halensis* (building on Philip the Chancellor) offers what appears to be the first complete medieval Scholastic account of the transcendental properties of being. Three observations are in order. First, the medieval Christian introduction of “true” and “good” into the list of transcendentals, noted by Albert the Great, is fully integrated in the *Halensian* account. Second, the crucial development is the introduction and specification of a relational structure between them. As Aertsen notes, “what is absent in Avicenna” and undeveloped in Philip “is an account of the inner relations and order between these notions.”³⁹ Giving greater precision to Aertsen’s claim: the transcendental properties are not here three discrete and isolated ways of construing being. It is not sufficient to say simply that being is simultaneously one, true, and good. Rather, each and every entity is metaphysically constituted by a relational triadic structure in which unity, truth, and goodness “accumulate,” presuming what is logically prior and enabling what is logically posterior. That is to say, in the EFIT, the transcendentals are interrelated among themselves according to a specific ordering—an intra-entitative relationality. Their status as intentional notions, rather than extensional entities, does not preclude a particular, unalterable, and nonnegotiable ordering among them. Third, the fundamental structure of being is governed by this irreducible presence of truth and goodness: it cannot be reduced to sheer being or mere unity. Being, on this account, could be said to be “bound by truth and goodness” in the sense that being is intrinsically and irreducibly true and good.

A Transcendental Ontology of Triadic Relationality

The pioneering emphasis of the *Summa Halensis* on the relational structure of being is not limited to its claim about *intra-entitative* relationality. The insistence that being is not only one but also true and good prompts the Halensist to extend the scope of the inherently relational structure of being. A remark from the third definitional text facilitates a transition to this expanded purview: “the intention of ‘one,’ which is of ‘being’ considered absolutely, is more absolute than the intention of true and of good, *which are of being in relation*” (emphasis added). For the Halensist, truth and goodness in particular are inherently relational notions. Hence, they are not only relatedly present dimensions *within* entities; they also enable and structure relationships *among* and *between*

³⁹ Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, 47.

entities. What could be called the *inter-entitative* transcendental relationality of being has three dimensions for the Halensist: the ontological, the anthropological/epistemological, and the theological.⁴⁰

Tri-Dimensional Inter-Entitative Relations

Most basically, first of all, the presence of not only unity but also, and especially, truth and goodness in being is the condition for the possibility of relationships *among* entities:

Considered absolutely, as divided from others and in-divisible in itself, an entity is defined as “one.” As related to another by some distinction, an entity is defined as “true”; for “true” is that by which something is distinguished [from something else]. As related to another by fittingness or order [*convenientiam sive ordinem*], an entity is defined as “good”; for “good” is that by which something is ordered.⁴¹

Here, unity establishes not only in-division within an entity but also separation from other entities. Truth establishes not only an entity’s particular nature but also its particular nature as distinct from other kinds of entities, and thereby intelligible as one thing and not another.⁴² Goodness establishes not only an entity’s actualization but also its relative ordering among other actualized entities.

⁴⁰ *SH I, T3, Q1, M1, C2* (n. 73): “Being [*ens*] is the first intelligible; but the first determinations of being are ‘one’ and ‘true’ and ‘good’: for they determine being [*ens*] inasmuch as the *esse* of things is considered in its own genus, and also according to the relation of their *esse* to the divine cause, and according to the relation of those things to the soul, which is the image of the divine essence” (“*Ens est primum intelligibile; primae autem entis determinationes sunt ‘unum,’ ‘verum,’ ‘bonum’*: determinant enim *ens* secundum quod consideratur *esse* rerum in proprio genere, et etiam secundum relationem *esse* earum ad divinam causam, et secundum relationem rerum ad animam, quae est imago divinae essentiae. Secundum autem quod *esse* rerum consideratur in proprio genere, triplicatur entis determinatio”).

⁴¹ *SH I, T3, Q1, M1, C2* (no. 73): “Secundum quod *ens* aliquod consideratur absolutum, ut divisum ab aliis et in se indivisum, determinatur per ‘unum.’ Secundum vero quod consideratur aliquod *ens* comparatum ad aliud secundum distinctionem, determinatur per ‘verum’: ‘verum’ enim est quo res habet discerni. Secundum vero quod consideratur comparatum ad aliud secundum convenientiam sive ordinem, determinatur per ‘bonum’: ‘bonum’ enim est ex quo res habet ordinari.”

⁴² Cf. *SH I, T3, Q2, M1, C3* (no. 74).

Tri-Dimensional Subject–Object Relations

Secondly, the presence of unity, truth, and goodness in being is also the condition for the possibility of relationship *between* entities and rational creatures. For the Halensist, these objective determinations of being correspond to the very structure of the rational subject, allowing a three-dimensional relationship between subject and object: “Again, in relation to the soul, the same determination is triplicated. For the being of something is related to the soul triply: that is, as a thing is ordered in the memory, grasped by the intellect, and loved by the will.”⁴³ In any subject–object encounter, the object is held in memory as a single entity: as one, understood as a particular kind of entity; as true, and desired or loved as actualized; as good, since actualization brings about the inherent attraction of goodness. “Good adds to being the idea of desirability, for something is only desirable as actualized [*complementum*].”⁴⁴ Since, moreover, any entity has these three fundamental determinations, in any subject–object encounter, what is known first and foremost (even if implicitly?) is being, along with unity, truth, and goodness. Following Avicenna⁴⁵ and preceding Thomas Aquinas,⁴⁶ the Halensist thus calls “being” and its transcendental properties the “first intelligibles”: “since ‘being’ [*ens*] is the first intelligible, its concept is

⁴³ SH I, T3, Q1, M1, C2 (no. 73): “Item per comparationem ad animam triplicatur eadem determinatio. Nam esse rerum tripliciter comparator ad animam: videlicet ut res ordinentur in memoria, percipiuntur intelligentia, diligantur voluntate.”

⁴⁴ SH I, T3, Q3, C1, A1 (no. 102): “‘Good’ refers to being along with its act [*ens cum actu*], that is, with its complete realization [*complementum*], whether in utility or in order: and thus it adds to being the idea [*ratio*] of appetibility or desirability, for it is only desirable as completely realized [*complementum*], whether useful or delectable” (“Bonum vero dicit ens cum actu, id est cum complemento, sive utilitate et ordine: et ideo addit enti rationem appetibilis sive desiderabilis, nec est desiderabile nisi in quantum complementum, sive utile sive delectabile”).

⁴⁵ Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of “The Healing”* 1.6, parallel English–Arabic text translated, introduced, and annotated by M. E. Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005).

⁴⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 5, a. 2, corp.: “Now the first thing conceived by the intellect is being; because everything is knowable only inasmuch as it is in actuality. Hence, being is the proper object of the intellect, and is primarily intelligible” (“Primo autem in conceptione intellectus cadit ens, quia secundum hoc unumquodque cognoscibile est, in quantum est actu, ut dicitur in IX Metaphys. Unde ens est proprium obiectum intellectus, et sic est primum intelligibile”; translation from <http://dhspritory.org/thomas/summa/FP/FP005.html#FPQ5A2THEP1>).

known by the intellect; therefore the first definitions of being are the first impressions in the intellect: one, true, and good.”⁴⁷

Tri-Dimensional Creator–Creation Relationship

Lastly, this transcendental triadic structure of being—*within* every entity, *among* all entities, and *between* entities and rational subjects—is a function of a more fundamental relationship: that between created being and its Creator. For the Halensist, the “divine Cause is a threefold cause: efficient, formal or exemplar, final,” and the being of creatures, “which flows from their Cause,” accordingly, “receives a threefold impression.”⁴⁸ The Halensist explains that: “[since] the *esse* of creatures conforms to the efficient cause, there is unity: so, just as the efficient cause is one, undivided, . . . so [the creature] is made, as far as possible, to be undivided”;⁴⁹ “[since] the *esse* of creatures conforms to the formal, exemplary cause, there is truth: so, just as the exemplary cause is the first art [*ars*] of truth, so the creature, as much as is possible,

⁴⁷ *SH I, T3, Q1, M1, C1* (no. 72): “‘Ens’ sit primum intelligibile, eius intention apud intellectum est nota (Avicenna, *Metaphysics* of “*The Healing*” 1.6); primae ergo determinationes entis sunt primae impressiones apud intellectum: eae sunt unum, verum, bonum, sic patebit.” The Halensist continues here: “They cannot, therefore, have anything prior, specifically, for their notification. If then their notification occurs, this will be only through subsequent things, as either through negation or through consequent effects” (“Non poterunt ergo habere aliqua priora specialiter ad sui notificationem. Si ergo notificatio fiat eorum, hoc non erit nisi per posterior, ut per abnegationem vel effectum consequentem”).

⁴⁸ *SH I, T3, Q1, M1, C2* (no. 73): “Secundum quod esse rerum comparator in relatione ad causam divinam, simili modo triplicatur determinatio. Causa enim divina est causa in triplici genere causae: efficiens, formalis ut exemplar, finalis. Quae quidem causalitas, cum sit communis toti Trinitati, appropriator ut causa efficiens Patri, exemplaris Filio, finalis Spiritui Sancto. Secundum hoc, esse in creatura, quod fluit a causa, triplicem sortitur impressionem, ut in conformatione ad causam” (“Insofar as the being of a thing is compared in relation to the divine cause, its determination is triplicated similarly. For the divine cause is a cause in a threefold kind of cause: efficient, formal as exemplar, final. This causality, though it is common to the whole Trinity, is appropriated as follows: efficient cause to the Father, exemplar to the Son, final to the Holy Spirit. According to this, being in creatures, which flows from a cause, has a threefold impression, as conformed to its cause”).

⁴⁹ *SH I, T3, Q1, M1, C2* (no. 73): “Impressio ergo dispositionis in esse creaturae, secundum quam fit in conformitate ad efficientem causam, est unitas: ut sicut efficiens causa est una, indivisa, multiplicata in qualibet creatura, sic fit, ut sibi possibile est, esse indivisum.”

is made in imitation of this art: and this is to possess truth”;⁵⁰ “[and since] the *esse* of creatures conforms to the final cause there is goodness: so, just as the final cause is the highest good, so for every creature there is an inclination and conformity to the highest good: and this is the goodness of creatures.”⁵¹ In short: “The transcendentalism of one, true, and good is founded on the precise causality of the first principle. . . . Because this causality is threefold, there cannot be more than three general conditions of being.”⁵²

This inter-entitative relational structure of being can be summarized thus: because divine causality is irreducibly threefold, creation is thrice-related to God. Because creation reflects its Creator, creation is not only transcendently “watermarked” by a threefold impression, but it everywhere exhibits the relationality inherently instantiated by unity, truth, and goodness. In fact, it is not too much to claim that every entity *simply* is a function of this relatedness: first, to its Creating Cause through efficient, formal, and final causality; second, within itself, as one, true, and good; third, to other entities, since its unity distinguishes it from other entities *generally*, its truth relates it to other entities according to specific *difference*, making it intelligible as specifically distinct from others, and its goodness relates it to other entities according to some order (*ordo*), arrangement, conformity, and end; and, fourth, to human perceivers, as retainable, intelligible, and desirable, as an entity relates to the capacities of rational creatures, whose minds are structured to receive these three most common impressions of being. In a fine passage that synthesizes (nearly) all these relational dimensions, the Halensist summarizes:

In any being whatsoever, there is unity from the efficient cause, through which it is ordered and preserved in the mind: for the mind joins together those things which it retains according to some coordination of relation to “one” and as distinct. Like-

⁵⁰ SH I, T3, Q1, M1, C2 (no. 73): “Item, impressio dispositionis, secundum quam fit in conformitate ad causam formalem exemplarem, est veritas: ut sicut causa exemplaris est ars prima veritatis, sic creatura, secundum quod sibi possibile est, fit in imitatione artis: and hoc est habere veritatem.”

⁵¹ SH I, T3, Q1, M1, C2 (no. 73): “Praeterea, impressio secundum quam fit in conformitate ad causam finalem est bonum: ut sicut causa finalis est summa bonitas, sic cuilibet creaturae sit inclinatio et conformitas ad summam bonitatem: et haec est creaturae bonitas. Unitas esse creaturae monstrat unitatem efficientis, veritas veritatem exemplaris, bonitas bonitatem finis.”

⁵² Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, 40.

wise, there is truth in any being from the exemplary cause, through which it is known by the intellect. Lastly, there is goodness from the final cause, through which it is loved or approved by the will.⁵³

The *Summa Halensis* thus offers a transcendental metaphysics in which being is irreducibly structured not only by unity, truth, and goodness, but by the particular relationship among those three properties. Once again, this is an account of being “bound by truth and goodness” in which truth and goodness are inherent and intrinsic properties of being.

A Transcendental Brocade

Though logically ordered by and “accumulatively layered” along a specific metaphysical progression (*from one, to true, to good*), this transcendental structure of being, taken as a whole, also admits of a certain reciprocity among the transcendental notions. In light of the triad’s irreducible presence, being, on the Halensian account, can be turned and viewed, like a multi-faceted gem, from the perspective of any one of the three notions, such that the other two are seen in or as “colored by” the light of the first:

Those intentions [one and true] adopt the intention of the final cause, and so the intention of the good; hence the true is *desired* only because it is good; likewise, the one is *desired* only because it is good. Again, [one and good], as understood in the intellect, adopt the intention of the true: for the good is *understood* only inasmuch as true; nor is the one *understood* except as true. Again, [true and good], as ordered in the mind adopt the intention of the one: for a thing is only *present* in the mind as one, and true and good are only *present* there as one.⁵⁴

⁵³ SH I, T3, Q1, M1, C2 (no. 73): “Est igitur in ente quolibet a causa efficiente unitas, per quam ordinetur in memoria et servetur: memoria enim ea quae retinet secundum aliquam coordinationem relationis ad ‘unum’ et discretionem componit. Item, a causa exemplari est veritas in quolibet ente, per quam percipiatur ab intelligentia. Item, a causa finali est bonitas, per quam diligatur vel approbetur voluntate.”

⁵⁴ SH I, T3, Q1, M1, C2 (no. 73).

On at least three levels, this passage describes well a remarkable interconnectedness of the transcendental notions on the Halensian account. First, what could be termed the objective relational presence of the transcendentals is in view, the particular fashion in which they are intrinsically present in being. Without ceasing to be formally, and thus irreducibly, distinct from one another, they nonetheless are so interrelated that any two can in some sense be “adopted by” the intention, the *ratio*, of the third: the good *is*, in some sense, true and one; the true *is*, in some sense, one and good; the one *is*, in some sense, true and good. But, again, this identity is extensional, not intentional or formal. No member of the triad can be reduced to or subsumed by another. Second, this objective structure of being facilitates a relationship with rational creatures: as already noted, one, true, and good correspond with memory, intellect and will, respectively. Third, the objective structure also enables a remarkably integrated encounter between knowing subject and object known. In any encounter with being, the notions are not only inseparable; they are all known in the distinct, irreducible light of each. One never simply perceives one of the transcendentals on its own, in isolation from the others: unity and truth are always encountered *as* good; unity and goodness are always experienced *as* true; unity is always perceived *as* true and good. While the members of the triad can be formally and intentionally distinguished, they can never, in reality, be separated, and in fact are so profoundly integrated that they interpenetrate one another. They are “woven together” such that, at any and every point, they are always encountered in and through their interrelationship to one another—a kind of transcendental brocade.

An Integrated Consummation of the Halensian Transcendentals in Trinitarian *Perichoresis*

At one point in this discussion, the Halensist articulates this transcendental metaphysics in suggestively Trinitarian language: “It should be said that these intentions, ‘one,’ ‘true,’ and ‘good,’ mutually indwell one another [*se circumincedunt*].”⁵⁵ The compound Latin term used here, paired with a reflexive pronoun, can mean “they move forward together,” or even “they circle around one another other.” The phrasing

⁵⁵ *SH I, T3, Q1, M1, C2* (no. 73): “Dicendum quod istae intentiones, ‘unum, verum, bonum,’ se circumincedunt.” The Latin translator uses the word (at least in its noun form) for Damascene’s *perichoresin* in *De fide* 1.14 (PG, 94: 859).

elegantly evokes not only the foregoing account of the transcendental notions but also a crucial link to the Halensian doctrine of the Trinity, which has been lurking in the shadows until now. What Aertsen has called the distinct “Trinitarian motive”⁵⁶ propelling the early Franciscan account of the transcendentals should now be faced directly. As already evident above, the Halensist correlates the transcendental structure of being with the threefold causality (efficient, formal, final) of its Creating Source. There is no question that the EFIT’s account of the transcendental structure of being is derived from a prior account of the nature of God. The rhetorical strategy of presentation thus far adopted, that of beginning with created being before turning to its Creator, is in the service of moving from the better known to the lesser known, from the created effect to its uncreated Cause.⁵⁷

The conceptual technology by which the Halensist forges a link between created and uncreated being is the Aristotelian account of causality, now aligned with the ancient Christian tradition of Trinitarian appropriations:

For the divine cause is a threefold cause: efficient, formal or exemplar, final. And this causality, since it is common to the whole Trinity, is *appropriated* as the efficient cause to the Father, exemplar [cause] to the Son, final [cause] to the Holy Spirit. According to this, *esse* in creatures, which flows from a cause, receives a threefold impression, in conformity to its cause.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy at Transcendental Thought*, 147.

⁵⁷ This Trinitarian impulse also appears in Philip the Chancellor’s approach. Schumacher writes: “For Philip, the addition of ‘true’ and ‘good’ to Avicenna’s enlistment of ‘one’ as a determination of ‘being’ is essential to accounting for the efficient, formal, and final causation of beings. This three-fold causality is ultimately traceable to God on Philip’s understanding, and in specific, to the members of the Triune God, that is, the Father, Son and Spirit, respectively. Thus, Philip subsequently elucidates the relations amongst these primary notions, insofar as they mimic the relations amongst the persons of the Godhead. Finally, he spells out their relation to the highest, divine, good, as well as that good’s relation to created goods” (“The Early Franciscan Doctrine of the Transcendentals”).

⁵⁸ *SH I, T3, Q1, M1, C2* (no. 73): “Secundum quod esse rerum comparator in relatione ad causam divinam, simili modo triplicatur determinatio. Causa enim divina est causa in triplici genere causae: efficiens, formalis ut exemplar, finalis. Quae quidem causalitas, cum sit communis toti Trinitati, appropriator ut causa efficiens Patri, exemplaris Filio, finalis Spiritui Sancto. Secundum hoc, esse in creatura, quod fluit a causa, triplicem sortitur impressionem, ut in conformatione ad causam.”

Recalling the above-noted correlation between the three Aristotelian causes and the three transcendental notions (one, true, good), the applicability of the notions to the Triune God follows directly: “Those intentions also differ according to their relation to their cause: ‘one,’ in the principle, in the *ratio* of the efficient cause; ‘truth’ in the *ratio* of the formal [cause]; ‘goodness’ in the *ratio* of the final cause: *which [notions] are appropriated to the Trinity.*”⁵⁹

For the Halensist, then, the reason that created being has a three-fold transcendental structure is that its Uncreated Source is also one, true, and good: “These intentions thus are not separate from the essence of a thing, as a vestige of the first cause, which is the Trinity of one essence.”⁶⁰ As is clear, the three intentions pertain to the divine essence as a whole and as such; they are not the defining personal properties of the three Persons, but only appropriated to them. Nonetheless, the Halensist unambiguously prioritizes these three attributes in its doctrine of God, organizing its entire discussion of the divine nature around these three and their derivatives in book I. In the preface to that discussion, moreover, the Halensist foregrounds their interrelatedness within the divine nature: “These three notions are of a single coordination [*sunt unius coordinationis*].”⁶¹

The Transcendental Triad in Bonaventure

In order better to appreciate the overall coherence and the trajectory of reflection in the EFIT on this particular point, it will be rhetorically

⁵⁹ *SH I*, T3, Q2, M1, C2 (no. 88): “Differunt intentiones istae secundum relationem ad causam, quae est; ‘unum,’ principium in ratione efficientis, ‘veritas’ in ratione formalis, ‘bonitas’ in ratione causae finalis: quae appropriantur Trinitati.”

⁶⁰ *SH I*, T3, Q2, M1, C2 (no. 88): “Istae ergo intentiones non separantur ab essentia rei velut vestigia primae causae, quae est Trinitas unius essentiae.”

⁶¹ *SH I*, preface to tractate 3. It should be noted that the *SH* does not predicate one, true, and good of both created and uncreated being in a univocal way, but rather insists on their analogical relation; see *SH I*, Intro, Q2, M3, C2 (no. 21): “Therefore, it should be said that, univocally speaking, there is no *convenientia* between God and creatures, but only through analogy, such that if good were predicated of God and creatures it is said of God by nature [*per naturam*] and of creatures by participation [*per participationem*]. Similarly, every good [predicated] of God and of creatures is said according to analogy” (“Dicendum ergo quod non est *convenientia* Dei et creaturae secundum univocationem, sed per analogiam: ut si dicatur bonum de Deo et de creatura, de Deo dicitur per naturam, de creatura per participationem. Similiter omne bonum de Deo et de creatura dicitur secundum analogiam”).

strategic to turn from the *Summa Halensis* to its textual expression in its most famous student, St. Bonaventure, who is perhaps the apogee of the EFIT in this respect.⁶² If the *Summa Halensis* hints at a kind of circum-incession of the transcendental triad within the divine nature, Bonaventure goes further.

First, in his mini-*summa* masterpiece, the *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure appears to adopt the Halensian teaching on the transcendentals in the following passage:

Since the First Principle is most exalted and utterly perfect, it follows that in it are found the most noble and most general properties of being [*conditiones entis*] to the highest degree. These are one, true, and good, which are not associated with being in its individuals [*supposita*] but with its very principle [*ratio*]. For “one” describes being as numerable, and this is because it is not susceptible of division in itself; “true” [describes being as] as intelligible, and this by virtue of being inseparable from its proper form; and “good” [describes being as] as communicable, and this by reason of being inseparable from its proper operation. This triple indivisibility has a logical ordering in that the true presupposes the one, and the good presupposes the one as well as the true. Thus it follows that these three properties, as being perfect and transcendental, are attributed to the First Principle to the highest degree, and, as having an orderly reference, are attributed to the three persons. It follows then, that supreme oneness is attributed to the Father; supreme truth, to the Son, who proceeds from the Father as his Word; and supreme goodness, to the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from both as their Love and Gift.⁶³

Here Bonaventure not only reproduces the Halensian teaching on the transcendentals but also applies them—with their Halensian

⁶² As Justin Shaun Coyle has noted in an unpublished paper: “Bonaventure’s identification of the transcendentals with the doctrine of trinitarian appropriation betrays the style signature of Franciscan theology. What some have termed a ‘trinitarian motive’ [Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, 147] behind Franciscan treatises on the transcendentals is already on vivid display in the *Summa halensis* of Bonaventure’s teachers and, in more muted shades, in Bonaventure’s earlier *Commentary on the Sentences*.”

⁶³ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* 1.6.2 (trans. Dominic V. Monti, Works of St. Bonaventure 9 [St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2005]).

definitions, logical ordering, and cumulative structure—to the divine nature itself. Properly speaking, unity, truth, and goodness are not the personal properties of the Persons, but rather essential attributes of the whole divine essence. Like the Halensist, Bonaventure nonetheless attributes them to the three Persons in order to illumine their relational identities. In some fashion, accordingly, the interrelations of the transcendental triad should mirror the actual relations of the Persons. This is indeed what emerges in Bonaventure's unfinished magnum opus, the *Collations on the Six Days of Creation*, in which he describes the relations between the divine Persons thus:

So the Father is in Himself and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit; and the Son is in the Father and in Himself and in the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit is in the Father and in the Son and in Himself, by reason of circum-incession, which is characterized by identity with distinction.⁶⁴

Here, Bonaventure describes the *perichoretic* interrelations (adopting the Greek term of art mediated to the western Middle Ages by John of Damascus in *De fide orthodoxa* 4) between the divine Persons in a manner strikingly similar, both conceptually and lexically, to the Halensian teaching on the mutual indwelling of the transcendentals. For Bonaventure, the Halensian logic of the transcendentals, of their inter-relational ordering, applied to the divine Persons, is such that, while the Persons are *intentionally* distinct from one another, *extensionally* they “con-cur,” they “move forward together,” they mutually indwell one another. One can never have one without the others. All three are always “circum-incessive.”

In sum, the EFIT's account of how God is three Persons in one essence betrays a consistent predilection for what might be termed a “comprehensive Trinitarianism.” Here, not only are there three Persons in God, but the one divine essence is also fundamentally characterized by a particular triad of divine attributes (one, true, good) whose interrelatedness mirrors the personal relations of the Trinity, which attributes, accordingly, may be appropriated to those Persons.

It is this account of the one divine essence that is relevant to the present argument. On this early Franciscan account, the First Cause

⁶⁴ Bonaventure, *Collations on the Six Days* 21.2 (trans. José de Vinck, *The Works of Bonaventure* 5 [Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1970]).

or First Principle, like its created analogue described extensively in the foregoing, is primarily and intrinsically characterized by unity, truth, and goodness. Not only that, but in God, the members of the triad have an irreducible interrelationship whose analogue is found in created being. None exist apart from the others, and they are logically “cumulative”: upon divine unity rests divine truth; upon both divine unity and truth reposes divine goodness. In this God, divine unity could never be conceived apart from divine truth and goodness; divine goodness or truth could never be reduced to divine unity.

Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, some overriding theological benefit may be gleaned from this early Franciscan tradition, wherein all of created reality, every created entity, and created being itself, are characterized by these three transcendental properties: unity, truth, and goodness. Of no little significance, though, is that, here, unity, truth, and goodness are not simply discrete, concomitant, and coextensive conditions of being, as they seem to be, more or less, when treated by John Duns Scotus.⁶⁵ Rather, in the EFIT, these three properties are not only, formally speaking, irreducibly distinct from one another; they are also inextricably coordinated with and related to one another. None can exist without, or be reduced to, the others. They are not merely (in a Chalcedonian idiom) extensionally “undivided,” but intentionally “unmixed.” They are also, in a Trinitarian lexicon, mutually co-inhering and indwelling one another.

Not only that, in the EFIT, as Pope Benedict XVI wished for in his Regensburg Address, “our sense of the true and good” is indeed “an authentic mirror of God.” The triadic structure of created being analogically reflects the triadic nature of Uncreated Being. The *circumincessio* of the transcendental triad in created being represents and resembles the coordinated structure of unity, truth, and goodness in the divine essence, which itself reflects the *perichoresis* of the divine Persons, the particular structure of the Trinitarian relations in God. In sum, the EFIT weaves a transcendental brocade of unity, truth and goodness—a *cord of three strands not easily broken*—by which we might conceive of a God “bound by truth and goodness.”

As contemporary scholarly arguments continue to rage over the

⁶⁵ See Wolter, *Transcendentals*, 126–27: “Of the three *conditiones concomitantes esse* unity receives the greatest attention. Truth and goodness . . . lose a great deal of their importance in Scotus’ metaphysics.”

genealogies of modernity, which often trace its initial fault line somewhere in the century or so prior to William of Ockham, some have suggested the *desideratum* of patient, careful, detailed analyses of particular moments and figures in that medieval landscape against which sweeping narratives might be better judged.⁶⁶ While a single article does not constitute such an analysis, it might signal to the cartographers of intellectual history the presence of certain spots on the current map that need more attention. The EFIT may well be such a spot.

At the same time, the theological *desideratum* of those who construct such genealogies is often a comprehensive worldview, an account of the whole of reality in which no place is “insulated in some degree from the decisive impingement of the transcendent,”⁶⁷ where nothing escapes the imprint of its Trinitarian Creator and Redeemer. For, in the standard narrative, in the thought of the nominalists, following Duns Scotus:

The Trinity loses its significance as a prime location for discussing will and understanding in God and the relationship of God to the world. No longer is the world participatorily enfolded within the divine expressive *Logos*, but instead a bare divine unity starkly confronts the other distinct unities which he has ordained.⁶⁸

Here, modernity is saddled with “impoverished philosophical notions of being as sheer givenness without inherent order, meaning or beauty,”⁶⁹ in contrast to the “unsullied ontological vision” of pre-modernity,

⁶⁶ See, for example, DeHart, *Aquinas and Radical Orthodoxy*, 12: “Is it uncharitable to suggest that one of the reasons the genealogical approach has proved so attractive in recent scholarship of all kinds is that it’s pretty easy to make the history come out the way one wants? To construct a detailed account of the twists and turns of intellectual history over a long period that would truly bear the enormous burden of proof required for generating meaningful theses that remain true to the subtle details of the material—that is a task requiring deep investigations in detail of many figures, years of experience, and a cautious, seasoned faculty of historical judgment. On the other hand, it is fatally easy to come up with a take on intellectual history that looks convincing when one doesn’t really swoop down and spend time examining the detailed features of a particular patch of the country.”

⁶⁷ Dehart, *Aquinas and Radical Orthodoxy*, 10

⁶⁸ Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 15.

⁶⁹ DeHart, *Aquinas and Radical Orthodoxy*, 3

lush with rich (i.e., non-univocal, analogical, participatory) notions of being. As has long been noted, a good case can be made that the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas offers the best example of the latter, and so accordingly should be actively appropriated at the present time.⁷⁰ No doubt it should be. But the foregoing analysis of the EFIT suggests another possible paradigm, a framework that appears even more thoroughgoing and comprehensive in its imposition of a “Trinitarian discipline”⁷¹ on all of reality, including the “Trinitarian watermark” it inscribes on being itself.⁷²

Recently, Khaled Anatolios has advocated the retrieval of the “comprehensive Trinitarianism” of Nicene Christianity, forged in the crucible of the fourth-century debates. If inspiration for such were sought in the intervening tradition, along the way back to the twenty-first century, one could do worse than to linger over this early Franciscan intellectual tradition. N-V

⁷⁰ DeHart, *Aquinas and Radical Orthodoxy*, 29: “[Milbank’s] ‘Only Theology Saves Metaphysics,’ . . . echoed his own earlier findings that that Aquinas suggests a Trinitarian imprint upon all creatures in his assigning them a threefold mode of perfection (substance, operation, finality).”

⁷¹ I am indebted to Justin Shaun Coyle for this felicitous phrasing.

⁷² Though the matter cannot be pursued here, it is perhaps worth noting that St. Thomas’s mature discussion of the divine nature in the *Summa theologiae* does not similarly privilege these three attributes over other divine attributes, nor does it treat these three in any sense as coordinated or circumincessive triad.

The Flesh of the Logos: Reflections on Faith and Reason

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SEPTEMBER 2016 MARKED the tenth anniversary of Pope Benedict XVI's address to the faculty of the University of Regensburg. The Regensburg address caused a sensation because of what the Pope said, or was purported to have said, about Islam. But, as the actual title of his lecture indicates, Benedict's chief purpose in the Regensburg address was not to talk about Islam. The lecture was entitled "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections," and its purpose was to issue a call for "reason and faith [to] come together in a new way" (7).¹

Whatever may be the case with Islam, the West, he argued, faces a crisis of reason. This crisis stems from a divorce between reason and faith that has deeply shaped the culture and institutions of the modern West, a conflict between the claims of reason and the claims of religious faith that seems to be intensifying rather than diminishing. We must bring faith and reason together in a new way and overcome the conflict between the two that has come to seem normal in the West. On our success in so doing, Benedict warns, depends the future of the university, of Europe, and of the West, to say nothing of peace among the religious traditions of the world.

¹ Benedict says "find one another" (*zueinanderfinden*) in a new way. Parenthetical page references to the Regensburg address are to the Vatican website's English translation, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.pdf. I have sometimes modified the translation in light of the German original, also available on the Vatican website.

Benedict bases his call for a renewed mutual embrace of reason and faith not on assumptions about human reason as such, but on a claim about God. The claim is this: not to act in accordance with reason, not to act *σὺν λόγῳ*, “with logos” or “according to the logos,” is contrary to the nature of God (2–3). These are the words of the fourteenth-century Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Paleologus to his Muslim interlocutor. Whether or not these words express a decisive critique of Islam, they clearly express, in Benedict’s view, a decisive truth about God. God acts *σὺν λόγῳ*, rationally, according to reason. At the heart of Christian faith, Benedict says, lies just this conviction about God (3–4). It finds its founding and paradigmatic expression in the prologue to the Gospel according to John, indeed in the Gospel’s very first verse: “In the beginning was the Logos,” and the Logos, John goes on to say, is God. With this utterance, John gave to us, Benedict does not hesitate to claim, nothing less than “the final word on the biblical concept of God” (3).

Before the birth of Christianity, the Greeks, or at least some of them, had already prized logos, reason. Logos or reason is present in the very nature of things; it pervades the world, including mind, the part of the world capable of knowing the world and the rational structure of things. And logos or reason, the Greeks were in various ways often convinced, has its root or ultimate basis beyond the world of sense, while the world of sense points to or manifests this rational basis beyond itself. Benedict sees in “the meeting between the biblical message and Greek thought” nothing less than the generous hand of divine providence—the providence of the biblical God, of course—and he sees the eventual “rapprochement” of Greek thought about logos with the biblical message as an “intrinsic necessity” (3) and a permanent feature of Christian faith itself. “The fundamental decisions [of the ancient Church] regarding the connection of faith with the searching of human reason belong to this faith itself, and are its own unfolding, in accordance with its own nature” (6).²

As Benedict notes, it is a “critically purified Greek inheritance” (5) that eventually, and with world-transforming results, comes to be

² “Die Grundentscheidungen, die eben den Zusammenhang des Glaubens mit dem Suchen der menschlichen Vernunft betreffen, die gehören zu diesem Glauben selbst und sind seine ihm gemäße Entfaltung” (p. 7 of the German PDF on the Vatican website, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/de/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_universita-regensburg.pdf).

assimilated into biblical faith. However much in the way of self-criticism and refinement of its intuitions about reason Greek philosophy may have been able to carry out on its own, the ultimate and decisive critical purification of the “Greek heritage” was the work of biblical faith itself. According to biblical faith, God is indeed logos—but not just any God, and not just any logos. In John’s prologue, the personal God of the Old Testament, the God of the Septuagint, as Benedict notes, the God who elected the Jews, from whom comes salvation for all the world (John 4:22)—precisely this God is logos, or reason.

So much Benedict points out to his hearers in Regensburg. But John’s prologue goes further than this. In fact, already in the very first verse, the apostle takes a decisive step in the “purification” of the Greek inheritance. God is logos, he says, or more exactly, God is *the* Logos. But before he says that, and as the basis for understanding what is to follow, he says, “In the beginning . . . the logos was *with* God.” “Logos” or rationality is not simply an attribute of God, with “God” now having been rightly located as the personal God of the Bible. The logos is with God, already distinct in the beginning, primordially distinct, from the God with whom he is. No one, after all, is with himself. To be “with” is to have an other, in some irreducible fashion distinct from oneself. With the personal God of the Bible there is, in the beginning, an other, the logos. So John intimates in the first words of his Gospel that logos in God is not merely an attribute, but a person.

John bids us to go further still. God is reason, logos, and in particular, reason that fully expresses itself in the formation of a “word” that comes forth in the beginning from God, who speaks it so as to be “with” the speaking God. This Word fully utters or speaks all that God is, and as a result, all that could possibly be made by him (John 1:3). Here the apostle John, intimate of the incarnate Word and temple of the Holy Spirit, exploits in a previously unimagined way the dual meaning of the Greek term “logos,” both “reason” and “word.” In so doing, he exposes the root of the Christian doctrine of God, of the Father who has a Word and a Spirit, the doctrine of the holy Trinity. On the lips of the apostle, unlettered fisherman though he was, “logos” does work it could never have done on the lips of any Greek philosopher and opens up depths Greek reason could never have suspected.

What I have said so far suggests two questions. First, what exactly is the “crisis of reason” (my phrase, not his) that worries Pope Bene-

dict? Second, how is the biblical teaching on God as *logos*, or if you like, the biblically purified Greek teaching on the divinity of *logos*, expected to help us overcome this crisis of reason?

The view of reason that has us in crisis is, we could say, that of modern scientific naturalism. On this account, what is rational is limited, on the one hand, to the certainties of mathematics and, on the other hand, to what can be verified empirically, or by experiment. These two come together, Benedict rightly observes, in the project at the heart of the modern natural sciences, which is to give a mathematically rigorous account of what happens in nature, to show that matter, from its simplest to its most complex forms, obeys laws that can be stated mathematically.

As far as it goes, this way of looking at reason, this confidence in mathematics and experiment, is both correct and helpful, as the practical accomplishments of modern science and technology show. The problem comes, so Benedict argues, when we *limit* reason to the mathematical modeling of nature and hold that the rest of what we might think or speak about is irrational, against reason, or perhaps simply non-rational, beyond the bounds of what reason can help us with. When we limit reason in this way, the most fundamental matters of human concern, including especially those having to do with God and religion, are treated as inherently the enemies of reason that must be rooted out with a positively inquisitorial zeal. Or a bit more benignly (but only a bit), these basic matters of human concern are seen as simply but irrevocably beyond the scope of reason, incapable of rational assessment one way or the other. Reason therefore rightly ignores all such matters and assigns them to the realm of the subjective or the imaginary, where other forces hold sway and where such matters must be kept if reason is to do its own salutary work.

It is sometimes held, not least in contemporary Catholic apologetics, that the crisis of reason is fundamentally a loss of confidence, a postmodern disappearance of reason's proper self-assurance about its own ability to know the truth of things. Such loss of confidence may be felt here and there, but this is clearly not the crisis Benedict is talking about. Scientific naturalism embodies, on the contrary, a quite untroubled confidence in reason, in reason's ability to know all there is to be known. Naturalistic reason rejects transcendent truth, truth unreachable from the world of sense, not because it despairs of the power to know it, but because of its complete confidence that there are no such truths to be known. Naturalism disregards reli-

gious claims not because it worries that such claims deal with matters beyond its reach, but because of its confidence that reason has long since reached the truth about these claims and shown them for what they are: false, at best subjective or imaginary, and often fantastic and dangerous. Reason needs no help from beyond itself in order to know whatever there is to be known. In the process of knowing, it can certainly grasp its own limit, which is simply the limit of the real, the whole of which it is reason's business to know. Scientific reason sees no need of a logos beyond its own manipulation that might instruct reason concerning its limits and concerning truths beyond those limits. The crisis of which Benedict speaks is not one of under-confidence, but of overconfidence. It will not be helped by insisting that we need to have more confidence in reason, but by proposing a genuinely alternative vision of what reason is.

In contrast to this unhappy and finally destructive "modern self-limitation of reason" (5), the vision of reason Benedict seeks to foster is, first of all, simply a broader one, a view that sees all matters of human concern as in some way (though not always in the same way) subject to rational engagement. An adequately robust understanding of reason will be one that has ample room not only for the natural sciences but also for listening to "the great experiences and insights of the religious traditions of humanity, but especially of the Christian faith," and for tirelessly seeking, with Socrates, "the truth of existence" (7). By devolving into scientific naturalism, reason has lost any awareness of having roots beyond the world of sense. The crisis of reason will be overcome, Benedict suggests, when reason recovers a sense of its transcendent basis, and so of its own true nature. Reason thus liberated from the chains it has needlessly imposed upon itself will no longer deny its own grandeur and will once again be free to engage the full breadth of what it is made to know (7–8).

The current crisis of reason will be abated, Benedict further suggests, when reason and biblical faith come together once again, or come together in a new way. What is it, then, about Christian faith in the God who is logos that can come to the aid of shackled reason and help to liberate it?

Here we need to return to the prologue of the Gospel according to John and to two further statements John makes about the logos. For whatever reason, strikingly, Pope Benedict recalls neither one of these Johannine teachings in the Regensburg address. However, they together hold the key, I think, to ending the crisis of reason. One is

John's statement that "the Word became flesh . . . full of . . . truth" (John 1:14). The other is John's statement that "From his fullness we have all received" (John 1:16).

"The Word became flesh." As the Greeks rightly glimpsed, word, or *logos*, is the ultimate source of all reason, of all rationality. The Word, however, is not simply the transcendent source of reason, beyond the world of sense and the mind of the creature. For, according to the biblical faith of Catholics, the *Logos* has become flesh. As a result, the flesh the *Logos* became—that is, the human being Jesus—is the transcendent source of all reason. Not to believe this is not to believe that the Word has become flesh. And not to believe that the Word has become flesh is not to reckon with the *Logos* as he actually is, and will be forever. As Augustine tellingly relates, he read in the books of the Platonists about the *Logos* who was in the beginning with God, if not in just those biblical terms. "But that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," he goes on to say, "I did not read there."³

The Greeks glimpsed the *logos* as best they could, dimly and from afar. They caught sight of reason at its source, but only from a great distance. Now, the Word has become flesh. When we receive the body of Christ in the Eucharist, that flesh, the transcendent source of all reason, rests on our tongue and we are joined to the transcendent source of all reason in heart, in mind, and indeed, in body. We know the *Logos* not from a distance, but intimately and by contact. The last thing we should want is to do the impossible, to return to the position of the Greeks, sensing reason, *logos*, only from afar. We cannot succeed in sundering the source of all reason from his flesh, ejecting the *Logos* from the Virgin's womb and the tabernacle, nor should we want to. We must seek reason, seek the *Logos*, where he is to be found, in his flesh, in the Virgin's womb, in the tabernacle. For the Word has become flesh and will be this flesh forever. The biblical faith of Catholics recognizes this.

"The Word became flesh . . . full of truth." In his Word, God expresses or utters all that he is, and with that, all that he can make or do. The eternal speaking of this Word is the very generation or begetting of the person of the Son, the Father's personal and eternal act in which we confess our faith each week when we say the Creed. Because he expresses all that God is, God's Word or Son contains all

³ Augustine, *Confessions* 7.9.14, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 121.

truth in its original or primordial form, all truth about God and all truth about creatures, whether creatures God actually makes or those he could make but does not. As a result, the Logos of God is not only the source of all reason, but the measure of all truth. He is not only the source of the rational creature's capacity to seek truth, but the truth the creature's reason seeks. He is the ultimate norm or standard to which all truths in one way or another conform, and from which all falsehood departs. Just this Logos, the Word who is "the truth of the Father," has become flesh.⁴ So, the flesh the Logos became, the human being Jesus, is full of truth and is the measure of all truth. This human flesh is the stern measure of our reason, the flesh that is full of truth, that is the fullness of truth, and so renders all of our judgments true or false.

Thomas Aquinas makes this point with great force in his commentary on John 1:14. "This human being," he says, "is divine truth itself." Not just the Logos, but the flesh the Logos became, is divine truth itself, *ipsa divina veritas*. Thomas goes on to say: "In other human beings, there are many truths known by participation, insofar as the first truth itself [that is, God, in his Logos, the measure of all truth] shines in their minds by way of many different [created] likenesses [to the first truth]. But Christ is this truth."⁵

Of course you do not have to know Christ or know that he is *ipsa divina veritas* in order to have a share in the truth that he is. The Greeks did not, and yet his light shone in their minds in one way and another, as any truth in any created mind is a shining of his light and a share in the truth that he is. Through Christ himself, "all created truths have come to be, as various participations and flashes of the

⁴ On the Son or Word who becomes flesh as the *veritas Patris*, see Peter Lombard, paraphrasing Augustine: "The Son is understood to be the most perfect beauty, that is, the truth of the Father, in no way unlike him, whom we worship with the Father and in him" (*I Sent.*, d. 3, c. 1, [8], trans. Giulio Silano [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2007], 20; translation altered). Similarly, see the Lombard's gloss on Ps 43[42]:3 ("Send forth your light and your truth"): "The light of the world and the truth of the Father is Christ . . . coming in his first advent" (PL, 191:425C; my translation). See also Thomas Aquinas: *Super 1 Cor 2*, lec. 2 (Marietti no. 100); *Summa theologiae* [ST] III, q. 39, a. 7, corp.

⁵ *Super Ioannem* 1, lec. 8 (Marietti no. 188; my translation from the Marietti edition). For an English version of the whole, see St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 3 vols., trans. Fabian Larcher, O.P., and James A. Weisheipl, O.P., ed. Daniel Keating and Matthew Levering (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010); the quoted passage is at 1:77.

first truth.”⁶ At the same time, Thomas often points out that there are different degrees of participation in the first truth, in God as *prima veritas*, as there are in all the divine perfections. Jesus of Nazareth is the *prima veritas* in the flesh. So the different grades of the rational creature’s participation in the first truth will be so many different levels of sharing in the human being Jesus as divine truth in the flesh, in the fullness of divine truth that is Jesus himself.

Of these, the most distant and incomplete is to know only truths accessible to natural reason. A radically more intimate and complete participation in divine truth itself comes through the virtue of faith, which knows the truths about God only the incarnate Word can teach, and so can both go immeasurably beyond natural reason and correct its many errors. Perfect participation in the fullness of truth that Jesus is comes only with the immediate vision of God, when we will know all truths humanly knowable and know them precisely as measured by the human being who is divine truth itself. On the whole, then, the more complete and intense your knowledge of the human being Jesus, the more complete and intense your apprehension of divine truth itself, the measure of all other truth. Every truth grasped by our mind comes to us from him; he is the source both of each truth and of the light by which we see it: “He cannot be deceived, because he is the truth itself [John 14:6] and teaches every truth; John 18:37: ‘For this I have come into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth.’”⁷ He is equally the standard by which all claims to truth must, in the end, be measured or judged. “The Word of God is the truth itself. . . . If you seek to know where you are going, cling to Christ, because he is the truth that we desire to reach.”⁸

“Of his fullness we have all received.” If the enfleshed Logos is the source of all reason and the measure of all truth, the human soul of

⁶ *Super Ioannem* 1, lec. 10 (Marietti no. 207; my translation; *Commentary*, 1:85).

⁷ *Super Ioannem* 14, lec. 2 (Marietti no. 1870; my translation; *Commentary*, 3:56). On the Word made flesh as the source of that light by which every intellectual creature sees any truth it apprehends, whether by nature or by grace, see *Super Ioannem* 8, lec. 2 (Marietti no. 1142), commenting on John 8:12 (“I am the light of the world”): “Whatever light there is in the rational creature all flows from this supreme light, ‘Which enlightens every man coming into the world [John 1:9]’” (my translation; *Commentary*, 2:107); cf. *Super Ioannem* 1, lec. 5 (Marietti nos. 129–30), commenting on John 1:9 (“He was the true light”) (*Commentary*, 1:54–55).

⁸ *Super Ioannem* 14, lec. 2 (Marietti nos. 1869–70; my translation; *Commentary*, 3:55–56).

the Logos is the *location* of the fullest possible human knowledge of truth. Catholic theology has long held that the perfection of Jesus's human knowledge consists above all in this, that he possesses in his human soul the immediate vision of God, the knowledge that brings unsurpassable blessedness, from the first moment of his existence in the womb of the Virgin Mary and throughout his earthly life. Here again, St. Thomas is clear and forceful, commenting on John 1:14. "Christ was full of truth, because his precious and blessed soul knew all truth, both divine and human, from the instant of conception. For just this reason, Peter said to him [at the end of John's Gospel (21:17)], 'You know all things.'"⁹

The perfection of human reason, the fullest possible apprehension of the truth by a created intellect, is therefore not simply an ideal, perhaps a quite hopeless ideal, at which we strive. The perfection of human reason is a reality in the human soul of Jesus. The human being Jesus is the measure of all our claims to truth, and at the same time, his human soul already possesses all the knowledge of truth that we seek. From his fullness we receive: all our knowledge, from the first infant stirrings of reason through supernatural faith to the fullness of beatitude, is not simply measured and normed by him; it *comes* from him, not only as divine Logos, but as this fleshly human being. It is the gift of Jesus himself to us, a participation in his perfection of reason, in his beatitude or blessedness. St. Thomas again speaks of the totality of grace in us, including our knowledge, as a share in the single perfection of grace that belongs to the human soul of Christ: "The fullness of grace that is in Christ is the cause of all the graces that are in all intellectual creatures."¹⁰

For just this reason, the apostle Paul urges us to have the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5; 1 Cor 2:16). The mind of Christ, the knowledge of "all truth, both divine and human" lodged in his human soul, is not opaque or inaccessible to us. He shares it with us in all its fullness. He imparts to us in a human way, by way of words, the natural instruments of the embodied soul, the innermost secrets of the divine life. By mere words, he opens up to us the truths about God

⁹ *Super Ioannem* 1, lec. 8 (Marietti no. 189; my translation; *Commentary*, 1:77).

¹⁰ *Super Ioannem* 1, lec. 10 (Marietti no. 202), on John 1:16 (my translation; see also *Commentary*, 1:82). Cf. *ST* III, q. 7, a. 1, corp., and q. 8, a. 5, corp. In particular, the blessedness at which our life aims is simply the fullest possible participation in the perfection of Jesus's human knowledge, in his own immediate vision of God (*ST* III, q. 9, a. 2, corp.).

that only God himself is naturally able to know but that he freely shares with us whom he calls to friendship with himself. To have the mind of Christ, as Paul insists, we need simply to believe the Gospel proclaimed by the Church. Or as Blessed John Henry Newman puts Paul's point: "And I hold in veneration, / For the love of Him alone, / Holy Church, as His creation, / And her teachings, as His own."¹¹ From his fullness, the fullness of human, rational knowledge, we have all received. The more we have the mind of Christ, the more rational we are.

What it will take for faith and reason to come together in a way that brings an end to the modern crisis of reason thus seems startlingly clear. Debased reason will have to return to its source, to the Logos made flesh, and humbly seek the mind of Christ. Less bluntly put, Western reason has fallen into bondage by attempting to loose itself from its roots in biblical faith, or if you like, its roots in the biblically purified Greek understanding of reason's grandeur. It will escape its chains by returning to its roots.

Interestingly, the Benedict of the Regensburg address hesitates at this point. Or more precisely, he sees that there are two quite different strategies by which a culture that takes scientific naturalism for granted might be brought to see reason in a broader and more humane way—to see reason, in other words, the way Christian faith sees it. For all practical purposes, these strategies are opposites, such that to follow one is to abandon the other. Nonetheless, Pope Benedict gestures at both.

One strategy is to seek resources within scientific naturalism itself, within reason under its current state of bondage, to exhibit the need for a more comprehensive understanding of reason than the one naturalism itself displays. The other strategy is to seek resources within biblical faith that call for this broader understanding of reason, in particular the Johannine resources that I have just described. While Benedict seemingly wants to try both, only one of them, I think, offers any reliable promise of success.

In pursuit of the first strategy, one might try to convince the scientific naturalist that his outlook makes some big assumptions that

¹¹ *The Dream of Gerontius*, in John Henry Newman, *Prayers, Verses, and Devotions* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 694. Similarly Thomas Aquinas: "What is established by the Church is ordained by Christ himself [*ea quae per Ecclesiam statuuntur, ab ipso Christo ordinantur*], who says, Matt. 18 (:20), 'wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst of them'" (*ST III*, q. 83, a. 3, sc; my translation from the Leonine edition).

its constricted view of reason does not allow it to explain. The project of mathematizing nature assumes, in particular, that matter has an inherently rational structure and that the rationality of matter is accessible to, and coheres with, the rational structures of the human mind. The modern natural sciences depend upon the truth of these epistemic assumptions, but science itself has no way to show that they are true. In the nature of the case, assumptions like these, upon which all natural science rests, can neither be demonstrated mathematically nor verified empirically, since every effort at demonstration and verification presupposes that they are true. In this way, Benedict suggests, we might try to convince the naturalist that “modern natural-scientific reason . . . bears within itself a question that points beyond itself and beyond the possibilities of its methodology,” and so science inherently points to and depends on the kind of reasoning undertaken in philosophy and theology, reasoning that cannot be reduced to empirical verification of mathematical hypotheses about nature (7).

Now, I find this sort of argument convincing, but I nonetheless think it is fated to fail, at least in the current conditions of faith and reason. What is to prevent the scientific naturalist from declining Benedict’s gambit and thinking himself quite rational in doing so? All reasoning has to start somewhere, the naturalist might argue, with something it takes for granted. Even Aristotle knew that. The enormous success of modern science at producing practical results proves, as well as anything could, that we are starting in the right place, in the rational place: with matter and mind (whatever the latter may be) alike obedient to mathematical laws. Why matter and mind cohere is, Benedict insists, “a real question” that science cannot answer (7). To which the naturalist can simply reply (and often has) that, since science cannot answer it, it is not a real question. It is, rather, the assumption that makes it possible to ask questions that we can actually answer.

This suggests, against the grain of much Catholic philosophy and theology since the mid-nineteenth century, with its endlessly reiterated and increasingly fruitless appeals to natural reason and natural law as the only bulwark against secularism, atheism, naturalism, and nihilism, that, at least as things presently stand in the West, it takes biblical faith to see the need for and the attractiveness of a broader and more humane conception of reason. Faith and reason can and should come together again, but faith is going to have to do the work of

joining the two. Reason, having shackled itself with the limitations of scientific naturalism, is not likely to escape them under its own power.

As a way of seeing how this might be the case, think again of Benedict's attempt to argue the scientist out of his naturalism. As I say, I find this kind of argument clear and compelling, and others do as well. But surely our inclination to be convinced by it is shaped quite deeply by biblical and Christian convictions. It is shaped, for example, by the convictions that matter (including the matter that makes up the human brain) is not simply a given and that matter and the human mind are both freely created by God. These convictions make the origin of each, of matter and mind, something sensible to ask about, a "real question," in Benedict's terms, and also offer a basis for being convinced of their profound coherence, which makes natural science possible.

Were we to abstract completely from the convictions of biblical faith (assuming for the moment that this is at least logically, if not psychologically, possible), would we still be inclined to regard the origin of matter and mind as a real question, one it makes sense to ask and to which we might give a rationally warranted answer, an answer that reached beyond matter and the embodied mind to an explanatory source beyond them?

If we were really to set aside the biblical faith of Catholics in the creator God, I suspect that most of us, if we think honestly about it, would be strongly inclined toward naturalism. At most we might perhaps suppose, with some agnostic scientists and philosophers of our own day, that scientific reason inevitably poses questions it cannot answer, a state of affairs that attests not to the need for a broader view of reason, but to limits beyond which our cognitive capacities can never hope to go. Something may lie beyond these limits, or something may not, but we will never know.

To be sure, this result, while likely under our cultural circumstances, is not inevitable. One or two of us might, for example, become genuine Platonists, robustly convinced of a *logos* that gives light to the passing world of sense and draws us beyond that world. But it would be a big mistake, though a mistake to which Catholic philosophers and theologians remain oddly tempted, to take these remarkable exceptions, these Platonist outliers, as proof that, in order to liberate reason from its shackles, we first need to convince scientific naturalists to be Platonists, Aristotelians, or something of the

sort—that we first need to persuade them of the truth of our philosophical preferences.

Still less should we suppose that, in order to help scientific naturalists find their way to Christian faith, we first need to convince them to be Platonists or Aristotelians (or Hegelians or Heideggerians, or whatever)—as though believing in Christ were possible only for someone who already holds this or that philosophical view. Perhaps one can be a Platonist simply on the strength of the arguments proposed in Plato’s dialogues, or in the *Enneads* of Plotinus, though under our cultural conditions that would be quite difficult (not least because of two millennia of Christian discourse about the Logos). But a Catholic, even the most flamboyant Platonist among us, does not believe in reason or logos transcending the world of sense solely, or primarily, because of the arguments in Plato or Plotinus. We believe in a transcendent logos because we have been taught it by the Logos himself, the Logos made flesh who taught us that he was in the beginning with God. To carry on as though this were not the case is at best confused, a failure to understand that all the truth we do have has been truly received from the fullness of the Word made flesh, and at worst dishonest, an apologetic bait and switch unworthy of believers in the Gospel.

These last thoughts are a bit of the second strategy, which seeks the resources for bringing faith and reason together and restoring reason to its senses in biblical faith itself. The source and the measure, rule, and standard of our reason is not simply the divine Logos, but the Logos made flesh—the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5), full of grace and truth (John 1:14), and thus the perfection of human reason. As Justin Martyr and Irenaeus already clearly saw, and as many since have likewise seen, biblical faith does not need to prove its rationality to those who know the logos only from afar. We know the Logos by contact: we have been given the mind of Christ, the very human thoughts of the Logos. Those who share in the Logos only from a distance will prove themselves rational when they recognize the flesh of the Logos for what it is. It is not we who will prove ourselves and our faith in the flesh of the Logos rational by finding support for it in the naturalist’s hopelessly constrained conception of reason. The key to realizing a new and better relationship between faith and reason, we could say, is not a new philosophy (still less the revival of an old one), but the Great Commission—or, as it has been called in our day, the New Evangelization. N.V

Is There Still a Place For Christ's Infused Knowledge in Catholic Theology and Exegesis?¹

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IT SEEMS TO ME that questions arising from the reading of Scripture require a theological account of Christ's knowledge that can itself then shape a speculative exegesis and that this was the approach of Thomas Aquinas. In this way, beyond the divine knowledge that pertains to Jesus's divine nature, Aquinas also attributed to the earthly Christ three forms of knowledge in his human mind. These three are beatific knowledge, infused knowledge, and acquired knowledge.² The first, the knowledge had by the blessed, is the supernatural intuitive knowing of the divine essence enjoyed by the saints and angels in heaven, our fullest participation in divine knowledge.³ The second, infused knowledge, is a more conceptual knowledge supernaturally imprinted onto Jesus's human mind, the kind of knowledge had naturally by angels and exercised by disembodied human souls.⁴ The third is knowledge empirically acquired through experience, the kind that is natural to bodily human beings.⁵

¹ This article was originally presented as a paper at the Thomistic Institute's conference on "The Mind of Christ: Christology and Contemporary Exegesis" in Washington, DC, in October 2015.

² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [hereafter, *ST*], III, q. 9, a. 4. All English translations of the works of Aquinas are my own from the Latin of the Leonine edition.

³ *ST* III, q. 10.

⁴ *ST* III, q. 11.

⁵ *ST* III, q. 12.

Aquinas wanted to clinch the fact that Christ must have had each of these three kinds of knowledge while on earth in terms of how each uniquely contributes to the perfection he needed in order to be our Savior, such that each kind of knowledge has its own particular argument for its presence in his mind. Although theologians today largely differ from Aquinas in the details, the reality of Christ's acquired knowledge seems currently to hold universal consent among theologians, the hesitations of other scholastic positions having long given way. However, not only have the reasons Aquinas gives for which the earthly Christ had beatific and infused knowledge been rejected in recent years by opponents of his teaching, but those reasons have also been reconsidered, adjusted, nuanced, or amended by those working more in tune with Aquinas's scheme. The need for Christ's infused knowledge has been defended most recently by Philippe-Marie Margelidon, who helpfully traces the historical development of Aquinas's thinking on infused knowledge and covers the objections standardly put against Aquinas's account.⁶ However, when I myself argued in favor of the need for Jesus's beatific knowledge in a recent book, I noted that my own argument seemed to undermine the rationale now often given for infused knowledge. I stated, however, that it was not my intention to reject Christ's infused knowledge and that it deserved a proper consideration of its own from the point of view of the Catholic theologian.⁷ My purpose here is to clarify and extend my argument about beatific knowledge and then reconsider the case for infused knowledge in that light.

Taking his cue from 1 John 3:2—'We shall see him just as he is'—Aquinas recognized this eschatological knowledge as the fulfilment of our natural desire to know the essence of God, such that this beatific vision is the formal core of our ultimate beatitude.⁸ Though we had lost the way to this vision through the Fall, the way was restored to us through the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ. Aquinas argued that the Savior himself enjoyed the knowledge of the blessed for the saving purpose of sharing that same beatifying knowledge with us. In other words, our heavenly beatific vision will have been caused by his beatific vision, the members of his body benefitting from what

⁶ Philippe-Marie Margelidon, "La science infuse du Christ selon saint Thomas," *Revue Thomiste* 114 (2014): 379–416.

⁷ Simon Francis Gaine, *Did the Saviour See the Father? Christ, Salvation and the Vision of God* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 154–55.

⁸ *ST I*, q. 12, a. 1.

the Head of the body enjoys preeminently.⁹ Now, one respect in which Aquinas's argument has been criticized concerns the necessity it ascribes to the presence of this vision in Christ's mind before his death and glorification. Aquinas's opponents are generally happy to allow that Christ attained to vision in the next life and that his beatific vision in heaven is the cause of our heavenly beatific vision. What they do not accept is that his beatific vision need be present already on earth in order for it to be the cause of ours.¹⁰

I suggest that we can understand more recent defenders of Aquinas's position to be providing a response to this objection through their careful unpacking of his terse statement that Christ's vision is the cause of ours in the context of more modern concerns with the theology of revelation. This approach can be found, for example, in both the classical neo-Thomist commentary of Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange¹¹ and the contemporary theological scholarship of Guy Mansini.¹² Such interpreters expand on Aquinas's teaching in terms of how we journey through faith in this life to vision in the next, taking the earthly Christ's beatific vision as involved in bringing us to faith, and thereby to vision. But, more than that, they envisage Christ's vision as involved not simply in bringing to faith us who live subsequent to his life, death, and resurrection but also in bringing the disciples to faith during the teaching ministry of his earthly life. In this way, Thomists can see the beatific vision as having a key role in explaining how the earthly Christ could be the Teacher of divine realities of which knowledge cannot be acquired through the natural human route, but divine realities that Christ's teaching nevertheless revealed to the faith of his disciples, and so to us, leading us all to share ultimately in his own vision of the Father.

I shall now clarify why the beatific vision can play such a role in Christ's work of revealing and teaching, and in so doing, introduce the question of the role of infused knowledge. Since Patristic times, the Savior has been vindicated as Revealer through the divine knowledge provided by his full divinity received through being eternally begot-

⁹ *ST III*, q. 9, a. 2.

¹⁰ E.g., Jean Galot, "Le Christ terrestre et la vision," *Gregorianum* 67 (1986): 429–50, at 434.

¹¹ Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Our Savior and His Love for Us*, trans. A. Bouchard (St Louis, MO: Herder, 1951), 143–71.

¹² Guy Mansini, "Understanding St. Thomas on Christ's Immediate Knowledge of God," *Thomist* 59 (1995): 91–124.

ten by the Father.¹³ It is because he is divine and possessed of divine knowledge that he is, at bottom, able to reveal divine realities to the disciples. This has meant that any signs of extraordinary knowledge in the Gospels, such as the Son's knowing or having seen the Father, were normally referred by Patristic exegesis to divine knowledge, and while Aquinas's exegesis is not so restrictive, his biblical commentaries, under Augustine's influence, betray something of a tendency to do the same.¹⁴ Given, however, that Christ teaches the disciples these divine mysteries in a human way, making use of his human mind in teaching, instead of the human mind somehow lying idle, we need to ask about the line of revelatory continuity between the divine knowledge in Christ's divine mind and his human acts of teaching: how do we get, or how did *Christ* get, from one to the other?

Thomists can suggest that the beatific vision provides a certain continuity between the divine and human minds.¹⁵ It can achieve this because it is itself our highest participation in the divine knowledge. Whereas, in our natural knowledge, on Aquinas's account, the act of knowing takes place on the basis of an intelligible *species* abstracted from sense data, there is no such *species* that can deliver knowledge of the infinite God, on account of the fact, among other things, that the *species* is finite and limited. But if the beatific act of knowledge cannot take place by means of a finite *species*, God instead gives himself, his own essence, to the minds of the blessed as the basis for knowledge of the divine essence.¹⁶ So, the blessed know God by the same means that God knows God, and in this, they imitate God himself, who knows himself by his own essence. Moreover, just as God knows everything else by knowing himself perfectly, by knowing his power, by knowing all he can do, he knows all that through his divine essence, and when the saints receive this same divine essence as *their* means of knowledge, they too have knowledge of God's creation in some measure in their knowledge of the divine essence.¹⁷ Thus, in the beatific vision, it is God's own means of knowing himself and more that is shared with the saints, and so Christ, in his human mind, will likewise know the divine essence, and in the divine essence, all that

¹³ E.g., Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentarii in Ioannem* 1.10; Augustine of Hippo, *Tractatus in Ioannem* 40.5.

¹⁴ See Thomas Aquinas, *Super Ioannem* 1, lec. 11 (Marietti nos. 217–19); 3, lec. 5 (Marietti nos. 534–35); 6, lec. 5 (Marietti no. 947); 8, lec. 4 (Marietti no. 1216).

¹⁵ Gaine, *Did the Saviour See the Father?* 71–102.

¹⁶ *ST* I, q. 12, aa. 2, 4.

¹⁷ *ST* I, q. 12, aa. 8–9.

he needs to know about creation.¹⁸ Thus, it is by the beatific vision that his divine knowledge is communicated to his human mind, on the basis of which his human teaching of the disciples about divine realities can take place.

However, it is far from clear that the beatific act of vision in itself explains this line of revelatory continuity from divine knowledge to human teaching in its entirety. This is because, in addition to the need for continuity across divine and human minds, there is also need for continuity across knowledge that is inexpressible and knowledge that is expressible. What I mean is that Jesus's teaching is communicated in human language, categories, images, and narratives, all of which must presuppose a communicable knowledge somehow proportionate to the workings of his human mind. The beatific vision, however, though it supplies the human mind with knowledge of divine things, does so, according to Aquinas, in a way transcendently disproportionate to the workings of the human mind.¹⁹ Hence, in the seventeenth century, the commentator John of St. Thomas (Jean Poincot) added his own explanation of Christ's infused knowledge by way of his teaching needs to Aquinas's argument for infused knowledge from the mind's required perfection, together with another argument of his (Poincot's) own from Christ's meritorious acts, which were said to be largely of a kind to require regulation by a supernatural knowledge beyond the beatific vision.²⁰ Though Poincot counted Aquinas's argument from perfection as the "best" one of the three,²¹ perhaps regarding it as straightforwardly best in terms of proof, he seems nevertheless to have regarded his own arguments as at least having the advantage of being clearer in regard to the actual workings of knowledge and meritorious activity in Christ's earthly life.

It may have been a desire to follow Aquinas in presenting a single argument for each kind of knowledge that later motivated Garrigou-Lagrange to reduce Poincot's number of arguments from three to one. While Garrigou-Lagrange recognized the role of infused knowledge in regard to Christ's merit, he simply omitted an argument for the presence of this knowledge in Christ's soul.²² Moreover,

¹⁸ ST III, q. 10, a. 2.

¹⁹ ST III, q. 11, a. 5, ad 1. See also John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus in summam theologicam D. Thomae*, vol. 8 (Paris: Vivès, 1886), q. 9, d. 11, a. 2, no. 15.

²⁰ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 8, q. 9, d. 11, a. 2, nos. 3–5.

²¹ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 8, q. 9, a. 2.

²² Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Christ the Savior: A Commentary on the Third Part of St. Thomas' Theological Summa* (St Louis, MO: Herder, 1950), 476–77.

while he agreed that infused knowledge answered to Christ's teaching needs, Garrigou-Lagrange presented this not as a distinct argument for this knowledge, but merely as a clarification of Aquinas's own argument from perfection.²³ Thus, just as Aquinas's argument for Christ's beatific knowledge was unpacked by Garrigou-Lagrange and other twentieth-century theologians in relation to Christ's teaching mission, as we have already noted, so Aquinas's argument for infused knowledge from required perfection was unpacked by Garrigou-Lagrange in terms of Christ's teaching needs. However, despite Garrigou-Lagrange's attempt at fidelity to Aquinas, it has been the case that, since the last century, Aquinas's own argument from perfection has been eclipsed by versions of Poinso's argument from Christ's teaching needs, set in terms of the inexpressibility of beatific knowledge and the expressibility of infused knowledge. Infused knowledge thus provides an expressible knowledge for Christ's teaching, which beatific knowledge, since it is inexpressible, cannot provide.²⁴

Margelidon objects that Aquinas never says that the beatific vision is deficient in terms of expressibility, concluding that infused knowledge cannot be invoked to remedy any such deficiency.²⁵ However, while it is true that Aquinas does not say anything about any deficiency in the beatific vision, it is also true that, for him, beatific knowledge is not *in itself* expressible in a creaturely way. For Aquinas, when we ordinarily make an act of knowledge, we express it in a mental word, a fruit of the act of knowing, as it were.²⁶ Thomists distinguish the *species impressa* by which we make the act of knowledge, of which we have already spoken above, from the *species expressa* that arises in our own act of knowledge. However, arguments against the finite *species impressa* having any role in beatific knowledge also count against any finite *species expressa*: none of the finite mental words our finite minds can produce can ever adequately express the infinite God. Though we may know God in heaven by vision, it is a *wordless* intuitive gaze that never enables us to express the infinite God adequately or say who or what he is in human terms. And, because everything else that is known in the beatific vision is known in the divine essence, all that knowledge is, as such, inexpressible too. It is this inexpressibility of

²³ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Christ the Savior*, 355–57.

²⁴ E.g., Alexandre Durand, "La science du Christ," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 71 (1949): 497–503.

²⁵ Margelidon, "La science infuse," 408.

²⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles* I, ch. 153; IV, ch. 11.

beatific knowledge that undergirds the modern Thomist argument that infused knowledge is required to give limited, finite expression to what Christ otherwise knows inexpressibly. Equipped with this supernaturally infused knowledge, Christ is then more or less able to teach his disciples the secrets of the kingdom of God.²⁷ Such an argument was made, for example, by Jacques Maritain.²⁸

In my argument for Christ's beatific vision, as already noted above, I appeared to undermine such a place for infused knowledge. I did this by giving an alternative account of the continuity between inexpressible and expressible knowledge, which I derived from Thomas himself, rather than from any Thomist.²⁹ While Margelidon is right to say that Aquinas nowhere says that the beatific vision is inexpressible, that is because, while the act of beatific knowledge is inexpressible *in itself*, much of its content can be expressed through further acts that draw on beatific knowledge. In the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas says that any of the blessed, "seeing God, can form in himself, from the very vision of the divine essence, the likenesses of things that are seen in the divine essence," but "such a vision whereby things are seen through *species* of this kind thus conceived is different from that vision by which things are seen in God."³⁰ This means that acts of forming such *species* and acts of knowledge through these *species* are acts distinct from beatific knowing itself, though dependent upon it. And so, when Aquinas attributes the beatific vision to the earthly Christ later in the *Summa*, he implicitly attributes to Christ the power to draw finite *species* from his beatific knowledge. He had already made this explicit in *De veritate*, where he says that the soul of Christ, "from the fact that it sees in the Word, is able to form for itself likenesses of the things it sees."³¹ This means that the beatific vision brings with it the power to derive expressible knowledge from what is seen in the beatific vision inexpressibly. So, while this does not mean that Christ can form expressible knowledge adequate to the inexpressible essence of God itself, it does mean he can form expressible knowledge of finite realities seen beatifically in God. It is

²⁷ I say "more or less" because there is the further issue of what acquired knowledge and the imagination add to communicability; see Jacques Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* (New York: Herder, 1969), 103.

²⁸ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, 72–73, 89–97, 104.

²⁹ Gaine, *Did the Saviour See the Father?* 100–102.

³⁰ *ST I*, q. 12, a. 9, ad 2.

³¹ Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 20, a. 3, ad 4.

this power, then, that can equip him more or less with communicable teaching, including suitable analogies based on creaturely realities for communicating knowledge of God to faith. But, if this power comes with the beatific vision, as Aquinas holds it does, that would seem to undermine the argument that infused knowledge is required precisely for the very same purpose of rendering the inexpressible expressible, of “translating” one to the other.

Of course, it might be possible to turn this the other way around and argue that, if Christ already has infused knowledge in order to translate inexpressible knowledge into expressible, then there is no need to invoke any power by which he can draw finite *species* from his beatific knowledge, or at least not to invoke any actual use of this power. Margelidon does not exactly make this argument, but its perspective would seem to be consistent with his approach, as well as with that of Poincot,³² and possibly even Aquinas himself, who, as far as I can see, never employs Christ’s ability to form *species* from the vision in his exegesis. Margelidon certainly recognizes that Aquinas attributed this ability to Christ but does not draw my conclusion that this creates problems for vindicating Christ’s infused knowledge, and it may be that Margelidon supposes that Christ never actually used this ability to form *species*. Margelidon regards infused knowledge as contributing in a complementary fashion something the beatific vision, as a matter of fact, does not actually contribute: communicability. But this is not to make up for any alleged deficiency in the vision.³³ So, if Christ, unlike the rest of the blessed, already had a full panoply of infused *species* ranging across the whole of creation, as Aquinas, Poincot, and Margelidon suppose he did, then that would seem to render superfluous his undeniable ability to form *species* from the beatific vision. So, one could argue that, since Christ already has infused knowledge from conception, he has no need to use his ability to form *species* from the vision, just as I myself have suggested that, if he has this ability, he will not need infused knowledge, at least not for the specific purpose of rendering the inexpressible expressible.

One objection to this whole picture would be that these two accounts of finite *species* in Christ’s mind are, in fact, not alternatives, but rather come down to the same thing. What I mean is the view, taken by Marie-Joseph Nicolas, that the *species* formed from Christ’s vision and his infused *species* are identical and not to be

³² John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 2 (Paris: Vivès, 1883), q. 12, a. 3, no. 1.

³³ Margelidon, “Le science infuse du Christ,” 408–9.

distinguished.³⁴ This view seems to be based on what Aquinas says immediately after his comment about Christ's ability to form *species* in *De veritate*: "Just as one who sees something in a mirror sees the reality through the form of the mirror—this was treated more fully in the question on angels."³⁵ The reference is to Aquinas's treatment of angelic cognition earlier in *De veritate*.³⁶ Nicolas seems to suppose that Aquinas is claiming that *species* formed by Christ are equivalent to angelic *species* and that, because he elsewhere speaks of infused *species* in terms of the knowledge natural to angels,³⁷ he is thereby treating the *species* formed by Christ as identical to his infused knowledge. Aquinas, however, teaches such equivalence nowhere in the text. There is nothing more than a point of comparison between Christ's knowledge of divine realities through *species* and angelic knowledge, with both thought of along the lines of knowing something in a mirror. So, there is no suggestion by Aquinas that *species* formed by Christ from the vision are identical with his infused *species*, and we must therefore still address the question of whether infused *species* make his ability to form *species* superfluous, or vice versa.

I suggest that my direction of argument is to be preferred because of the fact that Aquinas's account of Christ's power to draw communicable *species* from his vision fills in a revelatory line of continuity drawn from Christ's divine knowledge to his human teaching better than does Aquinas's account of infused knowledge. This difference between the two sets of *species* can be illumined by consideration of whether Christ's human will is engaged in their formation. Now, all of the blessed have the power to will to form *species* from their vision, and so, in the case of Christ, his human will is engaged in this succession of acts, just as his human will is also engaged in the subsequent use of these *species* all the way down to their employment in teaching. In contrast, Aquinas sees Christ's infused knowledge not as the fruit of his human willing or knowing, but as divinely infused into his mind at his conception, not humanly formed, but only divinely formed.³⁸ So, while those *species* humanly formed on the basis of the beatific vision exhibit continuity with the beatific vision,

³⁴ Marie-Joseph Nicolas, "Voir Dieu dans la 'condition charnelle,'" *Doctor Communis* 36 (1983): 384–94, at 386n5.

³⁵ Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 20, a. 3, ad 4.

³⁶ Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 8.

³⁷ *ST* III, q. 9, a. 3; q. 11, a. 4.

³⁸ *ST* III, q. 9, a. 3.

those *species* formed only divinely through infusion do not. Christ's ability to form *species* from his vision therefore has the advantage of making a surer contribution to an explanation of the revelatory line of continuity all the way from Christ's divine knowledge through to his human teaching.

To clarify: this means that, while Christ's ability to form *species* humanly depends on his vision, his infused knowledge does not, as such, depend on his vision, but rather, each is a distinct effect in Christ's mind caused by divine power. There is no sense for Aquinas in which the human act of beatific knowledge causes infused knowledge. The nearest he comes to saying something like this is when he gives the objection to the reality of Christ's infused knowledge that, as a knowledge inferior to beatific knowledge, it cannot coexist with beatific knowledge, since inferior knowledge is a *preparatory* disposition toward the superior and, when the superior is present, the inferior is dispensed with.³⁹ Aquinas answers that, while the imperfect knowledge as a disposition to perfect knowledge is *sometimes* preparatory to it, the disposition can also exist together with the perfect as an effect *following from* perfection, such that imperfect knowledge can sometimes coexist with perfect knowledge. But, although Aquinas uses this to rebut the objection that infused knowledge cannot coexist with the more perfect beatific knowledge, he does not transfer any relation of cause and effect that might appear in his analogies to the case in hand. He certainly concludes that infused knowledge is confirmed by the more perfect beatific vision, but he never makes any suggestion that one is the cause of the other.⁴⁰ For Aquinas, beatific and infused knowledges are distinct effects of the same divine cause, and without any causal continuity between them that could contribute to an explanation of the revelatory continuity from divine knowledge to human teaching. The same can be observed in the commentaries of Poinsoot and Garrigou-Largange. Though the latter regarded beatific knowledge as presupposed to infused knowledge in the context of their roles regarding Christ's merit, such that infused knowledge could be spoken of here as a "quasi-property" of beatific knowledge, he never treated infused knowledge as an effect caused by the beatific vision.⁴¹

More recent theologians who have neglected Aquinas on Christ's

³⁹ *ST* III, q. 9, a. 3, obj. 2.

⁴⁰ *ST* III, q. 9, a. 3, ad 2.

⁴¹ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Christ the Savior*, 476–77.

ability to form *species* from his vision have sometimes discerned a weakness in their account of the continuity between Christ's beatific vision and his teaching and have wanted to shore it up by introducing a causal relationship between beatific and infused knowledge. Bernard Leeming spoke of a widespread idea of Christ's infused knowledge as "connaturally consequent" upon his beatific vision, as though the presence of the beatific vision meant an automatic cascade of this knowledge into the form of infused *species*.⁴² Nicolas introduced a kind of causal relationship between beatific and infused knowledge by his conflation of infused *species* with those derived from the vision.⁴³ But, most important of all, Maritain employed the notion of instrumental causality, envisaging God as causing infused knowledge in Christ's mind, but through the instrument of his beatific vision.⁴⁴ Now, should Maritain's theory give a better explanation of the continuity at issue than my employment of Aquinas's account of Christ drawing *species* from his vision, we should have reason to prefer Maritain's theory over my proposal. However, while my account includes the engagement of Christ's human will in this line of continuity from beatific knowledge to human teaching, as we have seen, there does not seem to be the same place for his human will in Maritain's theory. Maritain allows for no possibility of a succession of distinct free acts of formation of *species* from beatific knowledge, acts in which the human will is engaged. Instead, for him, the formation of the whole panoply of infused *species* all at once is an almost automatic consequence of divine causation of the single act of beatific vision, without any particular engagement of Christ's human will. There may be a continuity provided by instrumental cause and effect here, but it seems to me to fall short of the continuity afforded by the engaged human will of Christ. Furthermore, a succession of acts of "translation" over time by the earthly Christ surely better fits a historical development of his communicable knowledge in the light of his beatific vision. Maritain deals with this progress by making the infused *species*, caused all at once at Christ's conception and initially located along with the beatific vision only in a quasi-Freudian supra-consciousness inaccessible to Christ's consciousness, to be made gradually accessible to his consciousness according to need over time by,

⁴² Bernard Leeming, "The Human Knowledge of Christ," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 19 (1952): 135–47 and 234–53, at 140.

⁴³ See Margelidon, "La science infuse," 396.

⁴⁴ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, 100–103.

again, the divine will alone, without engagement of Christ's human will in the process.⁴⁵ Thus it seems to me that Maritain's making the beatific vision an instrumental cause of infused knowledge fails to yield the same continuity from divine knowledge to human teaching that Christ's humanly drawing *species* from his vision does. But, if the latter account is to be preferred, it makes it difficult to see how making the inexpressible expressible can be the precise reason for the presence of infused knowledge in Christ, even where the latter has been instrumentally caused by the beatific vision.

Having stated why I think Christ's beatific ability to form *species* from his vision weakens a rationale often now given for his infused knowledge, I want to ask whether there might be another way in which infused knowledge might be needed by our Savior. One possibility might be Poinso's other argument that infused knowledge was required for much of the regulation of Christ's meritorious acts of charity. However, it seems to me that, if my argument so far is successful, then Christ's ability to derive *species* from his vision would likewise undermine any argument that infused *species* were required for this very reason, since *species* derived from the vision can equally well fulfil the same role in supplementing beatific knowledge in this respect. Anything infused *species* can do, *species* drawn from the vision can do too. To find our answer, we need to look further than Poinso's contribution.

Another possibility would be to revisit why Aquinas himself thought Christ needed infused knowledge, but when we do this, we find that there are also problems with Aquinas's rationale and wider account, which explains why recent Thomists have shifted their attention to an argument from teaching needs. Aquinas argues that the perfection of the Savior's mind requires the infusion of *species* covering the whole of the knowledge to which Christ's mind is in potency, not only that of which he could naturally acquire knowledge—that is, scientific knowledge—but also that to which his mind is in obediential potency, such as knowledge of human hearts and the future.⁴⁶ Problems are often found in the absolute character of perfection Aquinas thinks is required here, and others have wondered whether a dynamic, developmental account would be more appropriate to the native character of the human

⁴⁵ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, 101. See also the critique by Nicolas, "Voir Dieu dans la 'condition charnelle,'" 388–89.

⁴⁶ *ST III*, q. 11, a. 1.

intellect.⁴⁷ I have treated this question elsewhere in connection with Christ's acquired knowledge.⁴⁸ The extent of knowledge that follows from Aquinas's account of perfection also gives the earthly Christ a complete general, scientific knowledge of all creation, with which many are uncomfortable because, unlike the more prophetic element in infused knowledge, this scientific aspect, while suggesting to some an almost mythical omniscience, does not seem to contribute directly to the needs of Christ's mission of teaching and saving.⁴⁹ The fact that he also denies that he has prophetic knowledge of the timing of the last day (Mark 13:32) also sits uneasily with the fact that this is exactly the kind of thing that is expressibly known by infused knowledge on Aquinas's account, and there is much dissatisfaction with how Aquinas would deal with the issue exegetically.⁵⁰ That he seems to be motivated to attribute to Christ an expanse of *species* outdoing the infused knowledge of Adam (when there is much theological uncertainty today about Adam and his knowledge),⁵¹ as well as outdoing the knowledge of angels (when there is some dissatisfaction with how Aquinas treats the earthly Christ as able to know in the manner of nonbodily angels and disembodied human souls, which sits uneasily with the earthly Christ's embodied state, where sense and intellect, concept and image, always work together),⁵² makes theologians hesitant at the least.

It seems to me that all those questions require a further investigation that I cannot undertake here. What I want to do instead is to settle on a further reason for Christ's need of infused knowledge, at least of such knowledge as regards his mission of teaching and saving, in which infused knowledge has an advantage that cannot be usurped by Christ's ability to draw *species* from his beatific vision, a reason that is also consonant with Aquinas's wider theology of Christ's grace.⁵³ This solution lies in the fact that infused knowledge,

⁴⁷ See Margelidon, "La science infuse," 398, 405–7.

⁴⁸ Simon Francis Gaine, "Christ's Acquired Knowledge according to Thomas Aquinas: How Aquinas's Philosophy Helped and Hindered his Account," *New Blackfriars* 96 (2015): 255–68.

⁴⁹ See Margelidon, "La science infuse," 398–404.

⁵⁰ *ST* III, q. 11, a. 1; cf. III, q. 10, a. 2, ad 1. See also Durand, "La science du Christ," 502. For my interpretation of this verse, see Gaine, *Did the Saviour See the Father?* 156–58.

⁵¹ *ST* I, q. 94, a. 3. See Margelidon, "La science infuse," 399–401.

⁵² *ST* III, q. 11, a. 4; cf. III, q. 11, a. 2. See also Margelidon, "La science infuse," 405–7.

⁵³ *ST* III, qq. 7–8.

unformed in our minds by ourselves and obviously not derived from a beatific vision that we do not yet possess, would seem to be part of the charismatic life of God's people.⁵⁴ We find something like this featuring both in the prophets who preceded Christ and in the experience of the Church's members in this life, as attested in the lives of the saints.⁵⁵ Garrigou-Lagrange suggests that, given that some saints have experienced infused knowledge in this life, we can suppose that it would have been a prerogative of Christ's soul on earth.⁵⁶ Thus, in his human mind, the Body's Head would experience the presence of knowledge formed by the divine will only, underived by him humanly from his beatific vision, although this is not to say that this infused knowledge could not be confirmed and reinforced by *species* drawn from the vision. Now, I have argued that the engagement of Christ's human will in the formation of *species* from his vision was needed for the revelatory line of continuity from his divine knowledge to his human teaching. But this does not mean that there can be no place in his life for a more passive reception of knowledge. Just as grace is both operative and cooperative in regard to the human will,⁵⁷ even the human will of Christ, such that his will is both acting and acted upon, just as his salvation of us is brought about by both action and passion on his part,⁵⁸ so Christology may tease out the places of both passivity and activity in his knowledge. So, just as the beatific vision of the members of the Body depends on the beatific vision of Christ, the Head and Savior, just as the sanctifying grace of the members depends on the sanctifying grace of the Head, so we may suppose that the infused knowledge in the minds of some members depends somehow on the fact of infused knowledge in the mind of the Head. The reason he possesses infused knowledge would then be so that we might have it (just as with the beatific vision)—though, once present, for that reason, infused knowledge would inevitably contribute more generally to the knowledge enjoyed in his earthly life and to his mission of teaching and saving (just as does his beatific vision), for example, to his knowledge of human hearts and the future and to his meritorious acts of charity.⁵⁹

With that speculation, I want to conclude that there is place for

⁵⁴ *ST* I-II, q. 111, aa. 1, 4.

⁵⁵ *ST* II-II, qq. 171–74.

⁵⁶ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Christ the Savior*, 365–66.

⁵⁷ *ST* I-II, q. 111, a. 2.

⁵⁸ *ST* III, q. 1, proem.

⁵⁹ See Pius XII, *Haurietis Aquas* (1956), §56.

infused knowledge in the human mind of Christ, just as I have written elsewhere of the particular contributions of his beatific and acquired knowledge. His inexpressible vision of the divine essence provides a kind of illuminating horizon within which all expressible and communicable knowledge comes to be, whether derived from it, infused, or acquired. Should Christ draw *species* from the beatific vision in a line of continuity from divine knowledge to human teaching that can vindicate him as Revealer and Teacher, this would hardly rule out room for *species* supernaturally infused or naturally abstracted from sense data. Indeed, all this knowledge of whatever source can be only mutually confirming, enriching and reinforcing, as Christ uses, compares, and collates his knowledge from various sources for our benefit. Infused *species*, for example, which may not of themselves give rise to knowledge evident in itself, can thus benefit from the participated evidence and certitude that *species* drawn from the vision itself will firmly possess.⁶⁰ So, Christ will be fully equipped for knowing in various ways, and because he knows what he teaches us, we can believe by faith what he teaches us. It is this theological framework that can then equip us to practice a speculative exegesis of Scripture in the tradition of Aquinas by discerning in the picture of the Savior presented by the Gospels as a whole, and in particular passages, the contributions of various kinds of knowledge to the human mind of one who teaches us humanly of the divine realities he was sent by his Father to reveal. N-V

⁶⁰ Cf. Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, 101–4.

The Infused Science of Christ

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THOMAS AQUINAS'S THEORY of the knowledge of Christ may seem to have little relevance for modern historical-critical study of the figure of Jesus of Nazareth.¹ In his mature work, represented emblematically by the third part of the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas presents the knowledge of Christ in a fourfold descending perspective from the highest forms of knowledge to the most basic. He begins from the divine wisdom that Christ possesses as God and then examines three modes of human knowledge: the immediate vision of God that Christ possesses in his human soul, the infused science that Jesus possesses as the most perfect of the prophets, and the acquired knowledge that Christ possesses as man in virtue of the human nature that he shares with us.² Aquinas's account stems originally from the Chalcedonian principles of Christological doctrine. The approach might be broadly characterized as a form of "descending Christology" insofar as the deity and divine wisdom of the Lord are presupposed and his human acquired knowledge is affirmed just insofar as he is essentially human. Meanwhile, the beatific vision and infused science of Christ are interpreted as graces given to his human nature in view of his human actions on behalf of our salvation. It is due to his beatific vision and his infused prophetic knowledge, for example, that Christ as man is able to

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² Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [ST] III, qq. 9–12.

know perfectly who he is as the Son of God and who the Father and the Holy Spirit are so as to reveal them to us and to interpret Scripture authoritatively, foretelling of his own Passion and resurrection prophetically and instituting the Church and the sacraments effectively.

In methodological contrast, the modern historical-critical study of the figure of Jesus of Nazareth makes use of a number of normative principles that stem from the Enlightenment era, among them a presupposition of the historical homogeneity of natural causes. That is to say, the causes of human experience and consciousness for all persons at the time of Jesus (including Jesus himself) should be understood against the backdrop of and in continuity with the language, concepts, and symbols of Second Temple Judaism.³ These in turn should be understood in continuity with the predictable natural occurrences and causes that we experience in the modern scientific era. So, for example, apocalyptic elements in the culture of the Judaism of the time of Jesus should be employed to explain Jesus's immanent expectation of the "kingdom of God," but this need not mean that there is any such thing as an eschatological occurrence in reality.⁴ Likewise, the New Testament portraits of the figure of Jesus should be understood as human literary artifacts and explained in light of their cultural setting, the theological vantage points of their editors, and their intended uses for historically situated human communities.⁵ This need not imply that they are inspired or that the portraits of Christ that they present must correspond to who Jesus of Nazareth really was ontologically. It follows from this that the portrait of Christ found in the Gospels might be very different from the "real" Jesus of history.

We might notice the contrasts these two methodological approaches represent. If Aquinas's presentation of the infused science of Christ seems to bespeak a knowledge derived immediately from God, and

³ For an excellent example of a study of the historical Jesus conducted in this mode, see E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1985). The naturalistic explanation of the Gospels and of the figure of Jesus in particular arguably has its theoretical origins in the work of Baruch Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1690).

⁴ See, most famously, Albert Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1913), and more recently, Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 91–156 and 334–40.

⁵ The argument for this interpretive stance was crafted with great clarity by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing; see *Lessing: Philosophical and Theological Writings*, trans. and ed. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

therefore from “outside of time,” the modern study of Jesus tends to construe his consciousness by ascetic reference uniquely to the immanent and limited horizon of his age. Pressed toward extremes, one account readily emphasizes the divine origin of Christ’s message and its universality for all ages but does so to the potential exclusion of his historical particularity as a first-century Jew, while the other account seeks to identify the historically particular and limited character of Jesus’s aims and self-understanding within the context of Second Temple Judaism but does so to the exclusion of his divine origin and soteriological intensions, which are universal in scope.

In this essay, however, I will argue that these two approaches, while really distinct, need not be construed in opposition to one another. On the contrary, a nuanced appreciation of Aquinas’s doctrine of the human knowledge of Christ may permit us to assimilate many of the legitimate aspirations of modern historical-Jesus studies while still retaining a high doctrine of the infused knowledge of the Lord as the greatest of the prophets. To make this argument, I will advert to the Thomistic analysis of the knowledge of Christ. However, in order to engage the contemporary question of Jesus’s historical self-understanding, we can invert the order of Aquinas’s descending perspective from higher to lower and proceed in the opposite direction. Beginning from a consideration of the acquired knowledge of Christ, I will seek to show that the historicity of the mode in which Christ learns and expresses himself as human is compatible with both implicit and explicit forms of universal reflection. In a second section, I will consider the habitual infused science of Christ within the context of his historically situated acquired knowledge. In the final section, I will consider his beatific vision as it relates to his infused science and acquired knowledge. My aim is to show the potential compatibility of a traditional theology of the infused science of Christ with what is best in contemporary historical studies regarding Jesus of Nazareth as set against the backdrop of his epoch. Ultimately, the balance of this Thomistic perspective is rooted in the realism of biblical faith itself and the principles of Chalcedonian dogma, which affirms both the true historical humanity of God incarnate and his distinctive human graces and privileges as the man who is uniquely the Son of God.

Acquired Knowledge: The Universality of Human Thought and Its Historical Modes

Aquinas is generally thought to have been the first thirteenth-century Scholastic doctor to posit the existence of naturally acquired human

knowledge in Christ, as opposed to uniquely infused knowledge.⁶ He did so based on the simple principles that Christ is fully human and that being human entails having an agent intellect by which we derive knowledge progressively from the senses, a claim that is, of course, derivative from Aristotelian philosophical anthropology.⁷ This form of knowledge allows us to learn gradually of the very essences of things (such as what the human nature is that is common to all men), but it also entails learning in and through a particular sensory mode that stems from our animality.⁸ This animality is not only individual but also corporate. That is to say, we learn from and with others within a broader political community and culture, which we are typically deeply dependent upon for our education in various ways. Here we should note some basic philosophical points that are pertinent to a theological consideration of Christ within his historical context.

First, while our acquired conceptual knowledge always pertains in some way to the universal, it is also always dependent upon the external and internal sense powers. The latter include the imaginative power (and sense memory), the synthetic “common” sense that collates diverse phantasms from diverse senses, the passions and cogitative sense, which both entail affective reactions or attractions to objects of knowledge.⁹ In other words, as we come to acquire knowledge of realities external to us, we simultaneously imagine sounds and words that act as phantasms of support for our spiritual insight and conceptual grasp of things.

Second, as Aristotle noted already in *On Interpretation*, there is a kind of triangular reference of words to concepts and of concepts to things: the conventional significations of language denote the nonconventional, natural concepts of the mind, which themselves refer to the nonconventional, natural realities that language signi-

⁶ See *ST III*, q. 12, a. 2, where he notes his change of mind on this issue with respect to his earlier position of *In III Sent.*, d. 14, a. 3. See the historical reflections of Jean-Pierre Torrell, “Le savoir acquis du Christ selon les théologiens médiévaux,” *Revue Thomiste* 101 (2001): 355–408.

⁷ See *ST III*, q. 9, a. 4, which appeals overtly to Aristotelian theories of human knowledge.

⁸ See, for example: Aquinas, *In III de anima*, lec. 12, on *De anima* 3.7.431a4–431b19; *ST I*, qq. 78–79.

⁹ *ST I*, q. 78, a. 4; Mark Barker, “Experience and Experimentation: The Meaning of *Experimentum* in Aquinas,” *The Thomist* 76, no. 1 (2012): 37–71; Barker “Aquinas on Internal Sensory Intentions: Nature and Classification,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 52.2 (2012): 199–226.

fies.¹⁰ At the same time, we can qualify this claim in two ways. (1) We grasp reality largely through the stimulation of linguistic naming processes, through both the formal and the informal methods by which our culture educates us. Language not only denotes but also draws our discriminating attention to various facets of reality. Symbols, language, and names do not arise in us only “after” we perceive things and grasp them intellectually. Their cultural performance also initiates us to the act of grasping the things that they denote. And (2) the realities denoted are not only purely natural but also largely artifactual. Many external realities we perceive and name are themselves at least partially informed by processes of human ethical and artistic freedom (such as customs of religion and philosophy, politics, and ethics, but also of art and artisanal objects). Many human symbols or forms of conventional reference are clearly understood only once one has a sufficient knowledge of the ambient culture in a given time and place and its references and functional symbols.¹¹

Finally, even if we emphasize the reality of the knowledge of essences and the universal natural and ethical insights that are inevitably present in each human mind in every human culture, we must also recognize that there are cultures in which the *degree or intensity* of such insight differs in a given realm of understanding. And there are vastly different degrees of scientific, religious, philosophical, and moral insight (or ignorance) present in distinct cultures across time.

The point of my reflection to this point is not to suggest that all forms of knowledge are inherently *determined* by their cultural linguistic setting (as if one could only learn what one was taught and never engage reality itself), but only that they are truly qualified or *conditioned* by it in a variety ways with regard to both the *modes of acquisition* of that knowledge and, to some extent, the *objects* of knowledge that are readily available (or inaccessible) in a given culture. We should not expect to find first-century Jews writing in symbolic logic or medieval Japanese calligraphy. Nor should we think they will be actively concerned with sixth-century-BC Confucian philosophy or the twentieth-century Einsteinian theory of general relativity. This conditioning of our universal form of knowing is both culturally individuating and essentially (universally) human, just as material

¹⁰ Aristotle, *De interpretatione* 1.1.16a3–6.

¹¹ See the argument to this effect by George A. Lindbeck in *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Post-Liberal Age* (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1984).

individuality, though distinctive to each person, is also (abstractly considered) an attribute of what it means for any human being to be human.¹² Like embodiment, the cultural mode of acquisition of our knowledge is not an effect of our fallen human condition (pace Origen), but simply characteristic of our animal nature with its distinctive mode of rationality, by which we learn spiritually through the senses, collectively, and across time and place.

What follows from this reflection theologically in our consideration of Christ? First, we may say that there is a certain culturally limited form of knowledge present in every human knower. Each of us speaks a particular language (or range of languages) and acquires knowledge within a given horizon of time and place, in the context of the available patterns of reflection and debate that typically shape the thinking of a given culture. Christ is no exception to this general rule. If God truly became human, then in his human life, the Word Incarnate not only acquired knowledge but also spoke and thought through the medium of the language and symbols of his epoch, set against the complex Judaic and Hellenistic backdrop that such language and symbols presupposed. To be clear, I am not suggesting that Christ was unable to speak in clearly universalistic terms about the human condition or the meaning of all that exists, for he clearly was, as were his contemporaries and disciples, for that matter. But I am saying that there were delimiting features of human cognition that were part and parcel of the reality of the Incarnation. In the words of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: “This human soul that the Son of God assumed is endowed with a true human knowledge. As such, this knowledge could not in itself be unlimited: it was exercised in the historical conditions of his existence in space and time. This is why the Son of God could, when he became man, ‘increase in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man’ (Luke 2:52), and would even have to inquire for himself about what one in the human condition can learn only from experience (Mark 6:38; 8:27; John 11:34). This corresponded to the reality of his voluntary emptying of himself, taking ‘the form of a slave’ (Phil 2:7).”¹³

It follows from this perspective that we need not argue that the historical Christ, by virtue of his human perfection, must have been able to acquire natural knowledge of any possible intellectual subject matter available to any human person throughout time, such

¹² As Aquinas notes in *De ente et essentia* chap. 2.

¹³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992), §472.

as knowledge developed in the nineteenth or twentieth century through the experimental sciences. Christ did possess extraordinary insight into the human condition, in part from his infused science, and this in turn must have had reverberations upon the development of his acquired knowledge, as we will note further on. Likewise, due in part to the extraordinary grace that Christ enjoyed in his human intellect, we need not attribute any noetic error to the mind of Christ.¹⁴ A limitation of knowledge by circumstances of time and place is not equivalent to and need not entail the presence of intellectual error. There is, therefore, a kind of perfection to the acquired knowledge of Christ. However, this perfection in its acquired mode should be understood as one that is culturally situated and that expresses itself intelligibly within the context and against the backdrop of the language and symbols of Second Temple Judaism.

Secondly, understood in a theological light, the culture in which Jesus of Nazareth lived was unique because it was in various respects the product of supernatural, prophetic revelation originating in the patriarchal and Mosaic epoch and following down through to the times of the monarchy, the high prophets, and postexilic redaction of the biblical texts. Biblical revelation is ultimately of divine origin, but it is also mediated through a vast mosaic of human authors, traditions, and interpreters, and thus makes use of precisely the fabric of human customs, language, and symbols that we have alluded to above. This is of capital importance because Jesus of Nazareth clearly appealed to and actively interpreted the tradition of prophetic revelation that preceded him. What this means is that, just as we can study the books of the Bible simultaneously as fonts of divine revelation and as products of human agency in a given time and place, so also we can analyze, for lack of a better term, the “theology” of the historical Christ insofar as it is an especially inspired, theologically ultimate *human* interpre-

¹⁴ This is a traditional assertion of Catholic theology, one that also is strengthened by the consideration that Christ is truth incarnate, himself the first truth, living a human life among us. Questions arise about Christ’s interpretation of Scripture. Does he treat Jonah as a historical figure, or Moses as the unique author of the Torah? If so, do these constitute errors of ignorance? My own interpretation is that Christ, as a first-century Jew, frequently treats these figures as symbols of typology or authority according to the religious customs of his age and is not in every case attempting to assert a historical claim about particular Old Testament tropes of the kind modern biblical scholars characteristically engage in.

tation of the word of God.¹⁵ Jesus is, after all, a human interpreter of the Scriptures, as is Paul or John or the author of the Letter to the Hebrews. Modern biblical scholars often examine in some great detail Jesus's interpretations of Jonah, or his reading of Second Isaiah or of Daniel, or his particular eschatology, or his teachings on divorce, or his interpretations of the Psalms of David. In part, they do so against the backdrop of the Judaism of his time so as to underscore the originality of Jesus of Nazareth, the aims of his ministry, and his claims to authority. The point I am making is that this act of locating such teaching within a particular historical context is not opposed to the idea that Jesus is the Lord, the God of Israel. If God became human, it is also normal that this man who is God should be himself an active human interpreter of the meaning of the Torah, the Prophets, and the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible and should, *as man in his human historical consciousness*, see himself indicated in Old Testament prophecy. That interpretation is aided and guided by the presence of infused science, to be sure, as we shall return to below. But the higher illumination of prophecy in the mind of Christ need not exclude the fact that he is a genuine human agent actively engaged with the living tradition of Judaism that he acquires knowledge of in and through his experiential life as a first-century Jew.

Finally, we may conclude with the following observation. Rightly understood, a philosophy of the agent intellect allows us to understand that all modes of human thought have overt degrees of universality to them. Conceptual thought simply is universal in its signification and structure, no matter how provincial or limited the horizon of understanding may be in a given time and place. For this reason, theologically speaking, we may say that it is always impossible to demonstrate a priori (from philosophical premises of unaided natural reason) the impossibility of biblical revelation simply by averting to the limitations of the historical context in which it was composed. If there is a particular culture that has become the receptive site or locus of revelation, that culture, just because it is human, will have individualizing features and limitations. At the same time, simply because it is a human culture, it is always potentially capable of signifying truths about God and humanity that are universal in scope. Christ is an ulti-

¹⁵ See, for example: Ben Witherington III, *The Christology of Jesus* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1990); G. B. Caird, *New Testament Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), ch. 9; N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1997).

mate revelatory figure in history, but he is so only ever within a given historical cultural setting. Jesus of Nazareth is a first-century figure with a historical consciousness deeply conditioned by his distinctive culture, but he is also capable of communicating a universal revelation of the truth about God, humanity, and salvation. There is no inherent contradiction possible in the simultaneous affirmation of these twin truths.

Infused Science: Its Nature and Economic Function

There can be little doubt that each of the four canonical Gospels ascribes extraordinary forms of knowledge to Jesus of Nazareth. In fact, these ascriptions are so prevalent, thematic, and intertwined throughout the narratives and instructions of the Gospels that their integrity and very narrative structures would appear virtually unintelligible or as mere fragments of texts were we to extract from them, by violence, as it were, every instance of the appearance of such knowledge. Jesus reads hearts and can speak with accuracy of the faith or of the judgments present in a given person's mind (Mark 2:1–2; Luke 7:50). He interprets Scripture not as one who is seeking its meaning, but as its authoritative and final arbiter (Mark 12:1–12; Matt 5:17–48; 12:38–45). He foretells the future, including his own rejection by the religious authorities of Israel, his public torture, and his death and resurrection (Mark 8:31–32; 9:30–32; 10:32–34; 12:1–12; John 3:14; 8:28). He is aware that he has the power to perform miracles prior to the action of doing so (Matt 8:3; John 11:4–11). He gives an account of the nature of the eschaton, the final judgment, and the life of the world to come (Matt 24:3; 25:31–45; Luke 18:8). He chooses twelve disciples to prolong the spiritual effects of his kingdom and commands that they celebrate the sacraments, which he institutes for the future life of the Church (Mark 3:14; 14:22–24; John 6:26–59). More generally, he seems to know what the human being is and to exhibit little surprise, scandal, or exertion of understanding in the face of human ignorance, weakness, or betrayal (John 2:25; 13:27; 19:11; Mark 14:18). In his intellectual and moral self-possession, he appears to remain somehow spiritually uncompromised by these features of fallen human existence (John 18:23; Mark 14:62).

It is of course possible that all of this knowledge gently exhibited by Christ as the Gospels depict him in his radiant holiness and majestic humility is itself purely the product of post-paschal authors and consists of retrospective projections cast back upon the historical Jesus

artificially for theological reasons. But there are both historical-critical and distinctively theological reasons to reject this view. On the merely naturalistic level, we may note that there exist no very close literary parallels in ancient Judaic (or Greco-Roman) literature to the figure of Jesus as he is portrayed in the four Gospels, insofar as he exhibits there a prophetic capacity that is not merely received from time to time (actualistically) but possessed habitually and exercised freely from his own person. This portrait has a basic originality that derives from within the early Christian community, and not as a mimicking act of reference to a preexistent model. No pure parallel exists in the representation of a Jewish prophet either in the Hebrew Scriptures or in the inter-testamental literature. Furthermore, the four canonical Gospels are neither merely the product of one person nor the singular work of a group of redactors, but bear the marks of distinct literary origins by individual authors who conveyed authoritative traditions preserved in communities that preexisted these authors, or that they accompanied. Given the multiple attestations to the infused science of Christ from independent sources, their early origin and authority in the early Church, and their uniformity of theological content despite the heterogeneity of styles among the four evangelists, it is reasonable to conclude that accounts of the extraordinary knowledge of Christ date back to the earliest strata of Christian teaching and preaching, from the primitive apostolic age. Thoroughgoing skepticism regarding the reality of the infused science, therefore, is neither obligatory nor textually and historically warranted.

Furthermore, there are significant theological reasons for belief in the prophetic science of Christ during the course of his earthly life prior to the resurrection. A first reason for this has to do with the identity and mission of Christ as the Son of God. If the visible mission of the Son is meant to reveal to us the mystery of the Father and to be the prelude to the sending of the Spirit, then the Son must be the self-conscious revealer of the Father and the Spirit, as well as of his own identity as the Son.¹⁶ He must work in unity with the Father and the Spirit as the Lord, who is himself God, in his human actions

¹⁶ See the argument to this effect in the International Theological Commission's *The Consciousness of Christ Concerning Himself and His Mission*, especially regarding the four propositions concerning Christ's human knowledge that are requisite to any sound Catholic theology (http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1985_coscienza-gesu_en.html).

of teaching and miracles, in his foretelling of his suffering, and in his institution of the apostolic college. But, of course, Christ can be such a revealer, teacher, and redeemer *in his human life* among us only if he enjoys *as man* the assistance of a particular supernatural knowledge of the mystery of God and of the economy of redemption.¹⁷

A second theological reason stems from principles of biblical ontology. According to St. Paul, Jesus has been revealed to be the “new Adam” and the “perfect man.” This claim is primarily soteriological in nature, but it also has ontological implications. Where the old Adam fell into ignorance, malice, and moral weakness, Christ exhibited wisdom, charity, and sinless obedience. Where the actions of the old Adam led the human race into death, the self-emptying of the new Adam has given rise to the re-creation and the resurrection (see Phil 2:6–11).¹⁸ If this is the case, then the historical Christ prior to his resurrection must have had the requisite moral insight to cooperate with the plan of salvation that was to be effectuated through his obedience unto death and his subsequent glorification. It is necessary, in this case, to ascribe to the historical Christ a particularly acute supernatural insight of mind into the life of the virtues under the movement of the Holy Spirit, as well as an inspired understanding of the divine economy.

A final theological reason pertains to the fact that the miraculous capacity of Christ to read hearts or foretell the future is evidently intended in the Gospels to serve as a repeated “sign” of his divinely sanctioned authority.¹⁹ This is what the First Vatican Council called a “reason of credibility”: a miraculous sign given to natural human reason to suggest the presence of authentic divine revelation present in the historical figure of Jesus.²⁰ If the revelation itself suggests to us the credibility of supernatural belief in the authority of Christ based upon his extraordinary forms of insight, we should not seek to extract or obscure this dimension of the New Testament as if it were an embarrassment or an unwarranted addendum. On the contrary, the

¹⁷ See *ST III*, q. 7, a. 1, where Aquinas presents similar arguments for the necessity of the presence of habitual grace in the human soul of Christ.

¹⁸ On this theme, see N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 56–98.

¹⁹ C. H. Dodd identified the programmatic character of this theme in John’s Gospel in his *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 297–89.

²⁰ In *Dei Filius* (1870). More recently, see Mats Wahlberg, *Revelation as Testimony: A Philosophical Theological Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014).

prophecy of Jesus of Nazareth is a feature of his existence that does make him distinctive in his own way within the broader context of the history of religions.

What, though, is the infused science of Christ, and how ought we best to understand its mode of exercise theologically? Here Aquinas's treatment of the subject is characteristically helpful. Aquinas sees the infused science as a form of insight or intellectual understanding not gained through the ordinary natural process of the agent intellect acting through the senses, but received directly from God and as prophetic in character.²¹ St. Thomas speaks here in Latin of infused *species* or higher concepts analogous to but not identical with angelic ideas.²² These are forms of knowledge that provide the soul with intuitive understanding of things that are hidden from other human beings and lie outside the scope of natural human reason, but that God might know, such as the hidden moral and intellectual dispositions of another human being or future events. Such knowledge, for St. Thomas, does not do violence to ordinary human modes of understanding, but integrates into our ordinary knowledge or happens from within the midst of it and is manifest through ordinary human speech or symbolic expression, as when the high prophets write about or enact through gesture in an "ordinary" human way what they have been given to understand in a higher mode by infused science.²³

Three key controversies ensue whenever one approaches this subject. One pertains to the *scope or extension* of the infused science, a second to its *actual occurrence* at any given moment in the life of Christ, and a third to its *compatibility* with the historical limitations of Christ's acquired knowledge. We might characterize the maximalist perspectives here by the threefold claim that (1) Christ as man knew through infused science all things possible for man to know, (2) that he knew them actually at every given moment, and (3) that he knew them in a way that transcended and was unconditioned by his historically acquired knowledge. If we follow this line of thought,

²¹ *ST* II-II, q. 172, aa. 1–2.

²² *ST* II-II, q. 173, a. 2. See also a. 4, on the extraordinary internal and external sensate forms that prophecy can take.

²³ This is implied of all prophets in *ST* II-II, q. 171, a. 5. Aquinas applies the principle to the case of Christ in a distinct way in *ST* III, q. 12, aa. 1–2, where he argues that Christ, as man, can and must have both infused and acquired knowledge.

we might conclude, for example, that Christ was aware by means of infused knowledge of every conclusion of geometry that might be possible, every philosophical truth, and every law of physics, as well as every contingent fact of history and the grammar of every language, and that he had actual awareness of these realities at all times, at every given moment of his life, albeit in a higher mode of awareness. Consequently, he was obliged in some sense to actively conceal or willfully mask massive portions of this knowledge in his ordinary life of engagement with others, even while revealing to them that limited portion of extraordinary knowledge that might pertain to their salvation and his mission as Redeemer. One might characterize this viewpoint as unhelpfully Docetist, since it suggests that Christ's typically human behavior among us is slightly unreal or one given in appearance only.

Aquinas offers helpful principles for a more balanced treatment of this subject matter, especially by his characterization of the infused science of Christ as *habitual* in nature. The first observation to be made in this respect is that Christ is unique among the prophets, according to Aquinas, because he possesses the prophetic charism habitually and not merely actualistically.²⁴ That is to say, while other prophets receive revelatory insight passively by moment, at given times that are outside of their determination, Christ can turn freely at any given time to the extraordinary knowledge he possesses in a stable and habitual way. In this respect, Christ is not a prophet in the strict sense, according to Aquinas, but more than a prophet, due to the habitual mode in which he possesses the infused science.²⁵

²⁴ *ST* III, q. 11, a. 5. Cf. *ST* II-II, q. 171, a. 2.

²⁵ Aquinas, *Super Ioannem* 4, lec. 6 (Marietti no. 667): "But was Christ a prophet? At first glance it seems not, because prophecy involves an obscure knowledge: 'If there is a prophet of the Lord among you, I will appear to him in a vision' (Nm 12:6). Christ's knowledge, however, was not obscure. Yet he was a prophet, as is clear from, 'The Lord your God will raise up a prophet for you, from your nation and your brothers; he will be like me. You will listen to him' (Dt 18:15). This text is referred to Christ. I answer that a prophet has a twofold function. First, that of seeing: 'He who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer' (I Sm 9:9). Secondly, he makes known, announces; Christ was a prophet in this sense for he made known the truth about God: 'For this was I born, and for this I came into the world: to testify to the truth' (below, [John] 18:37). As for the seeing function of a prophet, we should note that Christ was at once both a 'wayfarer' and a 'comprehensor,' or blessed. He was a wayfarer in the sufferings of his human nature and in all the things that relate to this. He was a blessed in his union with the divinity, by which he enjoyed

However, it also follows from this, in relation to the second controversy mentioned above, that, according to Aquinas, Christ does not know all that he can know by infused science at any given instance in an actualistic way, as if he were always to actively think about the weather in Tokyo in February of AD 1437 at each instant of his life. Rather, the power of Christ's extraordinary knowledge is actuated at given times, just as any habit lies in potency until it is actuated.²⁶ This is in keeping with the *human mode* of Christ's infused science. Human beings pass from potency to act in their vital activities, including the activity of thinking and deliberately choosing.²⁷ Christ's prophetic insights rise habitually within the horizon of his ordinary human way of knowing, and he has discrete prophetic insights regarding particular objects at distinct times and places.

This leads us back to the first point of controversy noted above, that of the extension or scope of the infused science in Christ. Here Aquinas makes a twofold assertion. On the one hand, Christ has the potency to know by infused science anything that can be known to human beings throughout time. On the other hand, the *actuation* of his habit occurs only with respect to those things that are of fitting importance for Christ's soteriological mission and for the sake of the revelation he wishes to communicate to the human race.²⁸ Both of these points are significant. The latter point is evidently pertinent, because it allows us to understand why Christ's extraordinary knowledge that is manifest in the canonical Gospels is always related to the revelation of his identity, his saving mission, and the mystery of the Cross and his resurrection. This knowledge is actuated in view of divine revelation and the salvation of the human race. It does not contain anything extraneous to this purpose, such as the truths of geometry or manifest judgments about the philosophical errors of logical positivism. At the same time, it is significant that Christ is able at least in potency to have infused understanding of all that is

God in the most perfect way. There are two things in the vision or seeing of a prophet. First, the intellectual light of his mind; and as regards this Christ was not a prophet, because his light was not at all deficient; his light was that of the blessed. Secondly, an imaginary vision is also involved; and with respect to this Christ did have a likeness to the prophets insofar as he was a wayfarer and was able to form various images with his imagination" (*A Commentary on St. John's Gospel*, trans. J. A. Weisheipl, vol. 1 [Albany, NY: Magi, 1998]).

²⁶ ST III, q. 11, a. 5, ad 1.

²⁷ ST III, q. 11, a. 5, corp.

²⁸ ST III, q. 11, a. 5, ad 2.

human. This is of decisive importance eschatologically, in the resurrected and glorified state of Christ, where his infused science does *now* have a much broader extension of purpose of range. We should not say, for example, that a military scientist who is praying today to Christ in English about the moral decision of making a nuclear warhead is *unintelligible* to the risen Christ in his human mind. On the contrary, precisely because Christ in his glory is able to assist such a person with the gift of his grace, the situation of that person must be not only divinely but also humanly intelligible, and in the light of Christ's own understanding. We might conclude, then, that Aquinas's characterization of the habitual character of the infused science of Christ allows us to understand why the exercise of his prophecy should be both of a limited, even if utterly consequential, kind during his human historical life among us, on the one hand, and of a far more radiant extension in the mystery of the resurrection, on the other, as we see indeed in the New Testament itself in the risen Lord's prophecies given to the seven churches of Asia in the Book of Revelation (Rev 2:1–3:22).

Finally, there remains the controversy of the congruity of the infused science of Christ with regard to his ambient culture and his own acquired knowledge. Was Christ obliged to hide from his auditors the vast majority of what he knew overtly and explicitly even while behaving as a human being of his own historical epoch? In one sense, it should be stated directly that Christ in the Gospels clearly does know many things that he reveals to his disciples only partially and cryptically. Consequently, we should accept that Christ had extraordinary knowledge that he *did not* reveal in its fullness to the disciples (Acts 1:7; John 14:26). However, based upon the characterization we have offered, it also should be clear that the infused science of Christ is actuated only ever from within the context of the more foundational structure of his human acquired knowledge. Otherwise said, it was precisely as a first-century Jew in the epoch of Second Temple Judaism, with its particular cultural-linguistic tropes and symbols, that God the Son made man acted as a prophetic figure in such a way as to teach the whole of the human race. His extraordinary knowledge was conveyed *to* his first century auditors, and through them to us, and this knowledge was conveyed *through* the medium of the language and symbols of his epoch, including those of inspired Scripture that were so deeply influential within his ambient culture. One may affirm that Christ knew many things that he did

not tell the apostles. However, as Aquinas notes, charismatic graces are intended primarily to help those to whom they are directed, not the one who possesses them.²⁹ This is true in the case of Christ's infused science: he communicates his higher prophetic insight in forms that those around him are capable of receiving (themselves enlightened by the grace of supernatural faith) in and through the idioms of the era.

This pattern continues in the later life of the Church: infused knowledge is a charism and charisms are oriented to the common good of the ecclesial community. They are therefore culturally significant, or corollary to the era and people they are given to. The revelations of Catherine of Siena, the elocutions of St. Teresa of Avila, and the confessional insights of St. Jean Marie Vianney are culturally situated in determinate ways, and yet extraordinarily magnificent and miraculous. Jesus's miracles and teaching are signs meant to allow us to perceive his own identity, soteriological mission, and eschatological judgment on the world. They were given to the people of his time and embedded within the cultural-linguistic features of his historical epoch that we referred to above. In other words, the infused science is superior to but also exerted only from within—and, in a way, at the service of—the ordinary world of persons who learn by acquired knowledge and who are enlightened by the grace of faith.

The Infused Science as It Relates to the Beatific Vision of Christ

This brings us to our final topic, the question of how the infused science of Christ relates to that higher form of human knowledge that Aquinas identifies: the beatific or immediate vision of God in the human intellect of Christ. Here we may first ask the evident question: why should we posit anything more than the infused prophetic knowledge of Christ and specify a distinct form of graced knowledge present in his human intelligence? Does the infused knowledge mentioned above not suffice for a complete understanding of the special human knowledge of Christ, in his earthly life?

The answer to this question can be posed in two stages. First, we might ask what difference it would make to affirm the beatific or immediate knowledge of God in the human mind of Christ as something distinct from his infused prophetic knowledge. Second,

²⁹ *ST I-II*, q. 111, a. 1.

we might ask how the two relate in distinct ways to Christ's acquired knowledge.

Regarding the first question, the key insight to a treatment of the question comes from Jean-Pierre Torrell, who notes rightly that prophetic knowledge that is infused, however elevated it may be, is compatible with supernatural faith and is, in fact, "typically" received by persons who have such faith.³⁰ Old Testament prophets and New Testament prophets, as well as Catholic saints or friends of God who have received infused knowledge, do so while abiding in faith, and they still live in the darkness of faith even while receiving such extraordinary revelation from God. The human nature of Christ is no different from theirs, such that, if he had infused prophetic knowledge alone in his human intellect, he too would live in faith. However, unlike the prophets, apostles, and saints, Jesus Christ is both true God and true man, a divine person subsistent in a human nature. He is also the unique savior of the human race. Traditionally, then, for various reasons, both the Catholic magisterium and classical Catholic theology have eschewed the attribution of supernatural faith to the Son of God made man.³¹

³⁰ Jean-Pierre Torrell, "S. Thomas d'Aquin et la science du Christ," in *Saint Thomas au XXe siècle*, ed. S.-T. Bonino (Paris: Éditions St. Paul, 1994), 394–409; See 403–4: "If one renounces the beatific vision and if one follows the logic of the Thomistic perspective, it must be said that Christ had faith. . . . The [bearer of prophecy] does not attain God in his experience [of infused science] but only expressive signs of the divine. He knows *that* God speaks to him, but *what* God says he can only believe. . . . The grace of faith is another kind of supernatural gift. . . . A created participation in the life of God, it conforms the believer, . . . to the mystery itself. . . . In other words, with faith we are in the order of the supernatural *quoad essentiam*, while with prophetic knowledge we remain in the order of the supernatural *quoad modum (acquisitionis)*. The two orders do not exclude one another, certainly, but the second is ordered to the first, and because the two are different kinds of realities, they must not be confused or made to play the role of one another. Concerning Jesus, then, . . . if we accord to him infused illuminations characteristic of the charismatic knowledge of revelation, he will be enabled for his role as a divine messenger, but he will still not have direct access to God, since these illuminations do not suffice as a replacement of faith" (my translation). See, likewise on this question, *ST II-II*, q. 171, a. 5.

³¹ For the recent magisterium, see especially: Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis* (1943), §75; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §473; John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (2001), §§25–27; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Notification on the works of Jon Sobrino, S.J." (2006), §8. See the recent study and defense of the traditional position by Simon Francis Gaine, *Did the Saviour See the Father?*

We may note briefly three reasons for this affirmation. A first reason is given by Aquinas: Jesus is the Savior of the human race not only due to his divine nature (as the source of our grace) but also by virtue of his human nature. Christ as God communicates grace to us in unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Christ as man communicates grace to us instrumentally, through the medium of his human actions of deliberate willing, in concord with his divine will as God. Salvation for the human race consists, however, not only in redemption from sin but also in union with God, culminating in the beatific vision in which the soul knows God immediately and possesses God perfectly, without danger of loss. Therefore, if Christ did not possess this grace in his earthly life, then in a very real sense, Christ was not saved as of yet and lived in faith, awaiting the salvation or redemption of his human nature.³² This is incongruent because it means that Christ, while in solidarity with us by virtue of his faith, would also be in solidarity with us in his awaiting redemption from another (the Father, for example). He would not be the savior, but only one saved. That is to say, if Christ as the God-human is the active savior of the human race in and through his earthly life, then he is so in part by virtue of his immediate and perfect knowledge of God. He knows that he is one with the Father and does not merely discern or believe himself to be so through the medium of faith, as if through a mirror darkly.³³

A second reason is that Christ as man should be able, as all human beings typically are, to grasp who he is as a person. But Christ, unlike all other human beings, is a divine person, and one can understand who a divine person is in an immediate way only through the grace of the beatific vision. Therefore, for Christ to have an immediate grasp of who he is as the Son of God in his human self-awareness, it is necessary that he possess the beatific vision. The vision is, in other words, essential to his personal unity and integrity, because Christ as a person is God subsisting as a human being.³⁴

A final reason has to do with the salvific human will of Christ.

Christ, Salvation, and the Vision of God (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015).

³² See the argument in *ST* III, q. 9, a. 2.

³³ I have offered a more developed version of this argument in *The Incarnate Lord: A Thomistic Study in Christology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2015), ch. 8. I am indebted for this argument to conversations with Bruce D. Marshall.

³⁴ See the arguments to this effect in Dominic Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), ch. 3.

Unlike other human beings, Christ is a person who has two wills: divine and human. His human will subsists in concord with and subordination to his divine will. If a person lives in supernatural faith, however, he cannot perceive immediately what the divine will is for his life at any given moment. One must act prudently in hope of living in accord with the will of God, even in obscure moments of prudential discernment. If Christ as man lived in faith (even with the infused science), he would be obliged to act in obscure hope of conforming his life to the divine will at each instance, something that is commonplace to all ordinary believers. However, in Christ's case, he would be acting personally as man, with the obscure hope of conforming himself to *his own will* as the eternal Son of God. That is to say, the life of faith would introduce a kind of moral bifurcation or dualism into the life of Christ, as he would seek humanly *without certainty* to do what he himself willed himself to do divinely. Or he would will himself divinely to do things that humanly he could not be certain of but that, as man, he only hoped he might be doing faithfully, while failing to perceive clearly. This picture of things does not correspond accurately to the Gospels, however, which depict Christ as acting decisively with certain knowledge of his identity and mission, as well as of contingent choices that the Father wills him to make and that he makes as man in conjunction with the Father and the Holy Spirit.³⁵

For various reasons, then, it is fitting to attribute the beatific vision to Christ in his earthly life, albeit in such a way that this mysterious grace respects the human dimensions of acquired and infused knowledge that we have named above. How, then, does the beatific vision coexist in Christ with his acquired knowledge, and how should we understand this coexistence in relation to the infused knowledge of Christ? The topic is very obscure, not in itself, but from our vantage point. It obliges us to consider the distinction and relationship of two forms of supernatural knowledge, each present within the human mind of Christ in the course of his human historical experience, and each of which are (in two different ways) superior to the grace of supernatural faith that we ourselves possess.

It is helpful to treat this difficult question by making a fundamental observation. Aquinas gives us reason to think that the beatific

³⁵ I present this argument at greater length in *The Incarnate Lord*, ch. 5. See also Jean-Miguel Garrigues, "La conscience de soi telle qu'elle était exercée par le Fils de Dieu fait homme," *Nova et Vetera* 79, no. 1 (2004): 39–51.

vision exists in the historical Christ in a way that preserves the ordinary structure of his human acquired knowledge and self-reflexive consciousness. He makes this point in at least two ways. First, he notes that the beatific vision is present in the historical life and agency of Christ according to a particular *dispensatio* or economic exercise.³⁶ The Incarnation occurs in view of the redemption of the human race, and this mystery of the humanization of God entails God's living in ontological solidarity with us. In Christ, God took upon himself our actual human condition. Because Christ was subject to the ordinary conditions of human existence (which include mental and psychological suffering), Aquinas thinks that he possessed the beatific vision in such a way that his lower powers (his corporeal and sensate-psychological experience of reality) retained their ordinary structure and vulnerability.³⁷ This state is to be contrasted to that of the resurrection, in which Christ in his glorified humanity enjoys the effects of the beatifying vision of God not only in the heights of his soul but also in his corporeal-sensate subjectivity and is affected by this grace even in the very matter of his glorified human flesh.³⁸

A second principle is analogous to the first. Aquinas stresses not only that Christ possessed the beatific vision in the midst of an ordinary human life of psychological and physical vulnerability. He also stresses that the higher intuitive knowledge derived from the vision did not impede or supervene upon the ordinary acquisition of knowledge that comes by way of human experience. Here Aquinas contrasts "higher reason" with "lower reason," but not so as to distinguish two faculties of the intellect, or even two habits (such as speculative and practical reason). Rather, he means to distinguish two types of objects of knowledge.³⁹ With regard to the mystery of God, Christ's human reason was always illumined from above by his intuitive knowledge of the Father, of himself, and of the Holy Spirit. With regard to temporal things, however, the vision did not supervene upon his acquisition of knowledge by way of direct experience.

Interpreters debate over the question of whether Aquinas might think that the human intellect of Christ could "naturally" avail itself of knowledge from the vision of God and translate it into conceptual knowledge in an almost immediate way. John of St.

³⁶ See: *ST* III, q. 14, a. 1, ad 2; III, q. 15, a. 5, ad 3; q. 45, a. 2; q. 46, a. 8.

³⁷ *ST* III, q. 46, aa. 6–8.

³⁸ *ST* III, q. 46, a. 8; q. 54, a. 3.

³⁹ Aquinas, *Compendium theologiae* I, ch. 232.

Thomas thinks not, while modern interpreters like Marie-Joseph Nicolas and Simon Francis Gaine think so.⁴⁰ On one reading, then, Christ would know he is the Son of God by immediate vision, not by faith, but he would be able to actively cognize this knowledge humanly primarily through the medium of his infused science, and only secondarily through his acquired knowledge. Since the beatific vision is non-conceptual, and therefore, in a sense, incommunicable, Christ would need the infused prophetic knowledge to “translate” his vision into terms that he might conceptualize and represent for us in ordinary terms.⁴¹ On the alternative reading, Christ would know he was God through the medium of the beatific vision and not by faith, but he would also be able to understand something of the vision and articulate this knowledge directly by way of his ordinary, acquired knowledge, without recourse to any special infused, prophetic knowledge. His agent intellect in its ordinary human mode of operation would have some form of access to the higher intuitive knowledge he possesses in virtue of the vision.⁴²

We need not seek to revolve this dispute here, which is incidental to the argument of this essay. For, however one resolves the debate, a key distinction remains as regards the *natural character* of the two forms of knowledge: the immediate vision of God and the grace of the infused science. Aquinas clearly affirms that the beatific vision affords a much higher form of knowledge than the infused science, since it allows the human nature of Christ to know the divine essence in a direct manner. However, it is also the form of knowledge that most directly fulfills the natural human longing for absolute knowledge of God.⁴³ The grace of the beatific vision is formally supernatural,

⁴⁰ See: John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 8, q. 9, d. 11, a. 2, nos. 3–5; Marie-Joseph Nicolas, “Voir Dieu dans la ‘condition charnelle,’” *Doctor Communis* 36 (1983): 384–94; Simon Francis Gaine, “Is There Still a Place for Christ’s Infused Knowledge in Catholic Theology and Exegesis?” *Nova et Vetera* (English), in this same issue. In the arguments that follow, I am greatly indebted to Gaine’s recent framing of the question, though I do not align with him on all points.

⁴¹ The text of Aquinas that comes closest to affirming this idea is found in *ST* III, q. 9, a. 3, corp. and ad 3, coupled with q. 11, a. 5, ad 1.

⁴² For a text that seems to lean in this sense, see Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 20, a. 3, ad 4.

⁴³ *ST* I-II, q. 3, a. 8. I have offered my own treatment of the famous “natural desire for God” question in Thomas Joseph White, “Imperfect Happiness and the Final End of Man: Thomas Aquinas and the Paradigm of Nature-Grace Orthodoxy,” *The Thomist* 78 (2014): 247–89.

of course, and is the highest and most naturally inaccessible of all forms of grace. But in its term or purpose, this grace is intrinsically human and epitomizes the maxim that grace does not destroy nature but brings it to completion. This is the case even as it coexists in Christ with all that is proper to ordinary experience: his psychological sensate development and human vulnerability and suffering. This is congruent in key ways with life in the resurrection. There one finds no suffering, since it entails a transformed state. However, it is also the case that, even in the resurrection, the grace of the beatific vision coexists in Christ in perfect harmony with his ordinary sensate experiences and his acquisitional mode of animal reasoning. In other words, the beatific vision is a much higher form of knowledge, but also a more “ordinary” one, given that it effectuates the perfection of human beatitude.

By contrast, the infused knowledge is not ordinary from a natural point of view, either formally or in its teleological term, but extraordinary, since it is knowledge that is not gained through the senses and the activity of the agent intellect, nor one that contributes essentially to the final fulfillment of the subject. Rather, it is particularly gratuitous in mode and consists in a charismatic form of knowing that is primarily oriented not toward the good of the individual, but to the assistance of others. The prophet may express his knowledge in and through the ordinary language of his time and may employ symbols that everyone can understand, but even when he does this, he does so based upon a gift of knowledge that others do not have and that is charismatic in kind.

We can conclude from this that the beatific vision of Christ and the prophetic knowledge (infused science) of Christ are soteriological in two distinct ways. The first is soteriological in a more properly exemplary and universalistic way. The immediate vision of God is the perfection of noetic beatitude for each human being.⁴⁴ Christ is the savior because he can communicate to us what he himself first possesses, the perfection of the knowledge of God that utterly and ultimately fulfills the human mind and heart. The second form of knowledge is soteriological because it represents an extraordinary charismatic gift of prophecy that most do not receive and that no one other than Christ has in a habitual way. It is oriented toward the economy of revelation and allows Christ to teach others those

⁴⁴ See: 1 John 3:2; 1 Cor 13:12; Rev 22:4; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §§1023–29; *ST I*, q. 12, a. 1.

received truths that are essential to the New Testament revelation so as to instruct them in the faith. It is true that the blessed, in the life to come, may well enjoy infused science as well as the beatific vision, even as the soul of the saint separated from the body must possess some form of infused science in order to cognate, given the absence of the body.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the infused science is not typically human and remains extraordinary for our human nature, while acquired knowledge and the beatific vision are more typically human, the first by way of nature and the second by way of grace.⁴⁶ The latter is a highest and most extraordinary grace, but it fulfills what is deepest and most distinctively rational in human animals: the natural desire for the truth and the natural desire to know God immediately.

Conclusion

The modern rise of historical-Jesus studies was conceived initially in opposition to classical dogmatic perspectives regarding the person of Christ.⁴⁷ It was thought by many that the historical-critical method could be employed to go back behind the portrait of Christ in the New Testament and the early Church, to recover a more realistic vision of Jesus of Nazareth “before dogma.” Although this approach is still maintained by some, it is no longer associated with the use of the historical-critical method as such. On the contrary, the modern quest for the historical Jesus has increasingly been conducted in seeming congruity with classical dogmatic teaching, especially by some “third quest” representatives who emphasize Jesus’s eschatological message within the context of Second Temple Judaism.⁴⁸ Many of these scholars argue that Jesus of Nazareth must have understood himself to be the definitive, eschatological emissary of God in history, one who was bringing the covenant of Israel to its definitive resolution.⁴⁹ Understood in this way, one may reconcile a modern appreciation of Jesus’s

⁴⁵ *ST I*, q. 89.

⁴⁶ We might contrast this with the case of angels, for whom infused knowledge is typical (*ST I*, q. 55).

⁴⁷ See here the historical argument of Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy in the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 197–229 and 447–76.

⁴⁸ See the argument of Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861–1986*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

⁴⁹ See, for example: Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, esp. ch. 8; James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), esp. chs. 12, 15, and 16.

historically contingent human consciousness (within the context of Second Temple Judaism) and the principles of Nicene Christology.

Nevertheless, the modern historical synthesis is also often subject to a kind of theological Apollinarianism, not of the classical kind (in which the human mind of Christ was denied problematically in order to assert the reality of his divinity), but of an inverted kind. On this view, the divine wisdom of Christ as God is eclipsed kenotically for the duration of his incarnate life among us. Only the human historical consciousness of Christ appears in all its contingent ordinariness, and the graces of Christ's prophetic awareness and special knowledge of his own identity are construed as mere "post-paschal theologoumena" added by the later Christian community in order to exalt the historical figure of Christ.⁵⁰ This theology is Nicene because it affirms the divinity of Christ, but it is not properly Chalcedonian, due to a kenoticism that obscures the presence of divine operations in the historical Christ, thus failing to grapple with authentic dyotheletism, in which the divine and human operations of Christ are each present and are coordinated hierarchically.⁵¹ The infused science and beatific vision of Christ are graces that pertain to his human nature, but they are graces that allow his human mind to cooperate actively with the divine wisdom that he possesses as God, with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The affirmation of these graces in the human mind of Christ is necessary in order to understand properly the real cooperation and coordinated harmony of Christ's divine wisdom and human understanding, his divine willing and his human decision making. How then might one accept the classical principles of dyotheletism while also embracing the legitimate insights of modern historical-critical studies?

⁵⁰ Most illustrative of this problem in systematic theology is the intriguing and historically influential work of Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1968), esp. 307–64, where he offers systematic challenges to traditional dyotheletism. It seems to me that Wright's portrait of Jesus in *Jesus and the Victory of God* aligns closely (intentionally or not) with that of Pannenberg in significant ways.

⁵¹ Joseph Ratzinger has noted the need for a renewal of dyotheletist Christology within a modern context in *Behold the Pieced One* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986). On the prospects for dyotheletism in dialogue with modern objections, see Thomas Joseph White, "Dyotheletism and the Instrumental Human Consciousness of Jesus," *Pro Ecclesia* 17, no. 4 (2008): 396–422. For a helpful treatment of the historical sources of dyotheletism, see Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature and Will in the Christology of Saint Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Return to a balance requires acknowledging the acquisitions of the modern historical studies and the realism they imply about a historically situated Incarnation while also finding a way to acknowledge the infused science of Christ as a key element in his historical mission. The extraordinary human knowledge of Christ is something integral to the New Testament, and therefore a real element of the life of Jesus of Nazareth that can be subject to historical consideration. The early Christian community understood the earthly Jesus to be a person gifted with extraordinary knowledge of the divine economy, capable of foretelling key events that were to come, able to read hearts and minds, and uniquely aware of his own authority and identity as the Son of God.

Aquinas's treatments of the infused science and beatific vision of Christ provide needed balance for Christian theology because they help us to understand the grace of the human mind of Christ and to explain how this grace is enrooted in his nature, and therefore in the context of his human acquired knowledge with its cultural-linguistic and temporally situated shape. Aquinas's affirmation of Jesus's human acquisition of knowledge allows us to understand how the Word Incarnate would have learned from his experience within the context of his surrounding culture. This temporal specificity of the knowledge and language of Christ need not mean Christ's mission has less universality. On the contrary: the Word became flesh in first-century Galilee and, from that particular flesh in that particular time and place, cast a light upon the whole world. As Jesus says prophetically about his own crucifixion as the privileged place of the revelation of his divine identity: "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know, that I AM" (John 8:28). Jesus could think about the meaning of the divine name of Exodus 3:14–15 based on his natural, acquired knowledge as a first-century Jew. By virtue of his vision and his infused science, he also knew that he could apply this name to himself as one who is one in being with the Father (John 10:30). Christological realism requires that we hold the two affirmations together in unity, just as we must affirm both the true divinity and the true humanity of Christ. In this aspiration, the theological vision of the knowledge of Christ offered by Thomas Aquinas is of essential help for the future of a sound modern Christology. N-V

Intelligence and Morality: Translation and Comments on an Article by Ambroise Gardeil, O.P.

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Translator's Foreword

CURRENT ECCLESIASTICAL AND theological controversies surrounding *Amoris Laetitia* often concretize on the question of moral conscience, our grasp of moral norms, and the at once efficacious and personal embrace of those norms.¹ The theme is not new, of course, and for decades has generated a vast literature in Catholic circles regarding the nature and importance of conscience²—not always without the detrimental effect of exalting conscience (which, as an act of practical

¹ Merely for a recent popular reiteration of this point, see Nicole Winfield, “Pope Francis reaffirms primacy of conscience amid criticism of ‘Amoris Laetitia,’” *America*, November 11, 2017, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2017/11/11/pope-francis-reaffirms-primacy-conscience-amid-criticism-amoris-laetitia>. Likewise, for a collection of popular essays on these matters (from perspectives that are not always wholly isomorphic to the present author, nor to Gardeil) see the Fall 2016 publication of Boston College’s “Church in the 21st Century Center,” *C21 Resources*, <https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/top/church21/pdf/Final%202016%20Resources.pdf>.

² And, if we consider matters in full historical breadth, we would plunge ourselves into centuries of debates concerning conscience among the laxists, probabilists, probabiorists, equi-probabilists, tutorists, et al. An integration of these discussions into the treatise on prudence awaits full treatment. See Benedict-Henri Merkelbach, “Quelle place assigner au traité de la conscience?” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 12 (1923): 170–183.

reasoning, can err) beyond its proper and due laudability. All things are done in conscience, even if that conscience be erroneous.

Given the heated nature of this topic (and the numerous arguments and sub-arguments involved among endlessly contentious parties), I am opting in this article/translation to provide a kind of “outside” view concerning these matters. In the spirit of this journal’s titular mission, this article presents something “old” to aid in reflection on these “new” problems: a translation of the two-part article “Intelligence et moralité” written by Ambroise Gardeil, O.P (1859–1931), for *Revue des jeunes* in 1927.³ Gardeil, an important figure in twentieth-century French Thomism, much of whose work has sadly not been translated into English, is perhaps most well-known for his influence on figures such as Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange⁴ and M.-D. Chenu.⁵ Much of Gardeil’s *oeuvre* was devoted to matters concerning theological methodology, works that provide many profound insights regarding issues related to fundamental theology.⁶ On the topic of conscience, he edited and completed the work of his teacher, Reginald Beaudouin, O.P., *Tractatus de conscientia*, yet another work deserving attention in this era of philosophico-theological upheaval.⁷ However important this technical text may be, in the present article, I wish to present a translation of his late-life, nontechnical reflections on moral knowledge in the hopes of indirectly addressing current ecclesiastical concerns by making available this faithful theologian’s reflection on conscience.

Primarily, Gardeil’s article is concerned with the philosophical

³ Ambroise Gardeil, “Intelligence et moralité,” *Revue des jeunes* (1927): 353–66 and 474–82.

⁴ See Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, “In memoriam: Le Père A. Gardeil,” *Revue thomiste* (1931): 797–808. Also, see Richard Peddicord, *The Sacred Monster of Thomism: An Introduction to the Life and Legacy of Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2005), 115–18.

⁵ See: Guy Mansini, “What is a Dogma?” *The Meaning and Truth of Dogma in Edouard le Roy and His Scholastic Opponents* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1985), 238; Christophe F. Potworoski, *Contemplation and Incarnation: The Theology of Marie-Dominique Chenu* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 45.

⁶ For detailed information concerning the work of Gardeil, see: H.-D. Gardeil, “Le Père Ambroise Gardeil (1859–1931),” *Bulletin thomiste*, October 1931, 69*–92*; Gardeil, *L’oeuvre théologique du Père Ambroise Gardeil* (Paris: Soisy-sur-Seine, 1956).

⁷ See Reginald Beaudouin, *Tractatus de conscientia*, ed. Ambroise Gardeil (Tournai, FR: Desclée, 1911).

elements involved in moral reasoning. For a theological investigation of moral reasoning and the moral life, one should consult his *La vraie vie chrétienne*.⁸ Despite this limited philosophical horizon, Gardeil's reflections on the reciprocal relationship between "intelligence" and "morality" are of profound importance for understanding the whole of the domain of practical reasoning (and, by extension, the speculatively practical reflection on it that is undertaken in moral philosophy). He takes as his guiding thread *Summa theologiae* [ST] I-II, q. 58, aa. 4 and 5, wherein St. Thomas condenses this reciprocal relationship into two direct questions: "Can moral virtue exist without intellectual virtue?" and "Can intellectual virtue exist without moral virtue?" In short, his answers are that moral virtue cannot exist without the intellectual virtues of synderesis and prudence (the latter of which is also moral, as we will see) and that prudence cannot exist without moral virtue, for prudence requires efficacious intention of the end and a right will regarding the choice and command of the particular means.

In the present article, Gardeil is concerned with the first question, which he probes with great depth. Unfortunately, we do not have a direct presentation of his commentary on the second question.⁹ At this late point in his life, he appears to have been unable to revisit this theme so as to bring the two-part reflection to completion. Though it is my intention to fill out those details in a later article, I will here provide a sketch of several points vitally important to this topic, which was quite dear to Gardeil's "disciple,"¹⁰ Garrigou-Lagrange,¹¹ as well as to those whose own

⁸ See Ambroise Gardeil, *La vraie vie chrétienne*, 2nd ed., preface by Jacques Maritain (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer & Cie, 1935).

⁹ However, we do have related matters treated in: Ambroise Gardeil, "Les exigences objectives de l'action," *Revue thomiste* 6 (1898): 125–38 and 269–94; Gardeil, "L'action: ses ressources subjectives," *Revue thomiste* 7 (1899): 23–39; Gardeil, "Les ressources de vouloir," *Revue thomiste* 7 (1899): 447–61; "Les ressources de la raison pratique: Gardeil, *Utrum beatitudo sit operatio intellectus practici* (1)," *Revue thomiste* 8 (1900): 377–99; Gardeil, "Ce qu'il y a vrai dans le néo-scotisme," *Revue thomiste* 8 (1900): 531–50 and 648–65, and *Revue thomiste* 9 (1901): 407–43. Likewise, A. Gardeil, see *La vraie vie chrétienne*, cited above.

¹⁰ This is not a wholly inappropriate title, at least based on Garrigou-Lagrange's own language, for he refers Gardeil as "our master," *noster magister*, in Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *De revelatione per ecclesiam Catholicam proposita*, 5th ed., vol. 1 (Rome: Desclée et socii, 1950), xin1.

¹¹ Certainly, their positions are not always the same, as can be seen, for example, in Garrigou-Lagrange's disagreement regarding the self-knowledge that is

intellectual formation owed much to the unfairly named “Sacred monster of Thomism.”

By focusing on the two important questions posed in *ST* I-II, q. 58, aa. 4 and 5, Gardeil indeed goes to the heart of the nature of practical reasoning. We could re-interpret the aforementioned two questions by saying that they represent “two faces” of one question or issue: What is the nature of prudential reasoning? Thus, the two aforementioned questions represent (1) the “face” of formal specification and (2) that of exercise. The first emerges from the initial insights of synderesis (in the natural order) and of faith (in the order of supernatural truths),¹² which insights carry within themselves the germ of the whole moral life. This formal specification is discursively elaborated from ends to means by prudence’s reasoning insofar as prudence is an intellectual virtue, perfecting the intellect in this moral-practical discourse. It also is edified, indirectly, by cultural developments, moral philosophy, and moral theology. The other “face” emerges effectively (i.e., as regards efficient causality) from the will’s infinite ordination, which, even in the order of nature, is harmonized with the positively infinite good in general.¹³ As expressed by Pierre-Marie Emonet, O.P.: “But where are the boundaries of the universal Good? And what limits enclose happiness? Thus it is in the desire of an infinite amplitude that the root of freedom resides.”¹⁴ Or, in the profound reflection by Maritain (though, one that presupposes the supernatural order)¹⁵:

had by the separated soul (as well as the case of angelic self-knowledge). See Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, “Utrum mens seipsam per essentiam cognoscat, an per aliquam speciem,” *Angelicum* 5 (1928): 37–54. A translation of this essay is anticipated in the near future in a collected volume to be published by Emmaus Academic.

¹² Indeed, in Gardeil’s article, this important point is not emphasized, and it does not come to the fore in Aquinas either. Thus, we must remember that the discussion is primarily philosophical in nature and requires careful extension to include the way that faith, hope, and charity (in the supernatural domain) are super-analogous to synderesis, the will’s natural desire for beatitude, and the natural love for God (in the domain of nature). This point is indicated succinctly in Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *De beatitudine* (Turin, IT: Berruti, 1951), 312.

¹³ It goes without saying that, for the Thomist school, this is not to be confused with “the Deity as such, in its inner mystery.”

¹⁴ Pierre-Marie Emonet, *The Greatest Marvel of Nature: An Introduction to the Philosophy of the Human Person*, trans. Robert R. Barr (New York: Crossroad, 2000), 70–71. For Emonet’s recollections of Garrigou-Lagrange, see “Un maître prestigieux,” *Angelicum* 42 (1965): 195–99.

¹⁵ To understand Maritain’s thought on the controverted “natural desire for

[Thomist philosophy] shows us in the human will a bottomless pit which subsisting Good, which God alone can fill. . . . It is only before the Divine Essence, intuitively known as the plenitude of all good, that all freedom disappears, the freedom of exercise as well as the freedom of specification. Then, in the light of that blessed vision, our will, finally satisfied, will be impelled towards God with all its weight, although perfectly vitally and spontaneously; it will plunge into Him, strike Him like a thunderbolt, in an infinite necessity of loving without end the infinite Love.¹⁶

When we understand practical reason, we must always consider the interaction of “heart” and “reason” if we are to fully and rightly understand the nature of prudence. As felicitously explained by another Thomist, Yves R. Simon, himself influenced by the same school of thought as Gardeil (through the intermediacy of Jacques Maritain and, through him, Garrigou-Lagrange):

Prudence does not reside in the intellect alone; or rather, it resides in the intellect indeed, but as inclined by a virtuous heart. . . . Indeed according to Aristotle, prudence is what brings the heart and the reason together. . . .

Who and what we are matters greatly in choosing the course of action that is right for us. Our choice, therefore, will not necessarily be everybody’s choice. But if we are trained in virtue, the choice we make will be objectively right, for our judgment guided by inclination will be the right judgment under our circumstances. Consciously looking for the best choice, we shall attain our object if our reason agrees with our heart, so to speak, or if, as some Scholastics used to put it, we join right reason to good will . . . Understanding human nature, we can train ourselves in virtues according to objective standards. And whoever succeeds in acquiring virtues will be

vision of God,” one must remember that he never abandons the general Thomist position that such a desire is conditioned, inefficacious, and elicited. Nonetheless, one should also consider remarks such as those made in Maritain, *Untrammelled Approaches*, trans. Bernard Doering (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 14n15 and 411.

¹⁶ See Jacques Maritain, *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison and J. Gordon Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), 274–77.

easily recognized, as we suggested at the start of our discussion, by his or her unshakable dependability in human affairs.¹⁷

Finally, this mutual influence of causality is well summarized by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange himself as follows:

The same law of mutual relations between various kinds of cause must regulate the relations between the intellect and the will at the completion of deliberation. The answer of the Thomists is not a crafty device; it is based upon the very definition of becoming. In the case of the final practical judgment and the act of the will which precedes and follows it, there is no priority of time. At one and the same time, the will applies the intellect to judge what it must choose, and is directed by the intellect in its choice. There is here only a priority of nature and reciprocal priority according to the point of view that one takes of it. In the order of extrinsic formal causality (directive idea), there is priority of judgment, since the judgment actually directs the will that it may choose in a certain manner; but in the order of efficient causality, there is priority of volition which applies the intellect to judge in such a way, priority of volition which can suspend the inquiry of the intellect or let it proceed. The will is thus the cause of the attraction itself that it experiences, in this sense, that it depends upon the will to cause the intellect to judge that a certain good is by nature disposed to move it; it is the cause of the direction that it receives, insofar as it moves the intellect to impress upon it this direction.¹⁸

As has already been indicated, in the article presented here, Gardeil is concerned with the first “face”—how virtue depends upon intelligence. Thus, he will emphasize *synderesis* and *prudence* insofar as the latter is an intellectual virtue. One sees this precision in his vocabulary when he writes that he is considering *prudence* not “as a capacity for moral governance *but in the consideration of the intellectual values that one ought to hold in order to have such governance*” (emphasis added). It is only

¹⁷ Yves R. Simon, *The Definition of Moral Virtue*, ed. Vukan Kuic (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 101 and 118–19.

¹⁸ Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *God: His Existence and His Nature: A Thomistic Solution of Certain Agnostic Antinomies*, vol. 2, trans. Bede Rose (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1955), 246.

at the end of the article that he rightly notes that a further article is required so as to move the consideration from the “intellectual side” of prudence to its moral and existential-effective side:

The conclusion of this [prudential] syllogism yearns to be proposed not only as a duty, but imposed as a command. It does not suffice to say to oneself, “It is necessary to do this or that”; it is necessary to say imperatively to oneself, “Do it.” And for that, it is necessary that the prudential verdict be stopped and solidified, as it were, by a voluntary determination that pours out its absolute inclination onto conduct. Thus is it that the intellectual virtue of prudence is metamorphosed into a moral virtue. But, to follow it in this prolongation of itself would be to encroach upon the second article that we ought to comment upon: whether there is intellectual virtue without moral virtue?

Given that the primary act of prudence is command,¹⁹ this further discussion is utterly necessary, lest its character (and with it, the character of practical truth as such) be misunderstood. However, I am leaving that for my own later extension of the work that Gardeil has set out upon so excellently in this article.

Still, even in this very text, Gardeil is not indifferent to the appetitive “side” of practical intellection.²⁰ In the above-cited text, Garrigou-Lagrange emphasizes the mutual causality of intellect and will in the order of choice (i.e., of prudential reasoning). For his part, Gardeil pushes the analysis back to the roots of practical reasoning into the order of intention, to the will’s initial resting in the moral ends known by synderesis. Indeed, making use of Reinhard Hütter’s felicitous expression for synderesis, “the primordial conscience,”²¹ we must also give careful attention to the initial and natural inclination of the will to its own goods when suitably proposed, which we could call “the primordial heart”:

Therefore, the fundamental moral education will consist in forming THE HEART—that is, the will, envisioned in its

¹⁹ See Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [ST] II-II, q. 47, a. 8.

²⁰ And elsewhere; see note 8 above.

²¹ See Reinhard Hütter, “To Be Good Is to Do the Truth: Being, Truth, the Good, and the Primordial Conscience in a Thomist Perspective,” *Nova et Vetera* (English) 15, no. 1 (2017): 53–73.

initial act of taking pleasure in the good and the true end of the being who possesses it. It will not be a question of instruction, properly speaking. The intellectual formation of the heart depends upon a simple maieutic [i.e., clarifying one's ideas]. It consists in drawing the attention of the human being to the character of reason, which, in him, takes precedence over all the others and differentiates him from all that is inferior in him and around him to make him see that, things being so, the ends of his actions ought to be in harmony with this noble part of himself, which completes him and totalizes him as a man and penetrates his spirit with the exigencies of these ends. As regards the formation, properly speaking, of the "heart," it consists in bringing about the natural reactions of the will in face of this evident goodness, to invite the will to consent to it.

We should turn now to Gardeil's article, a kind of extended reflection on the basic facts of moral reasoning considered primarily from the perspective of its intellectual exigencies. He himself defined his own theological-intellectual work, as presented in *La crédibilité et l'apologetique*, *Le donné révélé et la théologie*, and *La structure de l'âme et l'expérience mystique*, as being a kind of prolegomena to theological science, that is, as a reflection upon the very conditions of such knowledge.²² This essay should be read as one part of a philosophical prolegomenon to the conditions of moral knowledge and the prudential exercise of the moral life.²³ Though it must be supplemented by a second part concerned with "virtuous love and moral intelligence," it is nonetheless quite true that, in a full and mature account of moral reasoning and conscience (and, hence too, prudence, of which right and certain conscience is an act²⁴), "the intelligence of morality" plays an undeniable and central role. To highlight this import, I will end my introduction with the insightful words of Maritain, which will help to summarize the points expressed below in Gardeil's article:

²² See H.-D. Gardeil, "Le Père Ambroise Gardeil," 69*.

²³ In this, it is akin to Yves Simon's youthful work *A Critique of Moral Knowledge*, trans. Ralph McInerney (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002).

²⁴ See Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, "La prudence dans l'organisme des vertus," *Revue thomiste* 31, n.s. 9 (1926): 411-42. A translation of this essay is anticipated in the near future in a collected volume to be published by Emmaus Academic.

In a word [contemporary atheistic existentialists] imagine that morality exempts us from conscience and substitutes its golden rules for that flexible and delicate instrument (which costs us so dear) and for its invincibly personal judgment. They imagine that morality offers that same substitute for the likewise invincibly personal judgment (which is irreducible to any kind of science) of the virtue of prudence, whose cost is still more disquietingly high. They replace all this by the Pythia's chasm because they have thrown out reason and make the formal element of morality consist in pure liberty alone. Let the perplexed young man go cock an ear at that hole of the oracle; his liberty itself will tell him how to make use of liberty.

Above all, let no man give him counsel! The least bit of advice comports the risk of causing his liberty to wither, of preventing the handsome serpent from crawling out of the hole. For the liberty of these philosophers of liberty is singularly fragile. In uprooting it from reason, they have themselves made an invalid of it. But we for our part do not fear to counsel human liberty. Cram it with advice as much as you like, we know that it is strong enough to digest advice and that it thrives on rational motivations which it bends as it pleases and which it alone can render efficacious. In short, by suppressing generality and universal law, you suppress liberty; and what you have left is nothing but that amorphous impulse surging out of the night which is but a false image of liberty. Because when you suppress generality and universal law, you suppress reason, in which liberty, whole and entire, has its root (*De veritate*, q. 24, a. 2) and from which emanates in man so vast a desire that no motive in the world and no objective sollicitation, except Beatitude seen face to face, suffices to determine it.²⁵

Intelligence and Morality²⁶

St. Thomas has examined, in all of its aspects, the problem of the reciprocal relations of intelligence and morality, though nowhere as closely

²⁵ Jacques Maritain, *Existence and the Existent*, trans. Lewis Galangier and Gerald B. Phelan (New York: Pantheon, 1948), 60–61.

²⁶ Here begins the translation of Ambroise Gardeil, "Intelligence et moralité," *Revue des jeunes* 2 (1927): 353–66 and 474–82. The translator would like to thank Jean-Michel Potin, O.P., and the Dominican province of France for granting permission to publish this translation.

as in these two articles of the *Summa theologiae*, which are so unbreakably intertwined:

Can moral virtue exist without intellectual virtue?
 Can intellectual virtue exist without moral virtue?²⁷

This is not a battle of abstract entities. It is in the living man that the accord or conflict is envisioned. Essentially, virtue is the perfection of a subject capable of possessing it. Virtue renders him the beneficiary of an intrinsic increase in value. A graft upon choice, it is inserted in a still-inchoate nature and alters its lifeblood. The improved being, under the grip of virtue, can develop itself, apart from the shifting offshoots of the wild stock, only in the direction of the added value of quality, inoculated by its graft.

This psychological (and therefore subjective) character of the knowledge [*science*] of virtue, of the morality of virtue, does not imply any relativism for these values. Subjectivity is not necessarily subjectivism. The principles of morality and of moral philosophy, as well as the science and received rules of art, retain their objective values. However, these objective values, in some manner, are captive, integrated, and reabsorbed into the virtuous subject. They are transposed in him to the state of inclinations, of vital energies, of tendencies that, by being triggered, produce normally, and as a source, moral acts, exact theorems and procedures conformed to the rules of art or of craftsmanship. The virtuous—we understand this word in the broad sense that is given to it here—the truly virtuous person has become, as it were, a permanent source of moral, scientific, and artistic developments, which, in order to be easy and vital, possess a scope as absolute as moral philosophy, speculative science, or the arts. Such is this skillfully grafted bush, reproducing—in a timely manner and like nature—the most valued breeds objectively listed in horticulturalists' catalogues.

One grasps now that, though not having a title in the current style (“science and morality,” “art and morality,” etc.), our articles pose the same questions concerning the conflict and agreement between these values in themselves. However, in a certain sense, St. Thomas's approach is different. It is the living human, in what makes him most human, in what decidedly distinguishes him from the inferior beings

²⁷ *ST* I-II, q. 58, aa. 4 and 5.

that surround him and from the animality in which he participates—it is man living his superior life—who is, as it were, opposed to himself, above himself, and opposed in the two great directions that divide his typical perfection: intelligence and morality. Therefore, it is an interior drama that will unfold.

“Can moral virtue exist without intellectual virtue?” Let us clarify this formula, and since we interpret St. Thomas, let us recall that, for him, the moral virtues are named as being prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. These are their general headings, under which we must understand there to be an entire populace of secondary and annexed virtues: good counsel, religion, equity, courage, patience, sobriety, humility, and so on. On the other hand, the intellectual “virtues” are: the understanding of first principles (both speculative and practical), wisdom (or, first philosophy), and science; once again prudence (no longer as a capacity for moral governance, but in the consideration of the intellectual values that one must hold in order to have such governance); finally, art, in its broadest sense—the technical arts and the liberal arts, including among them the arts of the beautiful inasmuch as their making involves objective rules. St. Thomas did not invent this enumeration; he has borrowed it from the treasuries of an age-old tradition. Have we changed much from them?

Nobody can reasonably doubt that the moral virtues belong properly to man, that they are, in the first place, human. As regards the intellectual virtues, one hesitates sometimes to see in them the virtues of humanity as such. Their object is exterior to us and seems at first sight foreign to our nature. St. Augustine called them “adventitious” and refused to admit that they perfect man. This is a mistake, we think, for all of them, in various capacities, make us enter into possession of being, which, according to St. Thomas, is naturally coordinated to the human intellect. No being is foreign to us, given that the object of intellect is all of the Real and given that the intellect itself, of its own nature, is capable of becoming all things—ideally, properly understood.²⁸ Therefore, to Being itself, inasmuch as it is offered to

²⁸ [Translator’s note: To put it another way, the intellect is capable of intentionally becoming all things; or, the intellect is capable of objective union with all things. On this topic, the interested reader would benefit from a reading of Josef Pieper, *Living the Truth*, trans. Lothar Krauth and Stella Lange (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989).]

us as evident, there will correspond in us, naturally, the understanding of principles; to being concluded from these principles, in its chief conclusions, there will correspond Wisdom; in its more distant conclusions, there will correspond Science; to the good, the property of evident being, there will correspond the understanding of moral principles called Synderesis; to being envisioned as the end of the transformative activity of man (no longer of *homo sapiens*, but of *homo faber*), there will correspond Art. On account of the essential constitution of our intellectual nature, which from the outset coheres with all being, all these aspects of being constitute for it so many predestined ways of belonging; and, consequently, the habitude of the soul for seizing it, in order to live intellectually by it, will not be adventitious, but rather, will be the prolongation of our humanity passing beyond itself in order to grasp the Universe; therefore, it will be a qualitative habitude—in other words, a virtue, a human virtue, although of the intellectual order, less human in certain regards than moral virtue.

Thanks to these explanations, the question raised in its henceforth concrete tenor is as follows: Is moral virtue (prudence, justice, fortitude, or temperance) possible without one or several of the intellectual virtues that we have come to enumerate?

★★★

Before hearing St. Thomas's solution (and in order to seize the enduring topicality of that solution), it is not irrelevant for us to read the objections that he opposes to it in advance; before considering the argument *pro*, we will consider the argument *contra*.

Contra—We are confronted with what one could call the Boeotian²⁹ conception of moral virtue. It is more frequent and of greater influence than one believes it to be. St. Thomas exposts it briefly in his three objections. The first refuses to the intellectual virtues the right to rule morality; the other two adduce facts in support of the contention.

As a matter of law, moral virtue is doubtlessly presented as a human inclination to consent to the laws decreed by reason. But, by what reason? By ours, by this educated reason that is poured out into the intellectual virtues? This does not seem necessary. Is not the Order of

²⁹ [Translator's note: Meaning "ignorant" or "dull," being derived from Boeotia, a rural district surrounding Thebes. Its inhabitants were so judged by more urbane Greeks. See "Boeotian (adj.)," [https://www.etymonline.com/word/Boeotian.](https://www.etymonline.com/word/Boeotian)]

the Universe to which we belong assured by simple obedience to the Supreme Reason? Now, this *concentus* takes place without any knowledge of this Reason by the natures that obey it. Why could it not be thus too in man? Why does his nature, the work of the Supreme, Ordaining Reason, not suffice to assure the normal development of his customs, of his morality—and therefore of his moral virtues?³⁰

In fact, it is so. Limited people, in whom reason and the intellectual virtues are reduced to their simplest expression, *in quibus non multum viget usus rationis*, are often the most virtuous. Would not virtue thus be a question of temperament? There are persons who are naturally chided, without rational judgment (above all under the learned form of the intellectual virtues) having to intervene.

It will not be forbidden to us to indicate the modern extensions of these objections. Without a doubt, it is not ordinarily for the benefit of the Supreme Reason that modern thinkers suppress the influence of personal reason (formed and educated by the intellectual virtues) upon morality. They preserve only the negative part of this conclusion. I find it in the naturalist conception of morality.

Man is born good—Jean-Jacques has said so. His conscience, his eternal instinct, suffices to conduct him. Underneath the slag of civilized humanity, let us find human nature, individual and concrete, and let us follow it. One follows it, indeed, and the adventure begun in the idyllic manner with Paul and Virginia and the sheepfolds of Trianon comes to its end with the virtuous Robespierre and the September Massacres, the explosion of the just anger of the people, as I recently heard it said at the Sorbonne.

Or, rather, it was not brought to completion with this adventure. In our days, the theory has been made scholarly. It is no longer a question of God, nor even of reason, nor of nature. What is morality? It is that which produces human values. However, what is a human value? That which procures the well-being and happiness of Humanity! Humanity, such is now the touchstone of morality. To know and catalogue its resources and its impulses in light of sociology, to develop by social education those who submit, just as the horticulturalists select and enable useful varieties to be reproduced—this is the only moral formation that is beyond dispute, being established solely upon positivist foundations. Let us brand virtue the product of such an education. In this way is the question that has been raised resolved.

³⁰ Obviously, I paraphrase.

However, one would like to know what constitutes a human value, one that is truly useful to humanity. But, in answer to this question, one finds chaos. It is what preserves the health of society, one says: order, authority. No, it is what destroys it: revolution is the normal state from which progress emerges. It is instruction, finally accessible to all. No, it is the development of physical education. It is the formation of an intellectual elite, though set apart from the masses. The masses, yet another name for nature! Finally, let us develop everything, in every direction and without theory. The true morality of humanity will ultimately recognize its own. Morality is that which ultimately imposes itself. To have conquered—this is the sign of what conforms to the true Humanity. Lenin is a saint, and the ancient Leonidas was never anything but an abject adventurer.³¹

Such is the logical consequence of the principle that, in the fact of moral virtue, the spontaneity of virtue is everything and personal intellectual virtue is nothing. And certain *enfants terribles* have not neglected to formulate these consequences theoretically.

After which, nothing will remain except to say with Brutus: “Virtue, you are only a name.” This is equally a solution, the radical solution this time.

St. Thomas refused this solution. And behold, the measured and wholly serene response that he opposes to these ravings: without a doubt, moral virtue can exist without the particular intellectual virtues that are Wisdom (i.e., philosophy, even moral philosophy), Science (including the science of manners), and, finally, Art. But, there is never moral virtue without understanding [intelligence] of the first principles of morality nor without personal prudence.

I

The first of these assertions is not developed by St. Thomas in his article, doubtlessly because he regards the facts recalled in the second and third objections as not suffering any instance, in virtue of the adage *contra factum non valet ratio*. For him, as for all the world besides, it is a fact of experience that morality is encountered, even in a superior state, in the unlearned (i.e., in individuals upon whom philosophy, science, and art have no hold).

The preliminary recognition of this evidence of the positive order stands directly against all these systems that we have not yet named

³¹ See Jean Weber, “Une étude réaliste de l’acte et ses conséquences morale,” *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 2 (1894): 549–60.

and that boast of obtaining moralization by means of instruction strictly speaking, by purely intellectual formation as much at the primary level as at the level of higher education, by the arts of the beautiful or technical education. According to St. Thomas, instruction does not, of itself, endow one with morality.

However, let us give close attention to what he says and to what he does not say. He does not say that instruction is useless for morality. This would be false for many reasons. However, he does say: moral virtue can exist without certain intellectual virtues. The latter point has a completely different meaning from the former.

To understand its meaning, we must defer to the second article of the current question. It is there that we find designated the author of the opinion that he combats here, and it is not yet Jules Ferry,³² but it is already Socrates.

This fine intellectual temperament, this sage of reason, held that one can never sin when knowledge [*science*] is present. What is necessary is to learn, with him, from the science of the rules of the Good. He concluded from this that every sin is, at its foundation, only ignorance. Therefore, would the power of reason over the body and the inferior faculties be, according to him, despotic? In Aristotle's opinion, it seems necessary to grant this conclusion. In any case, according to Socrates, to make a man virtuous, it suffices that his reason be perfectly instructed in the laws of the good. Thus, every virtue of man is concentrated in instructed reason. There are no virtues, properly speaking, except intellectual ones, and our prudences are sciences.

Certainly, there is a kind of gentility expressed in this conception. One would wish, for the sake of humanity's beauty, that it would be thus. But would not Socrates have taken for reality what is, in the majority of men, only the optative of his great soul?³³

Aristotle, the positive philosopher who was given the mission of making the Ideas descend from their pedestal, undertook the task of overthrowing the Socratic superman.

It is wholly and simply false, he thinks. Reason does not have this

³² [Translator's note: A nineteenth-century reformer of education in France.]

³³ [Translator's note: The optative mood expresses a wish: "If it only were the case that . . ."]

despotic power over the will and the inferior appetites. Its power is political. That, it must take into account the spontaneities and resistances of the living matter that it governs. Reason does not deal with automatons, “with slaves that do not have the power of resisting,” but with energies that are, in a certain sense, “free” and that have a certain right to contradict. Without a doubt, this right is what cannot be abdicated by a nature (even an inferior and subordinate one) that does not wish to be violated in what is natural to it.

But what will limit this right in its exercise? From this fact, the conflict is placed in man’s interior. And it will result, as St. Augustine (a noteworthy specialist in the matter) remarks in his own turn, that, many times: “Reason marches forward and what follows? A weak will, and sometimes nothing!” And St. Paul had spoken even more strongly. Therefore, virtue does not appear to be the simple activation of an instructed reason.

Aristotle, who never forgets that he is a logician, explains this avatar of the rational venturing upon the terrain of the syllogism. In the syllogism of the virtuous man, he says:

I must act according to reason.
Now, reason is to moderate its passions.
Therefore, I must moderate my passions.

The “incontinent” man, under the sway of a current or habitual passion that he is incapable of restraining, introduces a surreptitious minor premise, which eliminates the other: Now, reason is to follow my passion.

And he does not fail to speak truthfully, the unfortunate man!—as truthfully as the virtuous—for his reason, in the state in which he finds himself, cannot see and judge otherwise.³⁴ Therefore, from the speculative point of view, he is right to judge thus and, consequently,

³⁴ [Translator’s note: We see here the intimate dependence of prudence upon the moral virtues, according to the maxim, based upon book 6 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that “Qualis unusquisque est, talis finis videtur ei [As a given man is, so does the end seem to him].” And we can add: “And as the ends seem, so too do the means.” See, for example, Garrigou-Lagrange, *De beatitudine*, 389: “For example, if someone is chaste, those things that pertain to chastity seem to him to be good and suitable because they are conformed to his appetite, which has been rectified through chastity. Thus, the rectitude of the principles of moral science descend, in a vital manner, through right reason to one’s judgment concerning singular actions” (my translation).]

to hold on to the principle of rational primacy posited by Socrates—his syllogism concludes validly; it is the celebrated “syllogism of the incontinent person.”

Therefore, what one must overcome, in order to defend true virtue against this immoral sophism, is not the major premise. Aristotle’s incontinent man superbly maintains it. He says “Reason” with as much a swell in his voice as any of our contemporary rationalist educators could put in his own voice. What one must overcome is the minor premise suggested by his incontinence. Now, upon this, the most learned rational morality, philosophy, and artistic formation have no hold. What is lacking is the science, situated on the terrain of the practice of life, of the minor premises that beget and determine effective action directly. In this sense, Socrates spoke well in saying that, when science is present, one does not sin. But, it is necessary to understand that it is not the science of the general, speculative principles of reason, but instead, the practical “science”³⁵ to which a reason released from passions can arrive, touching particular truths that directly and immediately provide the virtuous decision.

Finally, philosophy, art, science and speculative morality are not decisive when it is a matter of effective morality. One can dispense with them, and this is what has been seen well by those people who have observed that, on this point of real virtue, the uneducated know it as much and more than the learned, the literati, and artists.

But this does not mean that, if—by some other means still to be discovered—this practical knowledge, the generator of morality, is found assuredly, the intellectual virtues could not reappear as complementary factors. Indeed, it is conceivable that, either by the precisions that they furnish or by the reasoned (and therefore firm and vigorous) convictions that they bring to birth, or by the state of super-elevated soul that they provoke, sciences and arts constitute a terrain of culture eminently appropriate to the development of a superior morality. Did not St. Jerome say, “Love the study of the Scriptures, and you will no longer love the vices of the flesh”?³⁶

³⁵ [Translator’s note: The quotation marks are added, as “science” here is not the same as the speculatively practical mode of discourse by which practical notions are discussed in moral philosophy and ordered according to the objective relationships found among principles and conclusions. It is obvious that Gardeil knows of this distinction and is using the term “science” broadly here.]

³⁶ Jerome, Epistle 125, to Rusticus, cited in *ST II-II*, q. 188, a. 5.

But, thus placed back in their station, the intellectual virtues have their worth by being nothing more than a luxury and an enhancement. The foundation of morality has its source elsewhere. Where is this found? This is what St. Thomas will reveal to us in his second conclusion.

II³⁷

St. Thomas assures us that moral virtue cannot exist without certain intellectual virtues—namely, the understanding of first principles of morality and prudence.

Indeed, what is a virtuous man? He is not the man who makes a profession of loving virtue, who has virtuous intentions. The virtuous man is he who, in the details of his life, always chooses the moral good in such a manner that his intentions are embodied in individual acts. The habitual choice and practice of righteousness—behold, this is what characterizes moral virtue.

Now, this choice cannot have the quality of righteousness except upon two conditions: (1) that one has firmly consented to the general exigencies of the rational Good (to what one could call the Ends of human morality); (2) that, consequently, one wills practically and effectively, in a habitual manner, the means that, in the details of life, assure the reign of these Ends.

Now, the first of these conditions presupposes that one has an understanding of the first principles of morality; the second requires the special lights of prudence.

(1) The good of human mores [*mœurs*] is their conformity with reason, which in man is the element of value, what distinguishes him from animality, from his inferior and common part. Therefore, in order to be virtuous, it is necessary to consent to the rational good. Now, to consent to it, it is necessary that one know it. Thus, behold the place made, at the point of departure of morality, for a first virtue, the understanding of the true ends of man, of his rational good.

Here is a speculative virtue, but one that has a scope that is already practical. It does not only state the fact. It decrees. There is an equivalence and a convertibility for man between the formula “the rational good is the true good of humanity” and this other, “it is necessary to act in harmony with the rational good.” The intellect that perceives them sees these two equally speculative formulas in one another.

³⁷ [Translator’s note: This is where the second half of the article, cited above, begins.]

However, the first (a simple view and statement of fact) is not efficacious. One could be interested in it as in a fact of natural human history. The second, on the contrary, concerns the will, which is always on the alert when it is a matter of the good of man. This about-face is accomplished, moreover, without loss of the speculative value, by a simple change in orientation. It is always from within its pure intellectual value, if one can speak in this manner, that our principle makes contact with voluntary action: it is from the depths of its intellectual value that it motivates voluntary action and directs it.³⁸ The first principle of morality is, in itself, purely speculative. Its practical value is a consequence. It is “the extension” of it, says St. Thomas, that means that, if the will were not “behind” [*derrière*] the intellect, its purveyor of goods, this practical value would exist only ideally and in a perspectival manner.

This intellectual virtue has nothing complicated about it, nor anything learned. It is the pure reaction of the intellect faced with these two realities placed in its presence: on the one hand, the rational Good and, on the other hand, man, capable of acting. Man, you ought to act as a man: you ought to do the good that is in harmony with that which makes you to be man—reason. For example, you ought to moderate your passions according to reason’s exigencies; you ought to place in your relations with your fellow men an order that reason approves. These principles are easy. All are capable of perceiving them. All approve them. They bear their proof within themselves, and this proof lies in these two words: Be human [*Sois homme*]!

The contemporary error finds itself, from this fact, ousted. In order to found human morality, there is no need to have recourse to a theoretical teaching, to a technical instruction. It suffices that one knows oneself and has noticed the nobility of one’s being. After this, it will be necessary to consent to the rational good that alone corresponds to this nobility. This is a virtue, a great virtue, but it is not a virtue that is acquired in schools and laboratories.

This consent is given; immediately and already, moral virtue exists, completely formed in what is fundamental to it. Indeed, at any development that it reaches, it will never be anything but a habitual consent to these dictates of the first intellectual virtue that had decreed the foundational exigencies of man’s good, the obligation to obey the rational good. Without a doubt, this universal consent does not suffice

³⁸ See Martin Gillet, *Du fondement intellectuel de la morale d’après Aristote* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1905).

to make a completely virtuous man—complete virtue consists in effective (and, hence, infinitely varied) realizations. What we wish to say is that, without this introductory rectification of human appetite, which underlies all its eventual determinations, the practical realizations would be impossible; they would have no moral meaning.

Therefore, the fundamental moral education will consist in forming THE HEART—that is, the will, envisioned in its initial act of taking pleasure in the good and the true end of the being who possesses it. It will not be a question of instruction, properly speaking. The intellectual formation of the heart depends upon a simple maieutic [i.e., clarifying one's ideas]. It consists in drawing the attention of the human being to the character of reason, which, in him, takes precedence over all the others and differentiates him from all that is inferior in him and around him to make him see that, things being so, the ends of his actions ought to be in harmony with this noble part of himself, which completes him and totalizes him as a man and penetrates his spirit with the exigencies of these ends. As regards the formation, properly speaking, of the “heart,” it consists in bringing about the natural reactions of the will in face of this evident goodness, to invite the will to consent to it. Such a consent has nothing of the character of being forced, nothing of the character of a violent action, for it is inscribed in the natural laws of a human will's unfolding. Still, it is necessary to aid him, who for the first time has arrived at this (or who returns to it), to make this personal effort. In this sense, and within their limits, our secular educators have been right to say, “Before all else, be personal.” Yes, be personal—but not by making arise from you any innate thing whatsoever by a personalism of an arbitrary will; instead, be personal by letting loose your personal effort in the direction of the natural bent of your human will, which is, before all else, rational.

This double formation of the general conscience and of the heart does not require speculation. It demands simply that one looks truly upon oneself and that one loves what one has thus seen. In this way, St. Thomas's conclusion is imposed: moral virtue cannot exist without understanding [*l'intelligence*].

(2) But, these general views of the understanding do not suffice. The moral virtue that would remain in this case would not be necessarily directive [of one's action]. We have known all these kinds of façade characters, who extol the true rational good, who even desire it, and whose actions contradict his principles and aspirations. “The voice of Jacob, but the hands of Esau,” says the Bible (Gen 27:22).

A virtue, in order to be such—that is to say, in order to represent the final word on what one can do in its domain—(*virtus ultimum potentiae*) must be not only directive, which could take place in fits and starts, but must be necessarily directive. It must leave nothing to chance in its execution of virtuous intentions. It must not rely on insufficiently reflective inspirations, upon any impulses whatsoever, which sometimes can be good and at other times are in contradiction with the dictates of general conscience. “One does everything in conscience,” one of my students said to me sadly one day, having become one of the Masters of the Moral Theology of St. Thomas.

What is this instrument? St. Thomas calls it prudence, which he regards here only as an intellectual virtue. It is known that, on the other hand, he classes it among the moral virtues. We will see why. But, in any case, the pending question, the necessity of the intellectual virtues for moral virtues, can appeal only to intellectual values. Now, nobody can doubt that prudence holds these latter. And hence, St. Thomas can designate it as the predestined light of our choice of details.

Indeed, how, without a new intellectual virtue, can I obtain something more precise than the general dictates of the understanding of moral principles so that, in each case that is presented, often requiring the taking of an immediate position, I choose at the right moment and, as the source, the part that is in harmony with the right intentions of my superior moral conscience if I do not have in me, wholly formed in advance and in a habitual state, a light that makes me discern, in the maze of circumstances in which it is enveloped, where the just solution lies, that which responds to my virtuous intentions?

One of the functions of prudence is precisely to appraise and judge, by force of reflection, at least by way of a counsel held interiorly, where the facts are sized up in the light of principles, the just rational part, which will illuminate and direct the will in its choices and make of it a moral will upon the very terrain of life’s complexity. A virtue that is no longer theoretical but, so to speak, tactical, at once supple like the changing matter of human acts, all the details of which it registers and weighs out, and rigid like the first principles of moral actions, about which its sole ambition is to decree the exigencies—does not prudence have all that is needed for constituting the instrument of transmission that we are seeking?

Now, in this illuminative role, it behaves like an intellectual virtue. Therefore, St. Thomas concludes reasonably that moral virtue, which is essentially directive, cannot do without the intellectual virtue of prudence.

This illuminative role is not the only one; I have not forgotten this fact. If the verdict of prudence remained in the lines of intellectuality, proposing (in a manner that was so authoritative and urgent) only the true and rational solutions of our particular choices, this intellectual virtue would be powerless against the passion's caprices, powerless against the substitution of minor premises of concupiscence for its rational minor premises, which the incontinent man fraudulently introduces into the moral syllogism. Therefore, the conclusion of this syllogism yearns to be not only proposed as a duty, but imposed as a command. It does not suffice to say to oneself, "It is necessary to do this or that." It is necessary to say imperatively to oneself, "Do it." And for that, it is necessary that the prudential verdict be stopped and solidified, as it were, by a voluntary determination that pours out its absolute inclination onto conduct. Thus is it that the intellectual virtue of prudence is metamorphosed into a moral virtue. But, to follow it in this prolongation of itself would be to encroach upon the second article that we ought to comment upon: whether there is intellectual virtue without moral virtue?

What we have said suffices, it seems to us, to refute the idea of moral formation that we have qualified as being Boeotian and naturalist without feeling ourselves obliged to accept methods that are intellectualist, scientific, or artistic. Neither nature nor temperament, however virtuous one may suppose them to be, suffices for securing moral virtue—no more than do discipline and passive obedience, which remove the light of reason from us from us in order to direct us. Whether springing from servility or from love, the sway of rulers, who have not, as far as I know, confiscated the whole of morality, can give rise to the worst errors. But the speculative sciences, instruction, and artistic education, are just as useless and powerless.

Moral virtue is born from an intellect that is open to the true exigencies of the good. It is constituted in its fundamental being by a firm consent of the will to these exigencies, concentrated in this evident principle: "Man, act according to reason." Finally, it takes shape under the influence of the intellectual virtue of prudence, which, with a rigidity combined with flexibility, illuminates and directs, from within its speculative lights, practical choices concerning the details of life. N-V

Book Reviews

Christ's Descent into Hell: John Paul II, Joseph Ratzinger, and Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Theology of Holy Saturday by Lyra Pitstick (*Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016*), xiv + 135 pp.

LYRA PITSTICK, otherwise known as Alyssa L. Pitstick, the author of the provocative *Light in Darkness: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Catholic Doctrine of Christ's Descent into Hell*, the fruit of her doctoral dissertation at the Angelicum, has produced another, slimmer volume critical of Balthasar's project as she sees it. The book opens with a quick review of Balthasar's theology of the descent, followed by two chapters on Joseph Ratzinger's own comments on the descent and on Balthasar's theology, one covering his statements prior to his pontifical elevation and one addressing those subsequent. The following chapter concerns the statements of John Paul II on the descent, which she contrasts with both Ratzinger and Balthasar, but mostly Balthasar. Next, she runs through the remarks of Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, a former student of Ratzinger and undersecretary at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith commissioned by Pope John Paul with the drafting of the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Although Schönborn is a theologian in his own right, she touches on him only insofar as his *Introduction to the Catechism*, together with Ratzinger, is sometimes invoked in defense of Balthasar's orthodoxy with regard to the descent. Finally, she consolidates and elaborates her own comments on the respective positions of Balthasar, Ratzinger, and John Paul in two chapters entitled "The Crux of the Problem" and "The Crux, Continued," the latter of which directly addresses an issue oftentimes brought to the fore by Balthasarians: the praise lavished upon Balthasar by both Pope John Paul II and then-Cardinal Ratzinger in the wake of his untimely death (i.e., just days prior to his awaited honorary elevation to the cardinalate). These seven chapters are bookended by a very brief intro-

duction in which she laments that the *International Journal of Systematic Theology* declined to publish criticisms she offered of an article there published by the late Fr. Edward T. Oakes, S.J., in which he defends Balthasar's doctrine of the descent against her earlier critique in *Light in Darkness*, and a conclusion that simply recaps the whole, as well as a number of appendices containing short magisterial documents, and lastly, a short supplementary text she wrote in response to an invitation from a student magazine at Gonzaga University.

On the whole, the book is to be commended for its valiant work in both surveying the various occasions on which Ratzinger and John Paul address Christ's descent into hell and dealing with the misbegotten attempts of some to canonize Balthasar's thought on the basis of a few accolades from the two Pontiffs, who themselves tower above so many notable Catholic thinkers in the modern era. Although somewhat repetitive, her thoughts on the differences between these three theologians echo thoughts I have harbored on the matter for quite some time, albeit with a few key divergences. The ambition of such an undertaking is laudable, but—and this may not offend the casual reader—her recourse to secondary literature is minimal. I cannot help but think that she may have benefitted from consulting major works sympathetic to Balthasar's project by authors such as Nicholas J. Healy, David C. Schindler, Rodney A. Howsare, Cyril O'Regan, Gerard F. O'Hanlon, S.J., Aidan Nichols, O.P., and John Seward, author of the curt but illuminating book of reflections on Balthasar's triduum theology, *The Mysteries of March*. Her only interlocutor seems to be Edward Oakes, an esteemed Balthasarian indeed, but without much in the way of direct engagement.

In any case, the primary downfall of the work is a lack of theological nuance, particularly with regard to the constitution of sacred tradition and the composition of what one might call a "charitable" interpretation of Balthasar. As one can turn to patristic and medieval sources with an eye to affirming one's own position, a fault of which Balthasar sometimes may be guilty (at least, according to such renowned patristic scholars as Brian Daley, S.J.), or with a more judicious eye, the obverse is also true: one might look at Balthasar's controversial theology of the descent through the narrow lens of his *Mysterium Paschale*, "a quickly written [essay]," in his words,¹ or the German series *Mysterium Salutis*, or engage the whole of his

¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theologik*, vol. 2, *Wahrheit Gottes* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1985), 315n1.

work, looking for points of development and emphasizing potential places of convergence with “the tradition,” where room for clarification in search of conformity to orthodox doctrine might be found. Of course, when one’s understanding of doctrinal orthodoxy is correspondingly restrictive, the presupposition is that tradition is monolithic, and so is verbal signification. The fact is that Balthasar’s theological writings are shot through with mystical language, metaphorical predication, a dialectical–dialogical conception of analogous discourse, and even rhetorical excess. Pitstick’s reasoning, by contrast, is simply linear, block by block, literal predication after literal predication. Some would argue that Pitstick’s approach is therefore more properly theological than Balthasar’s, while others will insist on the intrinsically mystical character of theological discourse. Perhaps there is a middle ground. But alas, there is no discussion of these matters in her work, and I suspect that any such discussion would be equally un-nuanced—one need not be a Hegelian to object to lack of nuance, after all!

Most disappointing is the missed opportunity to discern where Balthasar and Ratzinger may converge so as to draw forth a theology of the descent that is, yes, different from the Tridentine one, but not in complete contradiction to it. In other words, John Paul’s Wednesday Catechesis on Christ’s descent into hell may be reconciled, at least, with Ratzinger’s quasi-Balthasarian theology of Holy Saturday. Pitstick is right to note that Ratzinger explicitly states his reluctance throughout his theological career to agree with Balthasar’s reflections on the descent wholesale (11), despite their close friendship and collaboration. But she treats Ratzinger as though he were a novice theologian only gradually coming to the realization that “the tradition” contains a theology opposed to Balthasar’s. Ratzinger does tend to leave Holy Saturday as a mystery of silence somehow huddled between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, but he also acknowledges that the sufferings of Christ culminate with the event of death itself and that his being dead is also commemorated on Saturday before the celebration of his glorious resurrection is inaugurated on the vigil. Pitstick is fixated on the “historical” descent without considering its essentially trans-historical significance. For Ratzinger and for Balthasar, time is not so much a linear reality that traverses earth, Sheol (or the realm of the dead), and purgatory as it is for Pitstick. Jesus did not report anything that happened between the *time* of his death and the *time* of his resurrection, nor is there any historical

record of Christ's descent into hell, only a theological *image* in 1 Peter 3:19—a word used consistently by both Ratzinger and Balthasar in reference to the descent and contested by Pitstick on the grounds of realism, a veritable red herring, given the fact that even the Catholic epistles sometimes utilize parabolic language. Hence, there is no definitive doctrine on the descent (as Paul Griffiths has shown), and speculations may abound as to what “happened” in Christ's soul during his “time” in the netherworld.

In line with what I have already written on the matter, it might be argued that, in the very moment of death, an event whose characteristic “moment” is supremely existential, Christ experienced the relative infinity of a timeless abandonment that exceeds even the hell of human hopelessness without actually being deprived of the life of charity. In fact, his suffering is proportionate to the measure of *caritas* in his soul. What is memorialized on Holy Saturday is precisely this *caritas* that has “undergirded and undercut” (*unterfassung*) the hellish misery due to sin, having become “accursed for us” (Gal 3:13), in order to redeem mankind from its deepest, darkest hours. At the same time, it may be affirmed with John Paul that, *after* this “moment” of solidarity with the dead in the traumatic event that is death itself, the soul of Christ enjoyed perfect vision of the Father with whom he never lost objective communion, which would soon overflow into his corporeal reality in the at once historical and trans-historical event of resurrection.

Concerning interpretation of Balthasar himself, one example of Pitstick's literalism appears on the very first page of the first chapter, where she insists that distinguishing between sin and sinner for Balthasar means giving entitative qualities to sin itself, which Balthasar merely does not want to undermine as a non-reality (with some who interpret Augustine wrongly). True, Balthasar's theology of sin is not very robust—it would benefit greatly from Jacques Maritain's (and company's) rendition of Aquinas's account of the origin of moral evil. But there is no indication whatsoever that Balthasar thinks, as Pitstick later claims, in accord with her analyses again in *Light in Darkness*, that the divine Word suspends its union with the dead human nature of Christ to become hypostatically united to sin itself in the hell of the damned (see especially 3–4), a ridiculous notion based on a literalistic reading of just a few passages in which the mystic Adrienne von Speyr is quoted. Every literate theologian knows that the mystical language even of canonized saints and doctors of the Church can be

read on occasion as heretical, if one really tries hard to be the inquisitor. Of course, there are other straightforward orthodox readings of the same language—that is precisely the point. N-V

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Ethical Sex: Sexual Choices and Their Nature and Meaning by Anthony McCarthy (*South Bend, IN: Fidelis Press, 2016*), 326 pp.

A DOMINANT CONTEMPORARY ATTITUDE toward the human body might be said to be totalitarian in nature. This attitude not only embraces the physical members of the human body but extends its reach even to the natural inclinations. It treats human bodily reality “as a raw datum” that is “devoid of any meaning and moral values until freedom has shaped it in accordance with its design” (John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* §48). According to this view, the human body is external to the human person and, as such, simply furnishes the material condition for the exercise of free choice. The anthropology in question is dualistic in that it divorces human personhood from human embodiment. Reason is thus left free to manipulate the bodily conditions of human being, all too often in ways contrary to the indications inscribed within those very conditions themselves.

The recent significant trend in Western countries to legislate for homosexual “marriage”—or even, in the case of Ireland, to enshrine this “right” within the constitution—renders even more important the intellectual engagement with the inclination to the procreation and education of offspring, as St. Thomas puts it (*Summa theologiae* [ST] I-II, q. 94, a. 2), that is to say, the intellectual engagement in sexual ethics. One reason for a rational defense of Catholic sexual ethics is precisely the fact that recent developments are the political expression of a dualistic anthropology and are, as such, as I have intimated, totalitarian in character.

Anthony McCarthy’s book, which offers such a defense, engages with a wide array of authors philosophical, theological, and literary. Included in this array are figures such as Aristotle, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Immanuel Kant, John Paul II, Aurel Kolnai, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Josef Pieper, Roger Scruton, Janet Smith, Bernard Williams, William Shakespeare, Robert Sokolowski, Michel Foucault, and Peter Singer, to mention just a selection. Manifold

arguments are adduced in support of what ultimately constitutes a Catholic sexual ethic, and countervailing arguments are rebutted in analytic style.

The first chapter of the book offers a sustained critique of the contention on the part of New Natural Law theorists that contraception is contra-life. The author then proceeds in the next chapter to look at natural law, functions, and teleology. Arguments are adduced in defense of teleology and of the idea that any particular organism has a function. This chapter proceeds to sustain the intimate link between the functioning proper to human beings and human flourishing. In this regard, the author remains alert to the demands that attend the hylomorphic structure of human being, albeit with an exception noted below. The importance of embodiment and teleology carry over into McCarthy's discussion of marriage and meaning. The notions of embodiment and teleology ground the objective reality of the conjugal act. Indeed, for McCarthy, "it is marriage which is that standard with respect to which sexual activity is judged to be good or not" (107). I would have to disagree with this formulation, however. Heterosexual marriage, rather, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for sexual activity to be good, a point the author would no doubt accept.

Teleological considerations flow over into the discussion of sexual desire. In this regard, McCarthy offers some useful reflections concerning pornography and fantasy. Thus, for example, with regard to the latter, he observes that "the moral demands of the real world are not being adequately met when an effect is deliberately produced which properly belongs to a different cause" (160). Teleological considerations also enter into the final chapter on love, virtue, and vice, as also does the notion of embodiment. McCarthy builds on Karol Wojtyła / John Paul II's observation that the human body in itself is not shameful and that neither are sensual reactions and sensuality in general. Thus, writes McCarthy, "it cannot be objectifying simply to appreciate or be aroused by the bodily features of (in particular) one's spouse, which surely constitute the valuable sexual attributes of an inherently valuable person in a marital unit geared towards the couple's social and biological fulfilment" (187). Again, the *telos* of the sexual act, it is argued, is essentially marital. While all lack of respect or objectification is anti-teleological in nature, this is particularly so in the case of sexual activity that is not properly ordered within a marital context.

The foregoing brief delineation of the structure and content of McCarthy's book shows forth what is valuable in his work, which is his appreciation of the notions of embodiment and teleology in formulating an adequate sexual ethic. Many creative arguments are marshalled with a view to defending a Catholic position. In elaborating these arguments, the author, as already intimated, engages an impressive range of figures from the domains of philosophy, theology, and literature.

There are however some negative criticisms to be leveled at the author's laudable efforts. Thus, one gets the sense at times that the author is not as familiar with the thought of St. Thomas as one would wish a Catholic philosopher engaged in sexual ethics to be. Perhaps this lack is a downside of the wide range of thinkers with whom he dialogues. Thus, in referencing *ST* II-II, qq. 23–27, McCarthy writes: "For Aquinas, all kinds of love are grounded in the will (including desire), which provides the initial framework for seeing different forms of love as integrated" (171). Prescinding from the confused nature of this formulation (is it "all kinds of love" or "the will" that includes "desire"?) it is simply wrong to state that Thomas thinks that all kinds of love are grounded in the will. The confines of this review do not allow an adumbration of Thomas's teaching concerning love. The following quotation, however, demonstrates that, for Thomas, the notion of love extends well beyond the human will: "Now to love God above all things is natural to man and to every nature, not only rational but irrational, and even to inanimate nature according to the manner of love which can belong to each creature" (*ST* I-II, q. 109, a. 3).¹

A little further on, McCarthy asserts: "For Aquinas the approval expressed in the statement 'it's good that you exist' is an expression of will" (172). No doubt Thomas would agree with this idea, but I know of nowhere where he actually formulates it explicitly.

Another point pertains to the natural inclinations, concerning which the author arguably departs from the logical demands of a thoroughgoing hylomorphism. Thus he writes that "a reproductive organ has a 'pre-rational' inclination towards its proper object (its function)" (91), in spite of his general insistence on the psychosomatic unity of the human person. (Admittedly, there are scholars of St. Thomas's thought who espouse this view.) Elsewhere, he

¹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, vol. 2 (Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1948).

repeats this idea in a more general form: “While we might see certain ‘instincts’ as ‘drives’ towards the good, they are pre-rational” (259n3). However, the hylomorphic structure of the human person, in my view, entails that the inclinations that man shares with other creatures are subsumed into the reality of the rational soul—the form of human being—and thus can never be simply pre-rational in his case. While the natural inclinations are not the result of deliberate choice, they do nevertheless seem to pertain to what Thomas means by simple willing (*simplex voluntas*).

One final observation: this book is written by a philosopher. Its deliberations begin in earnest with a discussion of “thick” and “thin” concepts, a distinction gleaned from analytic philosophical analysis. The first thinker quoted in this regard is Bernard Williams, an analytic philosopher. Given the sharp distinction between philosophy and theology that is the hallmark of much contemporary philosophy—lamentable and all as it is—it would seem that, as a matter of strategy, it would have been more effective for the author to keep a distance from quoting Catholic Church teaching. At any rate, as John Paul II points out in *Fides et Ratio*, a harmony obtains between faith and reason so that right reason naturally coheres with what the faith teaches us. A chance to evangelize contemporary culture has perhaps been lost precisely by the author’s explicit recourse to faith. This would be a pity, since his obvious philosophically ecumenical spirit deserves to be reciprocated. NV

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Priestly Celibacy: Theological Foundations by Gary Selin (*Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2016*), 210 pp.

PRIESTLY CELIBACY IS one of the more intriguing topics in Western Culture for a number of reasons, the largest being our preoccupation with ideas about and experiences of our human sexual power. A culture so obsessed with sexual activity becomes equally obsessed with those who choose to abstain from it. This cultural stance gives rise to a cynical curiosity about celibates, one that asks repeatedly, “how could you possibly live such a life?” and in the end says, “I don’t believe you are living such a life; no one could.” Selin’s book may not heal such cynicism, but it will anoint the intellect with a balm, making such cynicism difficult even to contemplate. Celibacy *is* livable—but

in a supernatural way. Specifically, celibacy is livable for normal men who have first become stunned by the depth and beauty of Christ and have heard him ask one question: “May I live my spousal mysteries over again in your body for the sake of the Church?” Hence, the normal is taken up into the supernatural.

When I was a teenager, I used to think men became priests, and hence celibate, because they “couldn’t get girls to like them,” because they thought, “I cannot get married; I might as well become a priest.” This was the “plan B” theory of celibacy. Were there men who chose celibate priesthood as “plan B”? Probably there were—and still are. But in light of Selin’s work, we see clearly how such a choice is not the gift that is being offered to priests. The gift that a priest is receiving and the choice he is making in response is a positive one, not a negative one. The gift is a man’s choice to allow Christ to live his spousal mystery over again in his body, as Blessed Dom Marmion once said so beautifully. The celibate priest receives a gift. It is the gift of participation in Christ’s own availability to serve the needs of his Bride, the Church. The priest is taken up into the spousal mysteries of Christ, his relationship to the Church, and his own carrying into the present a foretaste of heavenly freedom. With the celibate priest, Christ shares his own singular heart, thus effecting a living configuration between priest and Christ, a dynamic self-giving of priest toward the Church, and a prophetic sign for the baptized to contemplate as it hints at the single-heartedness of all in heaven.

Selin’s work could usher in a new day in seminary curriculum on priestly life and identity. Building upon the classic studies of celibacy by Cochini, Heid, and now John Paul II, along with the Second Vatican Council and Paul VI, Selin unveils an image of celibacy that carries profound theological depth and surprising personal and spiritual promise. In under two hundred pages, the author explores the theological history of celibacy, placing its vibrancy within close proximity to the mystery of Christ’s self-donation to his Church. For Selin, following *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (1965), celibacy exists as a supernatural good within a Christological, ecclesiological, and eschatological context. Viewing it from within such a context is the good news for seminary studies, as this book gives the reader a clear and engaging intellectual grasp of the nature of this disciplined charismatic life. Selin acknowledges the institutional benefits of priestly celibacy for the Church, but what comes to the fore most in his research is the personal motivation for such a life. This emphasis upon a mature personal motive for entering the celibate priesthood reveals

more clearly the true divine intent behind such a call: personal happiness in the service of the Church. Celibacy is not superior to marriage in some moral way (i.e., “universal call to holiness”), but it remains a gifted theological life offered to those who can “accept it” (Matt 19:12). Selin reviews the anti-corporeal corruptions of some views of celibacy, articulates the meaning of “ritual purity,” and describes how celibacy is the priest’s own embrace of purity of heart. This purity of heart is a gift from God and is effected in practice through the priest’s charitable presence in ministry.

The book also traces the history of clerical continence as it paved the way for celibacy becoming the priestly norm in the Latin Church, secured by the teachings of the Council of Trent. Rather paradoxically, as celibacy becomes the presbyteral *norm*, there blooms a deeper theological grasp of its gifted nature, rather than it simply being a disciplinary imposition. As the theological history unfolds (papal teaching, Max Thurian, Odo Casel, Cardinal Alfons Maria Stickler, etc.), Selin does an effective job of helping the reader notice the ever-growing clarity in the Church’s mind that celibacy is a man’s share in Christ’s own embrace of loving availability to the Father and the Church. And further, due to the rich historical and theological research on celibacy, the Church comes to grasp that celibacy secures a deeper freedom in priests so they can abide in “close identification with Christ.” What Selin gives to seminarians and their formators is a context within which to explore the gift of celibacy as an opening to both intellectual and affective union with Christ.

Selin recognizes that celibacy is neither part of the essence of priesthood nor necessary for its functioning, but rather a way of embodying priesthood that yields rich veins of spiritual ore benefiting both priest and Christ’s Bride, the Church. Priestly celibacy is a share in Christ’s own radical availability to serve the needs of the Bride, and consequently, the priest becomes oriented to Christ as to a font from which he receives the grace to live such radical availability himself. This availability benefits the Church as it receives the ministrations it desires from a man who is possessed by the singular heart of Christ in his own love of the Bride. Finally, the celibate priest carries to his people, in his own body, a sign of the relative value of all that is on earth. In his priestly celibacy, he prophetically points to the fulfillment of all human desire; fulfillment ultimately reached in God alone. The celibate presents to the married layman a true revelation that, after death, the believer is no longer taken up into sacramental marriage, but into its origin: the marriage between

Christ and his Church. Though it is a rich analogy, the nuptial image for priestly celibacy is not sufficient to express the mystery of priestly self-sacrifice, so Selin also explores the meaning of priesthood under the rubrics of Head–Body distinction, Friend of the Bridegroom, Spiritual Father, and Good Shepherd.

The book unfolds in four chapters, tracing the development of priestly celibacy, its place in magisterial teaching, its intellectual and spiritual renewal when understood in its Christological, ecclesiological, and eschatological meanings, and its relationship to the Eucharist, on which I will make one further note. In light of the eschatological truths present in both priestly celibacy (Christ’s own way of being among us and his Bridegroom status in Heaven) and the Eucharist (the anticipation of heaven and the wedding feast of the Lamb), the priestly identity is less ambiguously grasped in the celibate state than in the married priesthood. In the celibate state, the priest clearly is configured to the Christ, who is for the one Bride, the Church. As Benedict XVI noted in *Sacramentum Caritatis*: “The choice of celibacy has first and foremost a nuptial meaning; it is a profound identification with the heart of Christ the Bridegroom who gives his life for the His Bride” (§24). This truth is most clearly expressed as the celibate priest is taken up into the Eucharistic sacrifice as one who is configured to Christ’s own self donation to the Bride. It is this donation that fuels the pastoral charity that is a priest’s own way of being.

This book is a positive, inspiring, and scholarly feast with which the seminarian and priest can study and pray. It contributes a dynamic and fascinating theological understanding of priestly celibacy as it focuses us upon celibacy’s hope: to share in Christ’s own holy way of living and serving. N.V

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Did the Saviour See the Father? Christ, Salvation, and the Vision of God by Simon Francis Gainé, O.P. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), viii + 221pp.

AT THE OUTSET of the first chapter, Simon Francis Gainé asks: “Was the Word made flesh blessed from the very first moment of the incarnation with the vision of the essence of the triune God in his human mind?” (3). In particular, did Christ possess the beatific vision

before his resurrection, Ascension, and glorification? These are the theological questions Gaine seeks to answer in this book. The traditional answer to this related set of questions is, of course, yes, but contemporary Catholic theology is far from a consensus on this issue. In fact, if one could pick out a majority consensus about the theological teaching of Christ's beatific vision from conception, it would certainly be negative, at which Gaine somewhat playfully hints in his first chapter title, "No one thinks that anymore!" In that chapter, Gaine tells the story of how the theological teaching of Christ's beatific vision from conception transitioned from a state of nearly universal adherence among Catholic theologians to a minority position during the second half of the twentieth century. After the Second Vatican Council and the near-total "collapse" of Thomism's influence, most theologians have argued that the teaching that Christ saw the Father throughout his earthly sojourn has deleterious consequences for the integrity of Christ's human nature, among plenty of other putative problems (4). Anyone familiar with recent literature on this dogmatic question knows just how varied these criticisms are and the diversity of the problems critics identify in the teaching. The criticisms generally coalesce around the concern to foreground the similarities of Christ to us in his humanity, rather than obscuring them, as they think the traditional teaching does. To address these criticisms and "ask whether there might be a form in which the Thomist view was still viable," Gaine first thought of writing this book over a decade before its publication (12). He thought a work clarifying traditional Thomistic teaching was necessary because there seemed to be no explicit support for it in the most recent magisterium. However, in 2006, Benedict XVI approved the "notification" against two of the works of Jon Sobrino for treating Christ too much like a mere prophet with exemplary human faith. According to the notification, Sobrino had overlooked the significance of Christ's extraordinary knowledge of the Father. Thus claiming magisterial support for his argument, Gaine furnishes an account of how Scripture and Tradition render Christ's human knowledge, suggesting that modern criticisms of Christ's beatific vision fall short of their mark.

After sketching the state of modern Catholic theology on Christ's beatific vision in chapter 1, Gaine responds to the most prevalent argument against the doctrine from its supposed absence in the Bible. First, Gaine reminds us that one of the motivations for Karl Rahner's dogmatic inference of Christ's immediate self-consciousness was essentially to remove the question of Christ's human knowledge from the guild of historical-critical scholars who had called the traditional

teaching into question. The result was that Scripture became regarded as of little relevance to this theological issue. So, Gainé sets out to define “how far the Bible’s witness is relevant to this debate among Catholic theologians” (15). Given Scripture’s position as an essential source of theology, Gainé argues that modern theologians should not set Scripture in opposition to dogmatic theology, as Rahner may have done (18). Rather, the divine inspiration of Scripture should lead us to conclude that whatever Scripture presents tells us “the honest truth about Jesus” (18). Gainé then sketches biblical teaching on the beatific vision in general, noting the theme of sight as it relates to God’s presence, and the key here is the biblical intuition that seeing God this side of heaven is impossible aside from grace. Then Gainé provides an exegesis of key texts like 1 John 3:2 and 1 Corinthians 13:10–12, arguing that both texts have the Father as the object of the beatific vision that takes place by grace in the eschaton (31–32). Having established the character of the beatific vision generally, Gainé examines the Gospels for their presentation of Christ’s knowledge of the Father, which he argues is essential to grasping Christ’s teaching ministry: “Human teaching presupposes knowledge in the human mind of the teacher. Were it otherwise, Christ’s human mind would in some important respect be redundant” (39). Gainé observes that, if we did not postulate extraordinary knowledge in Christ’s human mind, then the “whole picture” of Christ the revealer “would lose all plausibility,” even if Christ’s beatific vision is not explicitly taught in Scripture (40).

Chapter 3 responds to the objection that the traditional teaching is not present in the Church Fathers. This is a very important objection, since it is a principle of Catholic theology that the interpretation of the Scriptures must not contradict the Fathers (43). It is also significant because the Fathers do not discuss the question of Christ’s human knowledge much. First, Gainé responds to Thomas Weinandy’s “Nestorian criticism” that the beatific vision is inapposite to the Son, since the saints alone hold the beatific vision (the vision of God), and not God. Gainé thinks a better way to formulate the classical position is to say that the beatific vision pertains to “one with a created mind,” not to one who is merely “not God” (44). Furthermore, Gainé observes, there is no evidence that Nestorian or Antiochene theologians held to the beatific vision in Christ’s person. In fact, Theodoret of Cyrus seems to have taught that the man Jesus did not possess extraordinary knowledge. Second, Gainé treats the differences of opinion about the beatific vision itself among the Fathers.

And finally, he turns to a reference in Augustine's *Contra Maximinum* and to Fulgentius's reply to Thrasamund to suggest there are patristic arguments for extraordinary knowledge in Christ's human mind (55 and 68–69).

Having established that scriptural and patristic data contain inchoate information about Christ's human knowledge, in chapter 4, Gaine rebuts the charge that the traditional teaching is poor speculative theology. In many ways, this chapter functions as the core of the book, since it lays out the scriptural data of Christ's ministry in chapter 2 and uses the theology of Thomas Aquinas to explain how the beatific vision renders intelligible the requirements for Christ's human nature to fulfill the role as teacher. The argument draws upon two principles of Aquinas's theology. First, drawing on Aquinas's Trinitarian theology, Gaine argues that, since the divine persons are coextensive with the divine essence, all three divine persons remain the object of the beatific vision (82). Since the divine persons are known relative to the others (e.g., the Father is known as the Father of the Son), it is possible to distinguish the persons from one another and to have a particular divine person as the focus of the beatific vision, according to context. Second, in Aquinas's theology, the beatific vision is an intellectual act of perceiving the divine essence that is constitutive of the proper end of human happiness. This act is made possible by the divine essence itself, and is thus an act of grace. This act of grace never violates natural reason: the beatific vision is always knowledge received according to the mode of the receiver (84). From these two observations, the incarnate Son, who possesses a created human mind, is thus able to see the Father intimately according to that mode of receiving. Moreover, since the Son is the Word who proceeds by way of knowledge from the Father, it is proper to think of the Son receiving divine knowledge in his created mind as it participates in that knowledge. Gaine insightfully argues that, whenever the Gospel of John focuses on Christ's knowledge, it also focuses on the Father for that reason: the Son receives extraordinary divine knowledge in a filial way (see esp. John 8:14 and 55 [86]). He receives this knowledge by grace appropriated to the Holy Spirit (91–94).

Gaine's interpretation of Aquinas and his position come into fuller view as the book's cumulative argument progresses. He concurs with Maritain and Lonergan that Christ needs finite concepts by which to translate the inexpressible beatific vision, but he differs from them regarding those concepts' origin. Lonergan argued the communicable concepts came from Christ's acquired knowledge based on his senses.

Maritain supposed that they came from his infused knowledge and that the beatific vision was contained in a supra-consciousness that rendered it available to Christ's human consciousness. However, Gaine believes Christ gets these finite, communicable concepts from the beatific vision itself, since Aquinas believed the blessed could draw intelligible *species* from the vision.

With the beginning of chapter 5 also comes the beginning of the book's second part. The first four chapters build a cumulative case that much is found in Scripture and Tradition to support the traditional teaching. Part 2 addresses various claims that "there is much that *is* found in Scripture and Tradition that necessarily excludes this vision for theology" (14). Chapter 5 addresses the claim that Jesus is portrayed in Scripture as having faith. According to this line of critique, faith is necessarily excluded from the beatific vision, since faith is commensurate to that of a human sojourner while the beatific vision applies to one who has arrived at the end of the sojourn. Here Gaine interrogates the Bible's use of the term πίστις, especially the phrase πίστις χριστοῦ, the interpretation of which is hotly contested among exegetes. Gaine notes that the verb πίστευω never has Christ as its subject (109). Furthermore, the patristic witness nearly unanimously evinces favor toward the objective genitive rendering of πίστις χριστοῦ: "faith in Christ" (110). He also argues that faith and vision of God are necessarily incompatible in Scripture (115–20). He engages the "third way" proposals of "Christic light" by Torrell, Galot's use of "infused knowledge" by way of mystical experience, and Weinandy's "hypostatic vision" and suggests that all three maintain Christ's indirect knowledge of the divine essence. The problem with positing indirect knowledge in Christ, for Gaine, is that, in all three cases, it assumes the distinction between the limitedness of faith and the fullness of the beatific vision. Either Jesus's knowledge is just that, or it is not. When he teaches authoritatively about the Father in John's Gospel, it is clear that either he sees with fullness those things that the Father reveals or he accepts that knowledge without seeing it on faith, "on divine authority" (119). The point is that indirect knowledge cannot do the conceptual work it is employed to do if the distinction between faith and vision is assumed. While Scripture neither proclaims Christ's beatific vision nor attributes faith to him, Gaine thinks the weight of evidence strongly tends toward Christ's beatific vision, rather than his imperfection of faith.

Chapter 6 asks how Christ's normal human cognition relates to his supernatural knowledge gained from the beatific vision. Critics like

Gerald O'Collins claim the two are incompatible. Gaine investigates the biblical witness again, asking what sort of identifiers might pick out "natural human knowledge" in Christ. It is well-known that texts like Luke 2:52 and Mark 13:32 identify human growth and ignorance, respectively. Then Gaine observes that Aquinas and modern critics are united on teaching that Christ acquired human knowledge (135). Rather than following Aquinas in teaching the total perfection of Christ's acquired knowledge by adulthood, Gaine suggests that Christ's acquired knowledge can be understood as perfect "relative to the needs of the particular moment," and is thus not infinite or exhaustive (136). Such a proposal builds consensus with critics. Gaine then challenges the putative mutual exclusivity of beatific knowledge and natural knowledge common among contemporary critics. He argues that the vision of divine transcendence given in beatific knowledge should never be confused with ordinary human knowledge, since the former proceeds by way of the divine essence while the latter is fitted for "translation" of unutterable beatific knowledge by ordinary human concepts and language (151). Thus, Gaine sees Aquinas's teaching of Christ's infused knowledge as superfluous to the perfection of his mind, since Christ's human nature is always perfect relative to the needs of the moment. It must be noted that Gaine does not reject infused knowledge in Christ altogether.

Chapter 7 challenges the claim that Christ's beatific vision renders the volitional freedom constitutive of human nature inoperable. Here Gaine invokes the theological principle that grace perfects nature, and thus the beatific vision perfects or enhances human freedom (161). Rather than being unbecoming to his earthly task of salvation, Christ's beatific vision enables him to inhabit the heavenly freedom necessary to accomplish our salvation (176–77). In the vision of God, Christ sees all those for whom he will die and loves them all by the same act. He knows and loves them by the same act of knowing and loving God, establishing supreme charity in him out of which he acts most freely (177).

Chapter 8 concludes the book with "what is often perceived as the most powerful argument" against the traditional teaching: the joy of the beatific vision excludes suffering and the negative passions entailed by suffering (179–80). Drawing on Scripture, Gaine establishes that Christ experienced human passions like joy, anger, and sorrow, and following Aquinas, he suggests these passions were "co-assumed" for our salvation (186). Gaine also follows Aquinas in distinguishing between Christ's higher reason, which experiences

intellectual joy in the vision of God, from the lower reason, which can experience pain and sorrow (189). For Aquinas, these two orders of knowledge do not “compete for space,” since they “have very different objects, and they can perfectly well co-exist, the former in the intellectual and the latter in the sensory appetite” (189). The problem that arises here is just how Christ’s intellectual joy could redound into the appetitive powers of his lower reason in the midst of suffering, as would be fitting in Aquinas’s philosophical anthropology (190). Aquinas allows for general instances where intellectual joy may not redound into the lower reason, but Christ would be an exception to the general rule that the beatific vision always redounds into the sensory appetite (197). Following Aquinas’s impulse, Gaine suggests that, because of Christ’s vision of the divine essence and all that pertained to his earthly mission therein, his great charity impels him to suffer on behalf of others. Far from being exclusive of his intellectual joy in the beatific vision, the immense suffering is taken up by the Son precisely because of that ecstatic vision of the Father.

One of the best attributes of Gaine’s book is the way he manages to integrate and respond to nearly all the major recent criticisms of Christ’s beatific vision while maintaining a logical unity throughout the entirety of the book. Each chapter lays the conceptual groundwork for the one to follow, laying out the substance of the theological desiderata in a way that anticipates a response to other current objections to the doctrine in following chapters. Gaine also helpfully repeats core claims from previous chapters as he develops the next one, assisting the reader in following his cumulative argument. While Gaine’s arguments against modern critics are cogent and persuasive, it remains to be seen whether critics will find them so.

For those inclined toward the traditional view, as is this reviewer, the book is eminently convincing. Through subtle exegetical rigor and conversation with contemporary theologians and biblical scholars, Gaine’s argument in support of Christ’s beatific vision is philosophically erudite, drawing on the best recent research into Aquinas’s theology and his characteristic subtle distinctions. One of the strongest parts of the book is Gaine’s engagement with Scripture. While there is no explicit “proof text” for Christ’s beatific vision in Scripture, Gaine is right to suggest that the evidence of his extraordinary knowledge of the Father and his teaching ministry demand explanation by way of some theological theory. While exegetes and theologians may quibble over the details, Gaine’s claim that the beatific vision explains the inner logic of the Gospel accounts, rather than obscuring it, is one

that will surely generate much beneficial discussion in contemporary Christology. His reading of Aquinas as an inheritor of the patristic and scriptural legacy is lucid and throws new light on contemporary questions about Christ's human knowledge. N.V

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Augustine, the Trinity, and the Church: A Reading of the Anti-Donatist Sermons by Adam Ployd (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015*), vii + 225 pp.

ADAM PLOYD, a United Methodist deacon, teaches Church History and Historical Theology at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis. The book under review is his first monograph, a revised version of his dissertation written under the direction of Lewis Ayres and Anthony Briggman at Emory University. Though the influence of Ayres, as well as that of Michel René Barnes, is felt on nearly every page, both Ployd's source material and his thesis are unique. From the outset, he asks his readers to view Augustine not only as a "polemical or occasional theologian" but also (and primarily) as a preacher (1). Ployd is the first to treat the forty-one sermons Augustine preached between the winter of 406 and the summer of 407, drawn from the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (119–33), *Tractatus in Iohannis Evangelium* (1–16), and *Tractatus in Iohannis Epistulam* (1–10), as a complete series, "a long discourse that Augustine conducts with his audience" (2). This discourse develops an understanding of the "church" (here, I follow Ployd's "intentionally vague" usage; see 4n6) that is intimately connected with Augustine's Trinitarian theology, and in particular, his "pro-Nicene" reading of Scripture. Ployd argues: "Augustine uses pro-Nicene principles and exegesis to construct his anti-Donatist vision of the church and in doing so he describes how the church shares in the life of the Trinity through the Son's giving of the Spirit to his own body" (3).

Ployd explores this thesis in four argumentatively compressed chapters, beginning with what he calls Augustine's "moral epistemology" in chapter 1. This term of art, deployed throughout the book, describes Augustine's insistence that knowledge and love are mutually informing, such that "we advance in knowledge of God through the reformation of our desire" (19). Ployd argues that, for Augustine, we maximally come to know and to love the God revealed in Jesus

Christ as members of the church. Augustine's preaching is singularly directed toward the cultivation of this "moral epistemology," which Augustine theoretically explored with characteristic conceptual rigor in his *De Trinitate*, composed only a few years before the sermon series under consideration (beginning ca. 401–405). Ployd shows how Augustine's "intellectual" approach to Philippians 2:6–7 relates to his "moral" approach to Matthew 5:8. In order to interpret Scripture appropriately, the exegete must understand that the designation of Christ as appearing "in the form of a slave" does not negate his remaining "in the form of God." One becomes capable of closing the epistemological gap between the incarnate and the eternal Christ through moral purity cultivated in faith (see Matt 5:8). In turning to the sermon series, Ployd shows how the church becomes, for Augustine, both a vehicle of access to the faithful love that enables one "to bridge the epistemological gap" between the material and the spiritual (32) and an object for theological reflection that requires humility, "the primary disposition of the Christian life" (54).

In chapter 2, Ployd explores the Christological dimension of the church, and in particular, how Augustine construes our incorporation into the one grammatical subject of Christ in his homiletic exegesis. To this end, Ployd explores the nature of "prosopological exegesis as the best way to understand how Augustine speaks of our unity with Christ in these sermons" (57). Though *persona* occurs only once in the *Enarrationes* under consideration, Ployd rightly argues that "prosopology" is crucial for Augustine's *Enarrationes* as a whole and that Augustine's use of it elsewhere justifies his consideration of it as "the guiding motif" of the psalms of ascent (64). Here, Augustine consistently interprets the voice of the psalmist as the voice of Christ, and by extension, of the church: "Many Christians joined as one to each other by being united with and into the one Christ" (65–66). Incorporation in the church means becoming part of Christ's body, which enables our ascent to the triune God. Ployd reads Augustine's appeal to crucial texts such as John 3:13, Colossians 3:1–4, and Acts 4:9 against the Latin pro-Nicene background established by Ambrose of Milan, among others. Augustine is unique, however, in drawing an explicit connection to "the significance of our union with the body of Christ," in which both humility and love "accompany and equip" our contemplation of the triune God (85–86, 99).

In chapter 3, Ployd moves from Christology to Pneumatology, arguing that the unity of the body of Christ is founded on the love of the Holy Spirit. Ployd argues that Augustine's "developing theol-

ogy of the Holy Spirit” connects “the eternal identity of the Spirit as the mutual love of the Father and Son to the redemptive work of the Spirit in establishing the church’s unity through that same love” (100). Ployd begins with an interpretation of Augustine’s sermon on Psalm 121, wherein Augustine reflects on the nature of the love that affects our ascent to the heavenly Jerusalem. He focuses on the soteriological implication of the love given by the Spirit as the “vehicle for our ascent,” not as isolated individuals, but in the communion of the ecclesial body (104). He then turns to the pro-Nicene context of Augustine’s appeal to Acts 4:32a (“Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul”). Both Hilary of Poitiers and Ambrose drew on this passage to affirm the consubstantial unity of the Father and the Son against the Arians. Ployd argues that Augustine adopts their anti-Arian usage but extends it “by adding love as the constitutive agent of unity” (111). Augustine, therefore, casts the Donatist refusal of ecclesial unity as fundamentally a failure of love, “a love that Augustine identifies as the gift of the Holy Spirit that Christ gives to his body, the church” (116). Finally, Ployd argues that Augustine drew on a similar pro-Nicene reading of Romans 5:5 (“God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us”) to advance an understanding of the “*proprium* of the Spirit” as the “charity of God” that enables the Church to share in God’s Trinitarian life (124, 127).

While the theme of the “common and inseparable operations” of the triune God consistently appears throughout the book, chapter 4 addresses this central pro-Nicene doctrine in the context of Augustine’s theology of baptism. After addressing the “traditional sacramental theology” of Cyprian of Carthage and the Donatists, Ployd argues that Augustine conceptually shifts the locus of baptismal *potestas* away from the authority and purity of the bishop administering the sacrament to the “unity of nature and power that obtains in the three divine persons of the Trinity,” and particularly to Christ as the primary agent imparting the grace of the Holy Spirit through the minister (146). Ployd argues that Augustine appropriates “pro-Nicene power theologies” (traced by Barnes) and “brings this understanding of divine *potestas* to the traditional North African theology of baptismal *potestas*” (155, 165). In Augustine’s view, Ployd argues, the validity of baptism is rooted in the agency and power of Christ, “the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit” (John 1:33), not in the condition of the earthly church and her ministers. Ployd goes on to argue (against J. Patout Burns) that, for Augustine, “the unity of the church

is the consequence of baptism, rather than simply a prerequisite for it" (169; see note 62). Ployd holds that Augustine's central image deployed to this point is that of the dove, in connection both to the Spirit (John 1:33) and to the church (Song 6:8). The Spirit-dove imparts a "moral simplicity" that enables those who suffer baptism to both long for and enjoy the "ecclesial unity that is a result of effective baptism" in the dove-church (181). Augustine thus presents the sacrament of baptism as the common operation of the triune God, who establishes the unity of the church.

Ployd's conclusion attempts to connect the meaning and significance of Augustine's "trinitarian ecclesiology" to martyrdom, another flashpoint in North African ecclesiological disputes. Ployd's structural analysis of Augustine's eleventh homily on the Gospel of John in light of Paul's reading of Hagar and Ishmael in Galatians 4 is suggestive, but it ultimately requires a deeper reading across a wider range of texts to be finally convincing. Ployd seems to preempt this criticism in his final remarks by noting how the book as a whole leaves "many questions unanswered or only partially explored," most notably "how exactly the church shares in the life of the Trinity" (195). There are others, however. Ployd's understandable insistence on the significance of Trinitarian theologies as a driving force behind Augustine's ecclesiology precludes a significant engagement with Augustine's North African predecessors, the only significant treatment of which appears (far too fleetingly) in chapter 4. Balancing the speculative inheritance of Augustine's Gallic and Italian sources with the more practical concerns that occupied North African theology would have yielded a more complete treatment of the ecclesiology present in the sermon series. Ployd does a fine job of drawing the reader into Augustine's delight in the interplay of key Scriptural texts in the sermons, but Ployd's predilection for technical interpretive phrases like "moral epistemology" often obscures the elegant simplicity of Augustine's own rhetorical achievement in the sermon series and the effect of Augustine's rhetoric on his original audience. These phrases almost inevitably slip toward a jargon that obscures rather than illuminates his primary source. Finally, though Ployd does attend to certain images in the sermon series, notably in his treatment of Augustine's play with the figure of the dove, he fails to capture how Augustine's treatment of the words of Scripture as a kind of lexical mosaic present an array of images for the relationship between the Trinity and the Church drawn from the ordinary life of his audience. In particular, Augustine consistently appealed throughout the sermon

series to nuptial images that figure the triune God as the Lover of his Bride, the church, and the Donatists as an unfaithful spouse seeking figurative divorce and remarriage (see, e.g., *En. Ps.* 127.8; 127.10–12; *Io. ev. tr.* 8.3–5; 9.2, 9.10, 9.13; *Ep. Io.* 1.2; 2.2, 2.11; 3.7).

In spite of these criticisms, Ployd's book is to be recommended for its creative integration of contemporary readings of Augustine's Trinitarian theology with his treatment of the nature of the Church in this unique sermon series. Its chief merit lies in the avenues it stakes out for future research into the development of Augustine's ecclesiology and the role of his practice as a preacher in configuring the minds and hearts of his audience to the love of the triune God offered in and through the Church. N.V

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