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THE BASIS OF THE THIRD PROOF FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

WE have only to look at the amount of Thomistic literature in the last three decades that has been dedicated to explaining the nature of St. Thomas' third proof for the existence of God, to become aware that it is a controverted point in the minds of Thomistic scholars. For quite some time the debate has raged in the school concerning the basis and nature of the demonstration which St. Thomas says is taken from the notion of possibility. The history of the debate leads us to express the problem in this fashion: "Is the *Tertia Via* based on the notion of causality or the concept of time?" In other words, are St. Thomas' words to have a physical or metaphysical interpretation? Whereupon we must further query: "If the third proof is causal in nature, how then does it differ from the preceding proofs?" "If it is a proof from time, is St. Thomas' argumentation based on valid principles?" The replies to these questions have divided the Thomistic school

into two main camps, each holding for a metaphysical interpretation.

As a starting point in the discussion we are given the comparison between two texts of St. Thomas. One, in his *Summa Theologiae,* demonstrates the existence of God from the existence of possibles. The other in the *Contra Gentes* proves the eternity of God from the same aspect. From the comparative study of these two texts much light has been thrown on the problem, so it behooves us to consider these proofs in their relation to each other.

It must be noted that the controversy is concerned only with the first part of the *Tertia Via* in which St. Thomas proceeds from the given existence of possible things to the concluded existence of at least some necessary being. The second part of the proof in which St. Thomas concludes to the existence of that Being which is necessary of itself, sc. God, entails no difficulty.

The pertinent part of the proof of the *Summa Theologiae* [1] reads as follows:

> The third way is taken from possibility and necessity and runs thus. We find in nature, things that are possible to be and not be, since they are found to be generated and to corrupt and consequently, they are possible to be and not be. But it is impossible for these always to exist,[2] for that which is possible not to be, at some time is not. Therefore if everything is possible not to be, then at some time there could not have been anything in existence, because that which does not exist, only begins to exist by something already existing. Therefore if at one time there was nothing in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence which is absurd. Therefore not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something, the existence of which is necessary.

The proof in the *Contra Gentes* [3] reads:

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[1] *Summae Theologiae,* I, q. 2, a. 3.

[2] The Leonine reads: "Impossible est autem omnia quae sunt talis, semper esse." However the Leonine lists the good codices as omitting the adverb, *semper.* Thus according to the rules of textual criticism, the preferred reading is: "Impossibile est autem omnia quae sunt, talia esse."

[3] *I Contra Gentes,* c. 15.

We observe that in the world there are certain things which can be and not be, namely those that are subject to generation and corruption. Now whatsoever is possible to be has a cause, because, as in itself it is equally related to two things, namely being and non-being, it follows that if it acquires being, this is the result of some cause. But we cannot proceed through an infinity of causes, as has been proved above by Aristotle. Therefore we must place some being which is necessary.

In considering the proof as given in the *Summa*, at first glance, we see that there are concepts of time as well as ideas of a causal nature. The proof in the *Contra Gentes*, on the other hand, seems to emphasize causality. Both proofs start off with the existence of contingents and both arrive at the same conclusion, sc. the existence of some necessary being. But the procedure of each proof differs. This is certainly true of the words and concepts by which St. Thomas proceeds. Whether or not it is also true of his intention, is the bone of contention between the two opinions.

At any rate, it is beyond doubt that St. Thomas has used the principles of sufficient reason and causality to bridge the gap between possibles and necessary in the *Contra Gentes*. There we have a proof, admirable in its conciseness and clarity. Since the *Summa Contra Gentes* preceded the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* by at least three years, the question arises: " Why, then, in the *Summa Theologiae* did not St. Thomas use this valid and cogent argument to prove the existence of God from the notion of possibility and necessity? " Why, we may ask, did he substitute in a book intended to dissipate needless obscurity, a proof over whose nature learned theologians have disagreed? We can only answer that the proof in the *Contra Gentes* did not suit the purpose of St. Thomas as he penned the famous third article of the second question. If then he made use of an exclusively and patent metaphysical argument in the *Contra Gentes*, it seems logical to conclude that in the *Summa* we must look for a proof that is other than wholly metaphysical. Thus we propose the temporal opinion as the correct interpretation of the *Tertia Via*. That is, the medium employed by St.

Thomas in arriving at the existence of a necessary being is the very physical nature of contingent things as viewed from the aspect of their duration in existence.

Let it be noted that we have said that this is a modern problem, for any difficulty with the *Tertia Via* is almost unknown in the Thomistic tradition. In respect to the earliest commentators of St. Thomas, as Capreolus, Cajetan and Bañez, the noteworthy fact is their paucity of comment and concern over this proof. All cite the text of St. Thomas. Capreolus in response to an objection of Aureolus defends the principle that corruptible things must of their nature corrupt.[4] Bañez in his commentary on the *Prima Pars* does the same. Cajetan does not even comment on this proof, although he must have been aware of the objection of Aureolus. In the light of the eminent qualifications of these great commentators, we must confess that this proof offered no special difficulty.

When we meet the commentary of John of St. Thomas however, we see a radical change from the attitude of the previous commentators. John of St. Thomas gives us a brief paraphrase of the *Tertia Via* which is indeed of a metaphysical nature. As the nexus between the existence of possibles and the existence of a necessary being, he says:

Therefore it is necessary that there be some being neither contingent nor corruptible through which they (corruptible beings) might have being; because it is necessary that what has being after nonbeing, have this through some being in act; and this cannot be a corruptible contingent because all contingents have being after nonbeing and there cannot be a process in infinity. Therefore they suppose some being, not contingent, from which they have being; therefore there is besides these corruptible beings, some being incorruptible and necessary.[5]

[4] *Defensiones Theologiae Divi Thomae Aquinatis*, I, dist. III, q. 1: *Tertia Instans.*

[5] *Cursus Theologici*, I, q. II, disp. 3, a. 2, no. 23: "ergo oportuit dari aliquod ens non corruptibile nec contingens, per quod habeant esse: quia quod habet esse ex non esse, oportet quod per aliquod ens in actu habeat illud; et hoc non potest esse corruptibile contingens, quia omnia contingentia habeant esse ex non esse, et non datur processus in infinitum; ergo supponunt aliquod ens non contingens, a quo habeant esse; datur ergo praeter ista corruptibilia aliquod ens non corruptibile et necessarium."

This argumentation is indeed very similar to the proof for God's eternity as given in the *Contra Gentes.*

The later commentators, as Gonet, Billuart and Gotti see the *Tertia Via* in much the same light, that is, they argue to the conclusion from the metaphysical reasoning of the principles of sufficient reason and causality. Thus for example, Gotti says:

> If every being were contingent or possible to be and not be, then plainly nothing would be, because these things which from their nature have only a possibility of existence, can not de facto exist, unless through some necessary being which from its nature exists per se.[6]

Most modern Thomists, e. g. Del Prado, Van der Mersch, Garrigou-Lagrange, Pegues, and in general the manualists, follow this interpretation. Thus under the leadership of John of St. Thomas, the common Thomistic interpretation has come to be the metaphysical reasoning as given in the proof of the *Contra Gentes.* It must be noted however that none of these commentaries treat of the temporal interpretation in itself, neither about the possibility nor the impossibility of its validity. However, to Fr. Francisco Muñiz, O. P., S. T. M., of the Collegio Angelicum in Rome must credit be given for first developing these ideas in his commentary in Spanish on the *Prima Pars* (*Suma Teologica,* t. 1. B. A. C. (Madrid, 1947), p. 126 seq.).

I. The Problem Raised by Contemporaries

In the 1924 edition of the *Revue de Philosophie* Père Gény, S. J. professed that much of the proof as worded in the *Summa Theologiae* seemed very doubtful to him. Père Sertillanges, O. P. undertook to defend the text of St. Thomas. As Père Gény was called by death before he might rebut, Père Descoqs, S. J resumed the argument by criticising the exegesis of Père Ser-

[6] *Theologia Scholastica Dogmatica juxta mentem Divi Thomae Aquinatis, O. P.,* I *De Deo,* tract. II, q. 1, dub. 4, par. 4: "Si omne ens esset contingens, seu possibile esse et non esse, nullum plane ens de facto esset, quia ea quae ex se et suapte natura solum habeat possibilitatem ad existentiam, non possunt de facto existere, nisi per aliquod ens necessarium cui per se et ex natura sua conveniat existere."

tillanges and reaffirming the doubts of Père Gény. Père Sertillanges replied as did also Frs. Chambat, O. S. B. and Héris, O. P. In 1932, Fr. Bouyges, S. J. offered his interpretation of the proof in the *Revue de Philosophie*. Later Frs. Boyer, S. J. and Maquart weighed the discussion in their manuals and explained their solution to the problem. In the 1949 edition of *Sapienza*, Fr. S. Deandrea, O. P. published an exhaustive evaluation of the controversy. Most recently, in the *Acts of the Third International Thomistic Congress* at Rome, the dispute was again brought to light by Fr. H. Degl'Innocenti, O. P. and Fr. Van Steenberghen of Louvain. We shall now try to trace the dispute by seeing what interpretation the above mentioned scholars claim to be the one intended by St. Thomas.

Père Gény:

Père Gény first asserts that his doubts are concerning St. Thomas' wording of the proof: "The text and not the substance offers a serious difficulty. In fact the manner of presentation in the *Contra Gentes*, I, c. 15, is extremely clear and most evident and accessible." [7] He then contends that St. Thomas undertook to give us this text in order that the starting-point might be more evident. However, in so doing, he failed to achieve the same clarity and validity that the argumentation in the *Contra Gentes* offers. Père Gény then divides the text into two affirmations, both of which he holds doubtful. These are: "What is possible not to be, i. e., what is corruptible, at some time ceases in being" [8] and "if therefore all things were at some time corruptible, nothing more would be at all." [9] As regards the first assertion, he says: "Why is that

[7] Paul Gény, S. J. "Les preuves thomistes de l'existence de Dieu." *Revue de Philosophie*, XXXI (1924), 6, p. 578: "Je dis: le texte et non de la substance même de la preuve. Il y a en effet, une manière de la présenter qui lui donne une clarté extrême et en fait la plus evidente et la plus accessible de toutes. Cette manière, Saint Thomas lui même l'a employée au chaptre XV du livre I du Contra Gentes."

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 582: "ce qui est susceptible de ne pas être (à qui est corruptibile), à un certain moment cesse d'être."

[9] *Ibid.*: "Si donc toutes choses avaient été corruptibiles à un certain moment, il n'y aurait plus rien en du tout."

which is corruptible, necessarily corrupted? This does not seem evident." [10] Against the second assertion, he adds: "Why should generations and corruptions in a world composed solely of corruptibile beings, necessarily lead to a total destruction?" [11] He then continues by saying that this likewise is not evident, for it supposes the truth of this principle taken from Maimomides: what is possible for one species, cannot but happen. From this principle it would follow that a world composed solely of corruptibile beings, at some time would be corrupted. But, adds Père Gény, this principle is in no way proven.[12]

Thus, for Père Gény, the sense of St. Thomas', "quod est possible non esse, quandoque non est," is "what is corruptibile, must at some time corrupt." Furthermore, according to Père Gény, St. Thomas also says that if all things are corruptibile, there must come about a total annihilation of being in the future. However, asks Père Gény, what happens to the scholastic axiom that the corruption of one thing is the generation of another. He insinuates that in his preoccupation with simplicity, St. Thomas has availed himself of Maimonides' doctrine and thereby contradicted himself.

Père Sertillanges:

Père Sertillanges then rises to the defense of the Holy Doctor. Taking the affirmations of Père Gény, he explains them in the light of the hypothesis which St. Thomas uses in the proof. Thus when St. Thomas says that if all things are possibles, he thereby hypothetically removes any permanence that

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 586: "De ces deux assertions, la première est déjà pour nous legerement déconcertante. Pourquoi ce qui est corruptibile devrait, il necessairement, en fait, se corrumpe?"

[11] *Ibid.*: "Pourquoi le jeu des generations et corruptions dans un univers composé uniquement d'êtres corruptibiles, devrait il aboutir à un anéantissement total?"

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 588: "Maimomide la demontrait en faisant remarquer que ce qui est possibile pour l'espèce ne peut pas ne pas arriver necessairement; c'est-à-dire: dans lhypothèse que chacun des êtres de l'univers est corruptibile, l'ensemble l'est aussi, et pour l'ensemble, l'hypothese doit se vérifer au moins une fois. Si le principe invoqué est vrai, la conclusion suit necessairement, et voila la difficulté résolue. Mais comment se justifie le principe?"

would tend to stabilize possible things in their existence. Père Sertillanges emphasizes that when it is said that all is perishable, then this " all " takes in every being; matter, form, exemplars, ends, etc. There is thus denied to the world any permanence whether this permanence be understood in terms of matter, form, exemplars, etc. If such be the case, how can it be said that the corruption of one is the generation of another. This axiom cannot be justified if the subsisting matter is itself perishable. Thus if all is perishable, then each thing is entirely perishable, and so the whole is perishable. If the whole is perishable, then at some determined epoch the whole must perish, which is another way of saying that it could not have subsisted. Thus all is perishable and St. Thomas then concludes from this that nothing was. It is a strange logical operation but a necessary one. The terms are absurd but their connection is correct, even necessary. Thus the hypothesis is itself condemned. There is then something necessary in the world and this necessary being (or beings) ultimately proves the existence of God.[13] And so,

[13] A. D. Sertillanges, O.P., *Revue Thomiste*, IX (1926), 42, pp. 500-501:

" Si tout est périssable, la matière aussi est périssable; la forme est périssable; les idées de plan qui sont les cadres idéaux de la nature, eux sont aussi périssables; les fins, qui s'identifient à ces formes idéales, sont périssables, et périssables enfin sont les étais plus ou moins authentiques, variés, mais toujours nécessaires, que les diverses cosmologies proposent pour expliquer le jeu des générations à travers les âges. . . . Quand on dit tout, c'est tout; quand on refuse à l'univers, c'est-à-dire a l'universalité intégrale des choses dont dépend le monde physique, de contenir quoi que ce soit de permanent, on est bien mal venu à supposer que la corruption de l'un doive aboutir à la génération de l'autre. Comment cet adage se justifie-t-il, si ce n'est grâce à une permanence sousjacente aux changements sous le nom de matière, à une permanence dominant et dirigeant les changements sous le nom de formes, à des exemplaires, à des fins, sans parler d'autres permanences possibiles ou nécessaires comme l'éther de nos physiciens, comme les cieux scholastiques, ou quoi que ce soit qui les puisse remplacer? . . . En bref, utilisant ma proposition intermédiaire, j'écrirais la preuve ainsi: Si tout est périssable en tout, le Tout, aussi, est périssable. Et si le Tout est périssable, à une époque indéterminée quelconque, ce Tout a dû périr, ce qui est une autre façon le dire: Il n'a pu subsister. Quand donc on dit saint Thomas prend son point de départ dans le fait, on a raison: mais ce fait, qui implique des permanences, ce n'est pas saint Thomas, c'est l'adversaire, qui le vide de tout contenu d'éternité en disant: tout est périssable. Le non-sens qui en résulte, et qui est déjà dans l'antécédent, il faut bien le voir, et c'est à quoi sert cette réduction au néant que saint Thomas opère ensuite. Etrange opération logique, je

for Père Sertillanges, the " possibile non esse " of St. Thomas is to be rendered by " perishable " which has the same sense as the " corruptibile " of Père Gény. For each author it is a physical fact and the " quandoque non est " means a corruption of being, or in other words, non-existence which follows existence.

Père Descoqs:

Père Descoqs then enters the lists and concludes with Père Gény that St. Thomas' wording of the *Tertia Via* is insupportable. However he disagrees with Père Gény in the source of the proof. For him, Aristotle and not Maimonides is St. Thomas' mentor on the point. As proof, Père Descoqs cites a long text from St. Thomas' commentary on Aristotle's *De Caelo et Mundo* in which the Stagirite shows that a corruptible being must corrupt.[14] However, Père Descoqs disagrees with this position. So he writes: " That which is corruptible must corrupt because if it does not corrupt, it will be an incorruptible. I distinguish: That which is corruptible *per se* and does not *de facto* corrupt will be an incorruptible *per se, nego*; will be an incorruptible *per accidens*, and then only *de facto* and not *de jure, concedo*. In this there is not the slightest contradiction." [15] Père Descoqs then goes on to chide St. Thomas for not criti-

le reconnais. . . . Tant pis pour l'athée, si, partant de l'absurde . . . il aboutit à l'absurdité nouvelle d'un univers sombrant dans le rien. Les deux termes sont absurdes, mais leur lien est correct, il est nécessaire, et l'hypothèse est donc condamnée; il y a dû nécessaire dans le monde, et ce nécessaire, ultérieurement, prouve Dieu."

[14] *I de Caelo et Mundo*, lect. 29: " Impossible est id quod est corruptibile, quandoque non corrumpi, quia si quandoque non corrumpatur, potest non corrumpi, et ita erit incorruptibile, et tamen ponitur sempiterno tempore corruptibile existens. Semper igitur, id est infinito tempore, erit simul actu corruptibile et incorruptibile. Sed quod corrumpitur non semper est; quod autem est incorruptibile, semper est; ergo erit aliquid simul possibile semper esse et non semper esse. Quod est impossibile . . . quia quod potest semper esse, ex necessitate semper est, unde non potest non semper esse. Sic igitur patet quod omne corruptibile quandoque corrumpetur."

[15] Pedro Descoqs, S. J. *Praelectiones Theologiae Naturalis*. I, 251-253: " corrompre, parce que, s'il ne se corrompait pas, il serait incorruptibile: je distingue: ce qui est corruptibilie *per se* et ne corromprait pas de fait serait incorruptibile *per se, nego*, serait incorruptible *per accidens*, et donc de fait mais non de droit, *concedo*. En quoi il n'y a pas le moindre contradiction."

cising this faulty reasoning of Aristotle. "For the validity of the *Tertia Via* does not depend on this distinction, and the essential principles which underlie, the argument remain intact. But inasmuch as this difficulty, which is the difficulty of Père Gény, has not been clarified, the proof, under the form which St. Thomas has given in the *Summa*, runs the risk of being incomplete and in a certain manner, unfounded." [16]

Père Descoqs confirms the interpretation and difficulties of Père Gény. The wording of St. Thomas is at fault inasmuch as it is not proven that a corruptible being must at some time corrupt. However, for Père Descoqs, St. Thomas' imperfect text does not at all influence this proof from possibility and necessity, of which the first and second *viae* are but varieties.[17]

Father Chambat:

Fr. L. Chambat then advances a new opinion by interpreting the controverted text in the sense of potency and act. Denying Père Gény's claim that St. Thomas took his text from Maimonides, he insists rather that the source was the sixth chapter of the thirteenth book of the *Metaphysics*. There Aristotle founds the priority of act in regard to potency by proving that if potency were prior to act then nothing would begin to be. Thus, for Fr. Chambat, St. Thomas is talking about the nonexistence which precedes existence when he says: "whatever is

[16] *Ibid.*: "Si la chose ne lui paraît pas ainsi, avouons nos regrets que le saint Docteur n'ait pas jugé opportun de pousser plus avant sa critique de l'objection. Le sort de la Tertia Via tout entière n'en dépend assurément pas et les principes essentiels qui servent de base à l'argument demeurent intacts. Mais, tant que cette difficulté—qui est la difficulté Gény—n'aura-pas été écartée, la preuve, sous la forme que lui a donnée saint Thomas dans la Somme, risque de rester incomplète et d'une certaine façon en l'air."

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 242-243. "Tres enim illae arguunt necessitatem causae primae ut reddatur ratio sive mobilitatis (la via), sive activitatis (2a via), sive entis quod generatur et corrumpitur (3a via, quae est ex caducitate entium materialium). Mobilitas autem et caducitas et dependentia in agere sicut in esse sunt praecise signa propria contingentiae, quae dicit dependentiam ab alio; unde la et 2a via non sunt nisi varietates *tertiae*, quae remanet omnium praestantissima, dummodo contingentia sensu maxime generali audiatur, quatenus haec via probat radicalem insufficientiam in esse entis contingentis. . . ."

possible not to be, at some time is not." Therefore, since it is then in potency, it needs a being in act to actualize it. And so, if all things are possible, then at some time nothing was.[18]

Father Héris:

Father Héris seems to say the same thing as Fr. Chambat, but he bases his opinion on the priority in time of potency in regard to act. " When St. Thomas writes: that which is possible not to be, at some time is not : the ' sometimes is not ' can also be understood of the non-being which precedes being as well as the non-being that follows being. In the first sense, the proposition rests on the principle St. Thomas establishes in the sixteenth chapter of the first book of the *Contra Gentes,* sc., ' what is sometimes in potency and sometimes in act, is, according to time, first in potency and then in act.' So when St. Thomas says there was nothing, ' aliquando non fuit,' he is not speaking of a total corruption but rather of a total non-inception in being or a non-appearance of being." [19] Fr. Héris claims that this interpretation is best because it is more metaphysical and approaches nearer the parallel proof in the *Contra Gentes.*

Father Bouyges:

In his article, Fr. Bouyges likewise rejects the exegesis of Père Gény. On the other hand, he does not agree with the ontological position of Frs. Chambat and Héris. Rather he thinks that the principle in question is a logical one and devoid of any physical

[18] Lucien Chambat, O.S.B. "La Tertia Via dans Saint Thomas et Aristotle," *Revue Thomiste,* X (1927), 46.

[19] Ch. V. Héris, O.P. *Bulletin Thomiste,* V Année, No. 4 (1928), p. 319: " Quand Saint Thomas écrit: ' Ce qui est capable de n'être pas, a un moment donné n'est pas,' le *quandoque non est* peut s'entendre aussi bien du non-être qui précède l'être que du non-être qui le suit. Au premier sens, la proposition s'appuie sur ce principle rappelé par saint Thomas au I Contra Gentes, c. 16: ' Quod quandoque est in potentia quandoque in actu, prius (est) tempore in potentia quam in actu.' Des lors on comprend la suite du raisonnement, tout entièr basé sur la priorité temporelle de la puissance par rapport à l'acte au sein d'un même être physique: ' Si donc tous les êtres sont capables de n'être pas, un jour rien ne fut parmi les êtres (non par suite de leur anéantissement, mais du fait de leur non-apparition). Mais s'il en était ainsi, maintenant encore rien ne serait."

or metaphysical content. "What is possible not to be," for Fr. Bouyges, is "transitory." A transitory thing is measured by time.[20] According to his thesis, St. Thomas is contrasting necessary and possible beings. The former exist always; the latter do not exist always.[21] Thus he avoids the difficulties of Père Gény by proposing a logical principle which he himself admits smacks of tautology.[22] Any other conception of the principle, whether physical or metaphysical, is only materially present in St. Thomas' reasoning.[23] Fr. Bouyges' exegesis is such: "We see beings which pass in temporal existence: they did not exist, they exist, they exist no longer. Before knowing their number, their physical or metaphysical nature, we are certain of this fact: they are transitory. To this category of beings, there can be logically opposed a category of beings (similar in nature or not) which always perdure; by hypothesis they always exist. Of this category, reason alone can certify for us its existence. This will be precisely the role of the *Tertia Via*." [24] Fr. Bouyges concludes

[20] M. Bouyges, S. J.: "Exégèse de la Tertia Via de Saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue de Philosophe, III* (1932), 132: "Denommer *possible esse et non esse* ce qui est 'transitoire,' c'est a dire mesuré par le temps, n'est pas arbitraire."

[21] *Ibid.*: "Par opposition à ces êtres nécessaires (durant toujours), les êtres transitoires ou ne-durant-pas toujours, pouvaient tout naturellement reçevoir le nom de 'possibiles.'"

[22] *Ibid.* (p. 142): "Si maintenant nous remplaçons la traduction du P. Gény par la nôtre, 'ce qui est un possibile quant à la non-existence à un moment n'est pas'; si nous admettons que 'possible quant à non-existence' dénomme ce qui par hypothèse, n'est pas nécessaire quant à l'existence, c'est-à-dire ne dure pas toujours, l'affirmation de St. Thomas est si évident qu'elle risquerait d'être une tautologie; et c'est pour cela qu'il l'énonce simplement, certain qu'il est de se conformer aux règles de la logique."

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 135: "Dans la pensée de saint Thomas, les mots 'possibilia esse et non esse,' n'étaient-ils donc qu'une simple denomination du 'transitoire'? Nous nous garderons bien de l'affirmer. Impliqueraint-ils alors une théorie plus profonde de la potentialité des êtres matériels corruptibiles? Oui. Mais dans la tertia via cette théorie n'est que matériellement présente, ou plutôt sousjacente."

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 138: "Nous voyéns des êtres qui se succèdent, qui passent dans l'existence temporelle: ils n'existaient pas, ils existent, ils n'existent plus. Avant de connaître leur nombre, leur nature physique ou métaphysique, nous sommes certains de ce fait; ils sont transtoires. A cette catégorie peut être opposée logiquement une catégorie, homogéne ou non, d'êtres qui eux dureaient toujours, existeraient toujours par hypothèse. Mais de cette catégorie, seuls des raisonnements nous certifierent l'existence. Ce sera précisément le rôle de la tertia via."

by averring that no matter how one understands the proposition "quod possibile est, aliquando non est," the two great principles of the proof which give it its demonstrative force are left intact. These two principles are: what does not exist can only come into existence through something already existing; and: it is not possibile to proceed into infinity in necessary things that have their necessity caused by another.[25]

Father Boyer:

In his manual Fr. Boyer allies himself with Père Sertillanges. He adopts Père Gény's interpretation of "*possibile non esse*" as "corruptible," but he defends the validity of St. Thomas' "*quandoque non est.*" Father Boyer cites the objection of Père Descoqs and distinguishes it. The objection avers that a *per se* corruptible can be *per accidens* not corruptible. Fr. Boyer distinguishes: Can be *per accidens* not corrupted, because of some cause impeding its corruption and thereby making it *de facto* incorruptible, *concedo*; can be *per accidens* incorruptible without such a cause, *nego*.[26] Thus Fr. Boyer allies himself with the physical interpretation and holds that St. Thomas' proof is legitimate as such. He further claims that Fr. Chambat's exegesis of non-being before being is not in accordance with the text.[27]

Father Maquart:

Fr. Maquart's manual contains a concise discussion of the problem. He inveighs against the interpretation of "*possibile*

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 145: "Car apres tout, quelque façon que l'on entende la proposition 'quod possibile est aliquando non est,' on laissera intacts les deux grandes principes qui donnent à la démonstration sa véritable force: ce qui n'existe pas ne commence à exister que par ce qui existe,' et pour la seconde partie: 'il n'est pas possible de procéder a l'infini quand il s'agit de nécessaires qui ont une cause de leur nécessite.'"

[26] C. Boyer, S. J.: *Cursus philosophiae*, II, 319: "Obj. 1: In argumento dicitur quod si omnia essent corruptibilia, iam corrupta essent omnia et nihil essent. Sed quod est ex se corruptibile potest per accidens non corrumpi. Ergo argumentum non valet. Respondeo: Concedo maiorem, distinguo minorem: corruptibilia possunt non corrumpi ex aliqua causa quae in eis naturam corrigit, et sic facit ea de facto incorruptibilia, concedo; possunt non corrumpi sine tali causa, nego."

[27] *Ibid.*, cf. footnote.

non esse " as " corruptible." He holds that St. Thomas is talking about things that *de facto* are generated and corrupted.[28] Therefore, says Fr. Marquart, a temporal argument can be introduced in the text. However, this temporal argument is only accidental in St. Thomas' mind. Fr. Maquart relies on the argumentation of a possible being's indifference to being as the reason for its non-existence at some time.[29] Thus he adopts the traditional Thomistic exegesis. On the other hand, he adds, if you accept the interpretation of Père Gény, then the difficulty is solved by the text from the *De Caelo et Mundo* (I, lect. 29). Moreover he holds that Fr. Boyer vanquishes the illegitimate distinction of Père Descoqs.[30]

Father Deandrea:

In the 1949 edition of *Sapienza,* Fr. Deandrea gives an excellent summary of the debate. He treats the principle in question according to its ontological content and its temporal signification. He disagrees with the opinion that translates the principle: " *quod est possibile non esse, quandoque non est* " as " that which is corruptible, must at some time corrupt." For he says that such an interpretation renders the validity of the proof as problematical and makes St. Thomas guilty of an evident incoherency.[31] Father Deandrea also rejects the interpre-

[28] F. X. Maquart: *Elementa Philosophiae,* III, 305: His autem consentire non possumus, et putamus hic loqui S. Thomam non de corruptibilibus, sed de his quae de facto generantur et corrumpuntur."

[29] *Ibid.,* p. 306: " Sed haec consideratio temporalis et inceptionis et corruptionis rerum non est nisi accidentalis in argumento S. Thomae. Aliter enim probari potest quod impossibile est omnia possibilia esse et non esse. Quod enim possibile est non esse ex se, est indifferens ad esse et non esse. Si igitur omnia sunt possibilia non esse, nihil unquam ex hac indifferentia egreditur ac proinde nihil actu est. Cum autem quaedam, quae sunt possibila esse et non esse, existant, impossibile est omnia quae sunt talia, sc. possibilia esse et non esse."

[30] *Ibid.,* p. 309: " Si autem admiseris interpretationem P. Gény de contingenti corruptibili, objectio cl. auctoris sufficienter solvitur a textu de Caelo et Mundo; ita cum P. Boyer contra P. Descoqs qui videtur introducere distinctionem illegitimam."

[31] S. Deandrea, O. P.: " La Tertia Via e le sue difficoltà," *Sapienza* (1949), 1, p. 41: " Abbandonando l'intepretazione del P. Gény la quale, oltre che rendere il valore della terza via assai problematico, non salva S. Tommaso da evidente incoerenza, non resta che tentare la direzione completamente opposta, cioé del non essere nel passato."

tation of Fr. Bouyges that the principle is devoid of any physical or metaphysical content, since as such it is tautology pure and simple. Rather he adopts, explains and defends the exegesis of Fr. Chambat. He maintains the validity of the principle "*quod possibile est non esse, quandoque non est*" by citing the text from the *De Caelo et Mundo*. He then applies the principle to St. Thomas' hypothesis that if all things are possibles, then at some time nothing was, by repeating Fr. Chambat's argument from the *Metaphysics* that the total lack of existence refers to the past time before anything was, since in generation potency is prior to act.[32] Fr. Deandrea's article proves to be a thorough study of the proof and its problems. His reasoning, logical and compelling, provides a strong argument for the school that holds the fundamental basis of the *Tertia Via* to be the metaphysical notion of the relation of potency and act. In itself it is unanswerable argument. Fr. Deandrea presents a proof for the existence of God which is different from the proof in the *Contra Gentes*, but which is also a valid and cogent demonstration.

Father Van Steenberghen:

The latest discussion of the *Tertia Via* and its problem is to be found in the *Acts of the Third International Thomistic Congress* held at Rome in 1950. Fr. Van Steenberghen challenges the validity of the principles contained in the proof. His objections may be reduced to those which Père Gény raised against these principles. His contention is that St. Thomas has shown too great a fidelity to Aristotle with the result that the Holy Doctor has followed the Philosopher into error.[33] For

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 45. "Il grande principio da cui hanno valore, e su cui si fondano, é la legge che regola i rapporti dell'atto e della potenza. La priorità (ordine generationis) della potenza sull'atto giustifica e autorizza, nell'ipotesi che tutte le cose siano 'possibilia non esse,' la deduzione del nulla totale tempo. La priorità assoluta (ordine naturae) dell'atto sulla potenza ci permette di salire dall'impossibilità di questo nulla all'atto necessario."

[33] Fernand Van Steenberghen: "Reflexions Sur Les Quinque Viae," *Acta III Congressus Thomistici Internationalis*, p. 240: "et saint Thomas semble avoir cédé ici (comme beaucoup de ses contemporains) à une fidélité excessive à Aristote."

he says: " It is more simple and natural to think that St. Thomas took as his source the Aristotelian principle according to which every contingent being (*possibile esse et non esse*) has a limited duration (*quandoque non est*), so that every necessary being is eternal (and conversely, every eternal being is necessary): all contingent being has then commenced from non-being; therefore if all beings were contingent, absolute non-being would have preceded being, which is absurd, for from absolute non-being nothing would come forth. Such seems to be the dialectic of the *Tertia Via*. In reality, the contingent-temporal parallelism does not impose itself with evidence." [34] Father Van Steenberghen then concludes with the opinion that we should abandon the complicated and moot formula of the *Summa* and return to the formula of the *Contra Gentes*.

Father Degl'Innocenti:

In the same meeting, Fr. Degl'Innocenti offers his word on the dispute. His opinion is that of Père Sertillanges.[35] Thus " *quod est possibile non esse, quandoque non est* " is to be interpreted as " what is corruptible, must at some time corrupt." He also adduces the text from the *De Caelo et Mundo* to prove this contention. He then goes on to explain the sense of: " *si omnia sunt possibilia non esse, aliquando nihil fuit in rebus.*" " If all things, not excluding prime matter, are by their natures

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 239: " Mais il me parait bien improbable que ' quandoque ' ait ici un sens purement métaphysique; il est bien plus simple et plus naturel de penser que saint Thomas reprend à son compte le principe aristotélicien selon lequel tout être contingent (possibile esse et non esse) a une durée limitée (quandoque non est), tandis que tout être nécessaire est éternal (et, inversement, tout être éternel est nécessaire); tout être contingent a donc commencé par n'être pas; dès lors, si tous les êtres étaient contingents, le non être absolu aurait précédé l'être, ce qui est absurde. . . . En réalité, le parallélisme contingent-temporel ne s'impose pas avec évidence. . . . "

[35] H. Degl'Innocenti, O.P.: " De sensu Tertiae Viae," *Acta III Congressus Thomistici Internationalis*, p. 257, footnote 8: " In nostra interpretatione nobis auxilio fuit P. Sertillanges qui inter modernos melius quam omnes percepit sensum Tertiae Viae: unicus enim plene adhaeret textui, explicat Tertiam Viam per Tertiam Viam, et fere unicus consulit honori philosophico S. Thomae qui juxta alios interpretes aërem verberaret et nihil omnino concluderet, quod durum est admittere."

wholly corruptible, from any corruption nothing remains whence there can be a new generation; and so varied and always more numerous corruptions do not compensate for new generations, and the world would have been already extinct. But it is not extinct. Therefore not all things are corruptible: besides corruptibles there must be incorruptibles in existence." [36]

Thus with these latest additions to the dispute, we are brought back to the beginning of the controversy. Fr. Van Steenberghen accepts the difficulties of Père Gény while Fr. Degl'Innocenti espouses the defense of Père Sertillanges.

Summation:

Let us now try to sum up the various theories proposed under their proper headings.

I — First of all we have those who contend that the text of the proof in the *Summa* is faulty. Let it be noted that none of them denies the possibility of arriving at the truth of God's existence from the existence of contingent beings. As Père Gény says, it is the text and not the substance that offers difficulty. Those who hold for the rejection of the text in the *Summa* and the adoption of the text in the *Contra Gentes* as the *Tertia Via* are: Père Gény, Père Descoqs and Father Van Steenberghen. They hold that the principles as worded in the *Summa* are not sufficiently clear and doubtfully valid.

II — The opposite school which defends not only the substance but also the text itself are subdivided according to their interpretation of the text.

A — Firstly, there are the old commentators who accepted the proof and the text. Their silence concerning it force us to acknowledge that for them, at least, the text in the *Summa*

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 254: "Sensus igitur est: Si omnia omnino, non exclusa materia prima, sunt natura sua corruptibilia, ex quavis corruptione nihil relinquitur unde possit fieri nova generatio; et sic variae et semper numerosiores corruptiones non compensantur novis generationibus, et mundus iam a saeculis esset extinctus, idque tanto facilius quanto antiquior poneretur. Sed non est extinctus, ut facto constat; ergo non omnia sunt corruptibilia, destructibilia: praeter corruptibilia existunt etiam incorruptibilia."

offers no difficulty. As Bañez remarks, the question of the existence of God is one on which Scholastics are not accustomed to dwell. Thus, Capreolus, Cajetan and Bañez.

B — Secondly, we have the greater part of the Thomistic tradition from John of St. Thomas onward who interpret the text of the *Summa* in the light of the proof in the *Contra Gentes*. For this school, the nexus between contingent and necessary being is the principle of sufficient reason. Since possibles are indifferent to being and non-being, there must be a determined (and therefore necessary being) to resolve their indifference and give them being.

C — Thirdly, there is the school which rejects such an ontological basis and claims instead that the fundamental principles are physical and temporal. These say that the very nature of corruptible beings is St. Thomas' medium of arising to the existence of necessary being. They hold the non-existence which St. Thomas posits if all things are corruptibles, is the non-existence that follows on or after existence. Thus Père Sertillanges, Father Boyer and Father Degl'Innocenti.

D — Fourthly, there is the group that rejects the interpretation read into the proof in the light of the *Contra Gentes* and yet holds for the insufficiency of the purely temporal exegesis. This opinion bridges the gap from possibles to necessity by the primacy in generation of potency over act. Therefore, for them, the non-existence mentioned by St. Thomas is the period that precedes existence. Closely allied in this theory are Father Chambat, Father Héris and Father Deandrea.

E — Finally we have Father Maquart who contends that the proof is capable of both a physical and metaphysical interpretation, but who inclines strongly to the traditional Thomistic exegesis. Father Bouyges, holding for a completely logical nexus between contingents and necessary being, may be ranked with those who hold that the period of non-existence precedes the existence of the possibles.

And so the problem stands. If a temporal interpretation is sought, then the difficulties of Père Gény and Père Sertillanges are an obstacle that must be explained and removed. Otherwise it seems that we shall be forced to the position of Frs. Chambat and Héris, or to the proof as worded in the *Contra Gentes*. However before we consider the alternatives, it will be necessary to look at the text in the *Summa* and determine if all the possibilities have been exhausted.

II. Terms of Solution

A. Necessity and Contingency in St. Thomas

In our examination of the proof as worded in the *Summa* the first thing we notice is St. Thomas' heading that this proof is taken from the notion of possibility and necessity. Yet, the *Tertia Via* is most commonly called the proof from contingency. Therefore, we may ask, is the notion of possibility the same as that of contingency? Still more, is contingency or possibility so divided against necessity that all being is either necessary or contingent? Finally, are necessary beings which receive their necessity from another also contingent when compared with that one being which is necessary of itself?

Some authors maintain that the name contingent is different from that of possible, so that a contingent being does not connote the same as a possible being. For these authors, contingency seems to mean participation in being. Thus, for example, Fr. Boyer says: "The argument which is called by St. Thomas, from possibility and necessity, can also be said to be from contingency, since the name contingent applies both to those things which have no necessity and to those which receive their necessity from another.[37] Fr. Boyer, then, seems to say that contingent being is the same as created being. Fr.

[37] C. Boyer, *Cursus Philosophiae*, II, 318: "Argumentum, quod a S. Thoma vocatur ex possibili et necessario, dici quoque potest ex contingentia, quia nomen contingentis convenit tum iis quae nullam necessitatem habent, tum iis quae necessitatem suam ab alio recipiunt."

Maquart holds that contingency may be applied to beings that exist from eternity as well as to corruptible beings, for " in itself, contingent does not imply inception nor corruption." [38] Yet in the first part of the third proof St. Thomas implies that possibile beings, at any rate, are beings subject to generation and corruption, since generation and corruption is the sign of their existence. In his article, " Necessary and Contingent Being in St. Thomas," in the October 1951 edition of the *New Scholasticism*, Mr. Thomas Wright inveighs strongly against this interpretation of contingency offered by Fr. Boyer and Fr. Maquart. Citing frequently from St. Thomas he concludes that both contingent and possible must be applied only to corruptible beings. Since the matter is intimately connected with our problem it will be wise to investigate and see exactly what St. Thomas meant by contingent, possible and necessary.

In the question in the *De Potentia* where St. Thomas takes up the problem of whether God has the power of annihilation, there is treated the necessity and possibility of things. St. Thomas says that possibility in things may be understood in two ways, either according to the active power of the agent or according to a potency in the things themselves.[39] Taken in the latter sense, St. Thomas gives us two opinions. First he cites Avicenna who held that everything outside of God has in itself the possibility of non-existence since to God alone does existence belong by essence. Since, therefore, the existence of all creatures is really distinct from their essence, all creatures by their very nature can not-be. That a creature be necessary is purely extrinsic to its nature, coming to it from that being which alone

[38] Maquart, *Elementa Philosophiae*, III, 309: " non magis est contra doctrinam Angelici Doctoris illud intelligere de contingenti existente ab aeterno quam de contingenti corruptibili; secundum se contingens quidem non implicat inceptionem nec corruptibilitatem."

[39] *De Pot.*, q. 5, a. 3: " Dicendum, quod in rebus a Deo factis dicitur aliquid esse possibile dupliciter. Uno modo per potentiam agentis tantum; sicut antequam mundus fieret, possibile fuit mundum fore, non per potentiam creaturae, quae nulla erat, sed solum per potentiam Dei, qui mundum in esse producere poterat. Alio modo per potentiam quae est in rebus factis; sicut possibile est corpus compositum corrumpi."

is *per se* necessary.[40] Averroes, on the other hand, placed that some created beings were in themselves not possible not to be and therefore necessary. As a result those which are not in themselves necessary but possible not to be, cannot *ab extrinseco* become necessary so that their necessity might be said to be of their nature. This latter opinion St. Thomas holds to be more rational. For he says that the potency to being and non-being applies to something only because of matter which is pure potency. For matter, since it cannot be without form, cannot be in potency to non-being unless, inasmuch as existing under one form, it is in potency to another form.[41] As a result, St. Thomas continues, those things alone have necessity or no possibility to non-being, which are either subsistent forms (incorporeal beings) or whose forms totally exhaust the capacity of their matter so that it is not in potency to other forms. These latter then are incorruptible bodies as the celestial bodies according to Aristotelian physics. He then concludes that only those things have by nature a possibility to non-being, whose matter is subject to contrariety. All other beings are necessary by nature.[42]

St. Thomas confirms this conclusion in the response to the objection of Averroes against God's power of annihilation. For the Commentator, insisting on the truth that a thing's necessity

[40] *Ibid.*: "Avicenna namque posuit (*Metaph.*, c. 6), quod quaelibet res praeter Deum habebat in se possibilitatem ad esse et non esse. Cum enim esse sit praeter essentiam cuiuslibet rei creatae, ipsa natura rei creatae per se considerata, possibilis est ad esse; necessitatem vero essendi non habet nisi ab alio, cuius natura est suum esse, et per consequens est per se necesse esse, et hoc Deus est."

[41] *Ibid.*: "*Commentator* vero (in *XI Metaph.*, text. 41, et *in libro de Substantia Orbis*) contrarium ponit. sc., quod quaedam res creatae sunt in quarum natura non est possibilitas ad non esse, quia quod in sua natura habet possibilitatem ad non esse, non potest ab extrinseco acquirere sempiternitatem, ut sc. sit per naturam suam sempiternum. Et haec quidem positio videtur rationabilior. Potentia enim ad esse non convenit alicui nisi ratione materiae, quae est pura potentia. Materia enim, cum non possit esse sine forma, non potest esse in potentia ad non esse, nisi quatenus existens sub una forma, est in potentia ad aliam formam."

[42] *Ibid.*: "Illae ergo solae res in sua natura possibilitatem habent ad non esse, in quibus est materia contrarietate subjecta. Aliis vero rebus secundum suam naturam competit necessitas essendi, possibilitate non essendi ab earum natura sublata."

is from its very nature, concludes that even if God's action about them be removed, they still would not pass out of being and therefore God cannot annihilate them.[43] To this, St. Thomas replies:

that, in whose nature there is a possibility to non-being, does not receive necessity of being from another so that it might belong to it from nature because this would imply a contradiction, sc., that the nature could not be and yet be necessary; but that it be incorruptible from grace or glory is not prohibited. . . . Nevertheless there is not removed from the nature which has no possibility to non-being, that it has its necessity from another: since whatever perfection it has, it has from another: whence with the action of its cause ceasing, it would cease to exist, not because of an *intrinsic potency* to non-being, but because of the power in God of not giving it being.[44]

However St. Thomas insists in his response to the twelfth objection that their necessity is absolute, for "although incorruptible creatures depend on the will of God which can grant them being or withhold it, nevertheless they obtain from the divine will absolute necessity of being, inasmuch as they are caused in such a nature in which there is no possibility to non-being."[45] Thus St. Thomas insists that some creatures have

[43] *Ibid.*, obj. 8: "Praeterea Commentator dicit quod id quod est in se possibile esse et non esse, non potest necessitatem essendi ab alio acquirere. Quaecumque ergo creaturae habent necessitatem essendi, in eis non est possibilitas ad esse et non esse. . . . Si ergo sibi relinquantur, divina actione subtracta, non deficient in non esse; et sic Deus non videtur quod possit ea annihilare."

[44] *Ibid.*, ad 8: "Dicendum, quod illud in cuius natura est possibilitas ad non esse, non recipit necessitatem essendi ab alio, ita quod ei competat secundum naturam, quia hoc implicaret contradictionem, sc., quod natura posset non esse et quod haberet necessitatem essendi; sed quod habeat incorruptibilitatem ex gratia vel gloria, hoc non prohibetur. . . . Non tamen removetur quin ipsa natura in qua est possibilitas ad non esse habeat necessitatem essendi ab alio; cum quidquid perfectionis habet, sit ei ab alio; unde cessante actione suae causae, deficeret, non propter potentiam ad non esse quae in ipso sit, sed propter potestatem quae est in Deo ad non dandum esse."

[45] *Ibid.*, ad 12: "licet creaturae incorruptibiles ex Dei voluntate dependeant, quae potest eis esse praebere et non praebere, consequuntur tamen ex divina voluntate absolutam necessitatem essendi, in quantum in tali natura causantur, in qua non sit possibilitas ad non esse."

an absolute necessity of being. That this necessity is received does not impair its absoluteness. The fact that a creature's necessity is conditioned by the divine will's immutably stating it, does not make it possible *simpliciter* but only *secundum quid*.[46] For in this sense it is not impossible that any creature should not exist. However this possibility to non-existence is not denominated from any passive potency in the creature itself but from the fact that there is no contradiction implied. For God is not determined by a necessity of nature in His production of creatures.[47] Thus in the *De Potentia* St. Thomas distinguishes necessity and possibility of being according to the nature of the things themselves.

In the second book of the *Contra Gentes* St. Thomas treats of the problem in the chapter entitled "How there can be absolute necessity in created things." Here he says that although all things depend on the will of God which is not necessitated in its operation, nevertheless absolute necessity is not excluded from things so that we would have to say all things are contingent.[48]

St. Thomas then explains exactly what he means by necessity: "For it is simply and absolutely necessary that those things be, in which there is no possibility for non-being."[49] Thus, conversely, a contingent thing is a being which has such a potency to non-existence. St. Thomas then gives us the difference between them:

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[46] *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 17, ad 3: "Dicendum, quod non potest dici, simpliciter loquendo, caelum esse corruptibile propter hoc quod in non esse decideret, si a Deo non contineretur. Sed tamen quia creaturam contineri in esse a Deo, dependet ex immobilitate divina, non ex necessitate naturae, . . . potest concedi secundum quid corruptibile esse caelum, cum hac sc. conditione, si Deus non ipsum contineret."

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 5, a. 3: "Creaturas autem simpliciter non esse, non est in se impossible quasi contradictionem implicans, alias ab aeterno fuissent. . . . Similiter Deus non producit creaturas ex necessitate naturae ut sic potentia Dei determinetur ad esse creaturae."

[48] *II Contra Gentes*, c. 30: "Licet autem omnia ex Dei voluntate dependeant sicut ex prima causa, quae in operando necessitatem non habet, nisi ex sui propositi suppositione, non tamen propter hoc absoluta necessitas a rebus excluditur, ut sit necessarium nos fateri omnia contingentia esse."

[49] *Ibid.*: "Illas enim res simpliciter et absolute necesse est esse in quibus non est possibilitas ad non esse."

Certain things are so produced by God that in their nature there is a potency to non-being. This happens because their matter is in potency to another form. Those things, then, which either are immaterial or whose matter is not in potency to another form, do not have a potency to non-being. It is absolutely and simply necessary that such things be.[50]

So for St. Thomas, all creatures are not contingents but some are necessary. The difference is assigned to them according to matter and form. Since matter is the element of potency which is the principle of imperfection, while form is the element of act which is the principle of perfection, on this basis is measured the possibility and necessity of things in regard to their existence. For being and existence are perfection. Perfection is limited by imperfection as form is limited by matter and act by potency. From this we may conclude that subsistent forms have being and existence in an unlimited manner. On the other hand, composed beings have being limited by their matter. Yet even in those composed beings whose form totally exhausts the capacity of matter to receive another form, there can be no potency to non-existence, for non-being can come to a thing only through the separation of its matter and form. Therefore for Aristotle and St. Thomas, subsistent forms and incorruptible bodies (as they placed the celestial bodies to be) are necessary beings—beings that cannot not-be. All composed, corruptible bodies are possible or contingent — beings that can not-be. Since all created being is either simple or composed, and all composed being either corruptible or incorruptible, we may say that all created being is either necessary or contingent. This seems to be the doctrine of St. Thomas.

The fact that all created beings are dependent in their existence on the will of God does not obviate the fact that some creatures have absolute necessity of being. In the same chapter, St. Thomas disposes of such an objection against his thesis.

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[50] *Ibid.*: "Quaedam autem res sic a Deo in esse productae ut in earum natura sit potentia ad non esse. Quod quidem contingit ex hoc quod materia in eis est in potentia ad aliam formam. Illae autem res in quibus vel non est materia, vel, si est, non est possibilis ad aliam formam, non habent potentiam ad non esse. Eas igitur absolute et simpliciter necesse est esse."

If however it be said that those things which are *ex nihilo*, in themselves tend toward nothingness and so in all creatures there is a potency to non-being, this manifestly does not follow. For created things are said to tend towards nothingness in the same manner in which they came from nothingness. This indeed is only according to the potency of the agent. Therefore there is not a potency to non-being in created things, but there is a potency in the Creator to give them being or to cease keeping them in being, since He does not produce them by a necessity of nature but by His will.[51]

In his commentary on Aristotle's *Peri Hermeneias*, St. Thomas again holds that necessity and contingency are determined from the natures of things. In the lesson where he treats of the roots of contingency in things, he cites Boethius' commentary on the point. First there is the opinion of Diodorus who distinguished possible and necessary according to event. For according to him, impossible is that which will never be; necessary, that which will always be; possible, that which at some time will be. The Stoics distinguished according to exterior prohibiting factors. For them, necessary is that which cannot be prohibited from being true; impossible, that which is always prohibited from truth; possible, that which can or cannot be prohibited from being true.[52]

However St. Thomas points out the falsity of these distinctions. For he says that the distinction of Diodorus is incompetent because it is *a posteriori* while that of the Stoics is *ab*

[51] *Ibid.*: "Si autem dicatur quod ea quae sunt ex nihilo, quantum est de se, in nihilum tendunt; et sic omnibus creaturis inest potentia ad non esse; manifestum est hoc non sequi. Dicuntur enim res creatae eo modo in nihilum tendere quo sunt ex nihilo. Quod quidem non est nisi secundum potentiam agentis. Sic igitur et rebus creatis non inest potentia ad non esse: sed Creatori inest potentia ut eis det esse vel eis desinat esse influere; cum non ex necessitate naturae agat ad rerum productionem, sed ex voluntate."

[52] *I Periherm.*, lect. 14: "Est autem considerandum quod, sicut Boethius dicit hic in Commento, circa possibile et necessarium diversimode aliqui opinati sunt. Quidam enim distinxerunt ea secundum eventum, sicut Diodorus, qui dixit illud esse impossibile quod numquam erit; necessarium vero quod semper erit; possibile vero quod quandoque erit, quandoque non erit. Stoici vero distinxerunt haec secundum exteriora prohibentia. Dixerunt enim necessarium esse illud quod non potest prohiberi quin sit verum; impossibile vero quod semper prohibetur a veritate; possibile vero quod potest prohiberi vel non prohiberi."

exteriori and *per accidens*. The first distinction is *a posteriori* because something is not necessary because it will exist always but rather, it will exist always because it is necessary. The second distinction likewise is defective because something is not necessary because it cannot be prohibited but rather, it cannot be impeded because it is necessary.[53]

St. Thomas then cites the opinion that Boethius attributes to Philo, saying that others have better distinguished possible and necessary according to the natures of things. That is, a necessary thing is determined in its nature only to being; impossible is determined only to non-being; possible is that which by nature is determined neither to being nor to non-being but is contingent to both. This, says St. Thomas, is manifestly the opinion of Aristotle. For the Philosopher assigns the *ratio* of contingency in those things which are done by us to the fact that we are consiliative; in other things from this that their matter is in potency to each of the opposites, i. e., to being and non-being.[54]

From these different citations of St. Thomas we can justly conclude to his understanding of contingency and necessity. A contingent or possible being is one that can exist or can not-exist. But where St. Thomas is talking about already existing beings, we say that it is a being that can not-exist. A necessary being, on the other hand, is one which cannot not-exist. The

[53] *Ibid.*: "Utraque enim distinctio videtur esse incompetens. Nam prima distinctio est a posteriori: non enim ideo aliquid est necessarium, quia semper erit; sed potius ideo semper erit, quia est necessarium: et idem patet in aliis. Secunda autem assignatio est ab exteriori et quasi per accidens: non enim ideo aliquid est necessarium, quia non habet impedimentum, sed quia est necessarium, ideo impedimentum haberi non potest."

[54] *Ibid.*: "Et ideo alii melius ista distinxerunt secundum naturam rerum, ut scilicet dicatur illud necessarium, quod in sua natura determinatum est solum ad esse; impossibile autem quod est determinatum solum ad non esse; possibile autem quod ad neutrum est omnino determinatum, sive se habeat magis ad unum quam ad alterum, sive se habeat aequaliter ad utrumque, quod dicitur contingens ad utrumlibet. Et hoc est quod Boethius attribuit Philoni. Sed manifeste haec est sententia Aristotelis in hoc loco. Assignat enim rationem possibilitatis et contingentiae, in his quidem quae sunt a nobis ex eo quod sumus consiliativi, in aliis autem ex eo quod materia est in potentia ad utrumque oppositorum."

basis of a thing's contingency is matter subject to contrariety. The basis of a thing's necessity is neither the absence of or removal from the potency of matter. Thus immaterial beings and beings whose matter is not in potency to receive other forms, are necessary beings. Therefore all composed and corruptible beings are contingent. These latter come into existence through generation and suffer non-existence by their corruption. Thus the distinction is according to the very physical natures of these beings. The necessity of necessary beings is absolute because it flows from their natures. It is conditioned only extrinsically by the power of God to cease sustaining them in being. Though their necessity is received, it is yet absolute. Such seems to be the teaching of St. Thomas.

Since this is so, it is difficult to see how Fr. Boyer can say that necessary beings are contingent, even as corruptible beings, because their necessity is received. Likewise it seems as if Fr. Maquart is not speaking strictly when he says that contingency implies neither inception nor corruption. Certainly the only way in which these statements can be justified is by taking contingency in the sense of participation or in the fact of being caused. Then what these authors say is true since all created being participates in the existence of the First Being and is caused by it. However this is not the manner of speaking employed by St. Thomas. Indeed in his mind such an interpretation of contingency is *secundum quid*. For according to the Holy Doctor, contingency and necessity are not denominated by the active power of the First Cause but by the passive potencies in things.

It should now be clear what St. Thomas means when he says that the *Tertia Via* is taken from possibility and necessity. The beings that he calls possible not to be, are composed, corruptible beings. They have a real, subjective, physical, passive potency to non-existence. This potency is called passive as opposed to an active potency. For a thing suffers or receives non-existence. It is likewise real and subjective as opposed to a logical and objective potency. For the latter does not flow from the physical

nature of the being. For example we may say that even necessary beings have a logical or objective potency to not-exist inasmuch as it is in the power of God to cease sustaining them in existence. In this sense there is no contradiction implied in the fact that a necessary being should not exist. But there would be such a contradiction were we to say that a necessary being had a real, subjective potency to suffer non-existence. For then its very nature would be contradiction, i. e. demanding existence and yet allowing non-existence. Therefore a necessary being is one that lacks this real, subjective potency to non-existence; a possible being is one that has such a potency to non-existence. Such, then, is the subject matter of the first part of the *Tertia Via*.

B. Dialectic of Proof

To determine whether this proof for the existence of God has a temporal significance, it is first of all necessary to examine in detail that section of the proof in the *Summa* with which we are concerned. At first glance this prior part of the argument seems to be composed of ideas of a temporal nature as well as notions of a causal sense. As a result we must scrutinize the words of St. Thomas to understand exactly what he is talking about and in what precise sense we must interpret his thought.

Firstly, says St. Thomas, we find in the world about us, that certain things have the possibility of being and of not being. "*Invenimus enim in rebus quaedam quae sunt possibilia esse et non esse.*" The basis for this statement is our own experience of the generation and corruption of things; "*cum quaedam inveniantur generari et corrumpi, et per consequens possibilia esse et non esse.*" So, since generation and corruption mean a coming into being and a going out of being, we immediately infer that such things are possible to be and not be, since "*ab esse ad posse, valet illatio.*" As these beings are possible, it follows that they are not necessary, because every being is either possible or necessary. It must be noted that here St. Thomas is pointing out a simple fact of the physical world. There is no

need to delve into metaphysical reasons for his statement. We see, says St. Thomas, this happen before our eyes and we must accept it as a visible reality. There is no need for proof. The fact stands true that here are certain things that are possible to be and not be.

Now St. Thomas proceeds to reason about this physical truth. He says that it is impossible that all things which are, be of this nature. "*Impossibile est autem omnia quae sunt, talia esse.*" This is the minor proposition of his argument. Here he applies to the aforesaid fact of experience another truth so that logic forces us to conclude that there are some things in existence which are not possible to be and not be. But what is of this nature is necessary being since it is not able not to be. Therefore we conclude to the existence of necessary beings. "*Non ergo omnia entia sunt possibilia sed oportet aliquid esse necessarium in rebus.*" Thus we may syllogize the first part of the Third Way:

> There are in existence things possible to be and not be.
> But, it is impossible that all things which are be such.
> Therefore, there must be in existence some necessary being.

As is clearly seen the burden of the proof rests on the minor, which although it is a fact flowing from the physical nature of contingent things, is not evident to the senses, as is the major proposition. St. Thomas then proves his minor by saying that if a thing is contingent, then from the very fact at some time it is not. Thus he proves that it is impossible that all things be contingent. "*Impossibile est autem omnia quae sunt, talia esse: quia quod possibile est non esse, quandoque non est.*" Here, then, St. Thomas seems to be saying that it is from the very nature of a contingent or possible thing that it must at some time suffer non-existence. It is here that the basis and foundation of the Third Way is laid open. If this is true, then the third proof for the existence of God, is, according to the mind of St. Thomas, a valid proof from the physical nature of contingent things.

Presupposing the truth of "*quod possibile est non esse,*

quandoque non est," we must now see how St. Thomas shows that this assumption proves his minor proposition that all things cannot be contingents. He continues by employing the hypothesis that all things are truly possibles or contingents and then he reduces this position to an absurdity. For he says that if this is true that all things are contingent, then at some time there was nothing in existence. " *Si igitur omnia possibilia non esse, aliquando nihil fuit in rebus.*" This conclusion necessarily follows from the fact that such things at some time are not. Since then, St. Thomas continues, it is true that at some time there was nothing, then it logically follows that even now there is nothing, because the negation of being cannot of itself be the cause of being. " *Etiam nunc nihil esset, quia quod non est, non incipit esse nisi per aliquid quod est.*" Thus the absurdity is complete. From the necessity of a possible thing's nonexistence we are forced to conclude that if all things are possible, then a prior complete absence of being is necessitated and therefore a present lack of being results. Thus the hypothesis that all things are possible leads to the negation of being.

In this proof of the minor we may distinguish a double element. We see a causal inference in the truth that " what is not, does not begin to be except through something that is." This is indeed a metaphysical truth and is used to complete the reduction of the hypothesis to an absurdity. However it is not the proof of the minor proposition that " it is impossible that all things be contingent." Therefore it cannot be stated that this causal element transfers the Third Way to a metaphysical argument. The focal point of this proof of the minor is the fact that " what is possible not to be, at some time is not." For validity St. Thomas might have proposed the minor simply as: " It is impossible that all things be such, because what is possible not to be, at some time is not." However, to bring the force of the minor into full play, he added the reasoning of the contrary hypothesis which is reduced to an absurdity by the metaphysical notion of nothing being the cause of nothing. Of course, we must remember that the whole structure of the

proof then rests on the truth of its foundation which must be proved. But if it is true to say that what is possible not to be at some time is not, then has St. Thomas given us a valid proof for the existence of God from the very physical nature of temporal things. So we may syllogize the argumentation of this first part of the Third Way:

There are in existence things possible to be and not be. (evident)

But it is impossible that all things be of this nature.

Therefore, there is in existence something that is necessary.

as to the minor:

What is possible not to be, at some time is not. (q. e. d.)

But if all things are possible, then nothing is, which is absurd.

Therefore, it is impossible that all things be possibles.

as to the minor:

If all things are possibles, then at some time nothing was, because each of them at some time is not.

But if at some time nothing was, then even now nothing is because non-being cannot be the cause of being.

Therefore, if all things are possibles, then nothing is, which is absurd.

However, as we have seen, this theory is not acceptable to all. Objections have been raised to the truth of St. Thomas' contention that " what is possible not to be, at some time is not." Thereby the validity of a temporal and physical proof is brought into doubt. This is a serious objection and one which is hardly consonant with St. Thomas' knowledge of physics. Likewise, we have seen that many defenders of the proof as stated in the *Summa* have attempted to answer the objection by interpreting St. Thomas' words in the light of their own knowledge of physical science. As a result the proof has lost its

prime objective, sc., a clear and simple demonstration of the existence of God. It is the purpose of this paper to show that the proof of St. Thomas stands true by force of its very words and independently of technical distinctions and unwarranted assumptions.

Since the Holy Doctor in the article in the *Summa* gave no proof for his assumption, we must look elsewhere for the confirmation of its truth. Indeed, his very silence would lead one to infer that to his mind, the statement was evident in itself and needed no proof. As we have seen, his earliest commentators did not think it necessary to further explain his statement. However in the light of the controversy which has arisen over the nature of the proof, Thomistic scholars have delved into the works of St. Thomas, both physical and metaphysical, in order to determine his thought on the matter. Among the texts cited in confirmation of the temporal theory, we have the *De Caelo et Mundo* in which St. Thomas comments on Aristotle's doctrine on the physical nature of the world. To this we turn with confidence that from its pages may be derived the ultimate and conclusive evidence that will prove St. Thomas' assumption that " what is possible not to be, at some time is not." Furthermore it is the aim of this study to show that this text will prove his contention from the very nature of physical beings, in respect to their duration in existence.

C. Contribution of *De Caelo et Mundo*

In the first book of Aristotle's work on the physical nature of the heavens and the world we come to that section from lessons twenty-two to twenty-nine where he confounds the opinion of those who claim that, though the world was made in time, it is yet incorruptible. It is Aristotle's aim to prove that the world is eternal and therefore neither generable nor corruptible. In the first two lessons (nos. 22 and 23) Aristotle discusses the various opinions of those who have seemed to concur in the theory of a world that was made in time and yet is incorruptible. In the remaining six lessons (nos. 24 to 29),

he treats of the problem in a positive manner by proving that everything that is generable is also corruptible, since what exists without at some time having been generated, is by that very fact, incorruptible.

In commenting on this doctrine of the Philosopher, St. Thomas demonstrates that a contingent thing which has the possibility of being, has de facto non-being before being and non-being after being. Applying this conclusion to our problem of the Third Way, we must of necessity conclude to the fact that if a thing is possible not to be, at some time is not. That is, it must be subject to non-being, both before and after it has existence. It can readily be seen, therefore, at the outset, that the contents of this section of the *De Caelo et Mundo* can offer the irrefutable confirmation of St. Thomas' minor proposition in his third proof for the existence of God. It will be necessary then to examine carefully his argumentation in this commentary. The tract may be thus divided:

I *Introduction.* Definition and explanation of the terms to be used.
  A — *Ingenitum* and *genitum.* (lect. 24)
  B — Corruptible and incorruptible.
  C — Possible and impossible. (lect. 25)

II *Body.* The various proofs of his contention.
  A — Proofs from logic or common reasons.
    (1) Necessary premises. (lect. 26)
    (2) From the convertibility of terms.
      a—Relation of eternity to these terms. (lect. 26 and 27)
      b—Relation of these terms between themselves (lect. 28)
    (3) From the impossibility of the contrary opinion. (lect. 29)
      a—Destroys the principle of determined time.
      b— " " " " contradiction.
  B — Proof from natural science. (lect. 29, 11)

III *Conclusion.* Concordance of this doctrine with truths of Faith.

I — *Introduction.* Here St. Thomas defines the terms that will be used throughout and points out in exactly what sense they will be intended.

A — *Ingenitum* — A not-generated being may be understood in three ways:

(1) What has come into being but not through generation properly so-called. St. Thomas gives as an example a touch or motion. He says they are not generated because otherwise there would be a mutation of a mutation. So although a touch or a motion de facto comes into being, they are neither generable nor generated. There is by this definition denied the determined mode of generation according to potency.

(2) What has not yet come into being. For example, a man who will be born in some future time is called not generated. Although it is possible that this man be generated through generation properly so called, yet he has not been generated and so is not generated. Thus is denied the particular mode of generation according to act.

(3) What is impossible to be generated inasmuch as it is not possible not to be. Thus we say that something which must always be is ungenerated in the sense that there is denied the common notion of inception in being.

Genitum — A generated being may likewise be accepted in three ways:

(1) That which begins to be in any manner, i. e. through the proper mode of generation or otherwise. What is affirmed here is the common notion of inception in being.

(2) That which can begin to be in any manner, i. e. anything capable of being. What is here affirmed is any potential inception in being.

(3) That which can begin to be or come into existence through the mode of generation. This term covers not only things which have been generated but also things which are potentially generated. The affirmation is the proper mode of generation.

St. Thomas then compares the diverse acceptations of *geni-* they will be intended.

Ingenitum	*Genitum*
Negation of mode in act.	Affirmation of actual inception.
Negation of mode in potency.	Affirmation of potential inception.
Negation of common inception.	Affirmation of proper mode of generation.

He thereupon says that the last acceptations are the perfect understanding of the terms. The reason is because the negation of the common element (inception in being) contains a fortiori the negation of the proper mode (generation). Likewise the affirmation of the proper mode of generation includes the affirmation of the common element of mere inception in being. Therefore, in his treatment of the question, the term "*ingenitum*" is to be defined as that which cannot come into being since it is impossible not to be. The term "*genitum*" is defined as that which comes into being through generation properly so-called.

B — *Corruptible* — A corruptible being may be understood as:

(1) That which passes out of existence whether this cessation of being be through corruption or any other way. What is affirmed is the common notion of cessation of being.

(2) What can be corrupted through the proper mode of corruption. Here is affirmed the possibility of non-existence through mutation.

(3) That which is easily so corrupted. This is the affirmation of cessation of being though not yet in act.

Incorruptible—This term is equivalently said in three ways:

(1) What cannot pass out of being through the proper mode of generation but which can de facto not be, e. g. a touch or a motion. Thus there is denied the proper mode of corruption.

(2) What is not easily so corrupted. In this sense a thing which can indeed be corrupted is called incorruptible on account of the rarity of its actual corruption. For example, we call an honest politician incorruptible.

(3) That which cannot pass out of being in any way since it is not possible not to be. Here is denied the common notion of cessation of being.

Here, too, the last mentioned in each group is called the perfect sense of the term inasmuch as the affirmation of the proper mode of corruption includes the affirmation of the common cessation of being and the negation of the common element automatically infers the negation of the proper mode. Therefore St. Thomas accepts " corruptible " as that which is in potency to corruption properly so-called. He defines " incorruptible " as that which cannot cease to be in any manner since it is impossible not to be. It must be noticed that when we speak of inception in being, we use the positive terms of *genitum* and *ingenitum;* that is, something in act, since before a thing is, it is nothing. St. Thomas is here talking about being and not non-being. Therefore when he is affirming or denying the cessation of being, he uses the term " corruptible " and " incorruptible," i. e. according to potency, since after a thing ceases to be, it is nothing.

C — Finally, the precise senses of possible and impossible are determined. St. Thomas first distinguishes the sense of possible and impossible so that they may be taken either absolutely or relatively. In the absolute sense, something is possible or impossible *per se* from the very habitude of terms. Thus it is impossible for day to be night and possible for color to be visible. The relative sense, however, is determined in relation to things according to their active or passive potencies. St. Thomas says that it is in the latter sense that we employ the terms. Since we are concerned with natural things, we can refer possibility or impossibility to what an agent or patient can do or suffer.

(1) *Possible* is then determined to what an agent can do. But we always determine a potency in respect to the maximum of that potency. For example, if a trackman can run the mile in five minutes, he is not ranked as being able to run the mile in seven minutes. St. Thomas says that the reason for this is

that what is ultimate and maximum gives species to a thing and is completive of it. Therefore the virtue or potency of a thing is denominated from the most excellent of all things it can do. Now when we transfer the potency of doing to the potency of being, we find this to be most true. Because everything seeks being, we must then describe a thing's possibility to existence by the maximum time in which it can exist. Thus if a thing can exist forever it will be called infinite, and not that it can be for a certain time.

(2) *Impossible.* If, as we have seen, possible is denominated from the ultimate, then it follows that any more is impossible. Thus we say that as possibility is determined from the greatest of what can be done then impossibility is gauged from the least of what can not be done. For example, if it is possible for a man to lift one hundred pounds, we do not say that he can't lift two hundred pounds but rather that it is impossible for him to lift over one hundred pounds. In terms of existence, then, a thing's impossibility is taken from that time just succeeding its possibility to exist. Thus if a fly can live for twenty-four hours, it is impossible that it live for twenty-five.

II — *Body.*

A — Proofs from logic.

(1) After having defined and explained the terms he is going to use, St. Thomas now proceeds to reason about these terms. In this section he will establish certain principles from which his conclusion will ultimately follow. However these principles have to be themselves firmly established and proven before they can be validly applied to the problem. The proofs then will flow from the very consideration of the terms in themselves and from the analysis of opposing theories. Before he discusses these principles, however, he first sets down necessary premises which will govern his argumentation.

(a) He proves that possible to be or not to be, must be said according to a determined time. He has already implied this truth in his definition of the term " possible " but now he

shows that this principle is absolutely necessary to any discussion on the existence of things. For if it is not so held, then impossibilities will ensue. Thus we have a contingent thing which is possible to be and not to be. Now if the existence of this contingent thing is not limited to a determined time, then there will be always more time in which it can exist. The logical consequence of this is that the possible thing can then exist in infinite time. So therefore we are led to the conclusion that this thing is possible to be in infinite time and yet it is possible not to be in infinite time. But nothing can be and not be in the same time, so we must posit this thing existing in one infinite time and not existing in another different infinite time. The absurdity is patent. Yet this absurdity logically follows because the possibility of a contingent thing's existence is not limited to a determined time.

(b) The second premise is the logical truth that an impossibility does not follow from a false position but only from an impossible one. He proves this by first stating that false and impossible do not mean the same thing. For instance, if a man is sitting, it is false to say that he is standing; but it is not impossible that he stand. On the other hand, to say that he can stand and sit at the same time is not only false but impossible. Thus, if I suppose something and it is a false supposition, then not from this false supposition does an impossibility follow. But if I suppose something that leads to an impossibility, then it can be concluded that my supposition was impossible. St. Thomas uses this principle throughout his treatment to destroy the opinions of the adversaries. For by showing that their position leads to an impossibility, he thereby proves that their opinion is itself impossible.

(2) St. Thomas now proceeds to show that Aristotle's opinion on the eternity of the world is true as opposed to the theory of some that although the world was truly generated yet it is incorruptible. As we follow the Holy Doctor through his argumentation we will be able to see how this doctrine is applicable to our own problem in the third proof for the existence of God.

(a) — Having set down his premises, St. Thomas now considers the terms in relation to the concept of eternity.

i — Firstly he compares the notion of eternity to the terms, *ingenitum* and incorruptible. Thus he proves that every eternal being is incorruptible. If we posit something existing in infinite time, we must say that it is possible to exist in infinite time. If then we also say that this eternally existing being is corruptible, we are saying that it has the potency of non-existing. But when can this potency be realized if not in infinite time, because there is no time outside of infinite time. Yet if it is said that it is possible not to exist, it must be said according to some determined time, as has been shown. We must conclude that it can not-exist in the same infinite time in which it is placed as being eternal. So it is a being which, although de facto is possible to exist in infinite time because it is eternal, yet is also able to not-exist in that same time. But this is, of course, impossible. According to the premises, then, the supposition of an eternally existing being which is corruptible, is an impossible supposition. Since it is impossible that an eternal being is corruptible, it logically follows that it must be incorruptible.

However it can be objected against this reasoning that it does not necessarily follow. It is true, no doubt, that no potency is directed in act to two opposites at the same time. But there is nothing prohibiting a potency from being directed to two opposites in respect to the same time but under a disjunction. Although one cannot stand and sit at the same time, yet one can stand for a certain length of time and yet in that very same time he has the potency to sit. In terms of existence, we can posit an eternally existing being that is contingent or possible not to be and is not therefore a necessary being. So this contingent thing could indeed not-be in respect to some part of the infinite time in which it is posited as always existing. It does not follow from this that it is, at the same time, being and non-being. For example, someone can spend the whole day in the park and yet have the possibility of leaving the park for some part of the day, simply because he is in the park, not from necessity but contingently.

St. Thomas refutes this objection by pointing out the lack of parity between the two cases inasmuch as one is concerned with contingency which we cannot apply to eternal being. In terms of existence, if a thing always exists, then it has the potency of being in eternal time. But since all things seek being, each thing is only as much as it can be. This is especially clear in things that are from nature which is determined to one. Therefore it cannot be that an eternally existing thing is at the same time possible not to be or corruptible, because whatever exists eternally, does so not from contingency but from necessity.[55]

This sounds strange indeed to ears that are accustomed to having necessary existence attributed to God alone. But it must be kept in mind that St. Thomas is talking about the natures of things. Some things have a real subjective potency to being always and to these beings infinite duration is necessary. On the other hand, some things have a real, subjective potency to non-existence, and if we wish to avoid a contradiction we must say that such beings of necessity do not always exist.

It also follows that every eternal being is thereby ungenerated in the sense that no period of non-existence preceded its eternal existence. For there is no time, finite or infinite, outside the infinite time in which this eternal being exists. Thus the position of a generated eternal being places something to be and not be at the same time.

Thus St. Thomas shows that every eternally existing being is incorruptible and ungenerated. For he says that the element of "to not be sometimes" (*aliquando non esse*) is proper to corruptibility and generability just as animality is proper to brute and man. Thus by showing that the "*aliquando non*

[55] *I De Caelo et Mundo*, lect. 26: "Sed dicendum est quod non est eadem ratio utrobique. Nam illud quod semper est, sc. per infinitum tempus, habet potentiam ut sit in infinito tempore: potentia autem existendi non est ad utrumque respectu temporis in quo quis potest esse; omnia enim appetunt esse, et unumquodque tantum est quantum potest esse. Et hoc praecipue patet in his quae sunt a natura, quia natura est determinata ad unum. Et sic quidquid semper est, non contingenter semper est, sed ex necessitate."

esse" is repugnant to the notion of eternity, we must conclude that no eternal being can be corruptible or generated. Therefore we must further conclude that every eternal being is an *ingenitum* and an incorruptible.

ii — To establish the conclusion then it will be necessary to demonstrate the truth that eternity is a concept that is foreign to the notions of corruptibility and generability. To achieve this end, St. Thomas employs the logical instrument of the opposition of terms. Perhaps it will be helpful to refresh our minds on the subject. We may say that logical opposition is the relative property which exists between two propositions that have the same subject and predicate but which differ in quantity or quality or both. Evidently there must be some basis for agreement, which in our case will be the basis of time or existence. There are two proper types of opposition, sc., contradiction and contrariety. Contradiction exists between an affirmative and a negative proposition when one affirms exactly that which the other denies. For example, we say that the propositions: "Every man is" and "Some man is not" are contradictory propositions. Of this opposition we may formulate the rule that one proposition is necessarily true, the other necessarily false. Contrariety exists between a universal, affirmative proposition and a universal, negative one, e. g., "Every man is" and "No man is," The rule here is that of contraries, both cannot be simultaneously true, although both may be false.

Now that we have these concepts in mind, we can proceed with St. Thomas to show that no eternal being is corruptible and no eternal being is generated. So we say that:

Eternal being	is contradictorily opposed to	non-eternal being.
Eternal being	is contrarily opposed to	eternal non-being.
Eternal non-being	is contradictorily opposed to	non-eternal non-being.

The reason behind the validity of this opposition is that eternal (*semper*) designates the universality of time, just as the word every (*omnis*) designates the universality of supposits. For we saw that:

Every man is	is the contradiction of	not every man is.
Every man is	is the contrary of	every man is not.
Every man is not	is the contradiction of	not every man is not.

To further clarify the thought we can equipolate the terms to read thus:

Every man is	contradiction	Some man is not.
Every man is	contrary	No man is.
No man is	contradiction	Some man is.

Likewise in the opposition of being we say that:

Always is	contradiction	Sometime is not.
Always is	contrary	Never is.
Never is	contradiction	Sometime is.

Having established the opposition of the terms St. Thomas concludes that the negations of both eternal being and eternal non-being are in the same subject in the same way, because they are the medium between two extremes. We will now see the proof of this in terms of existence. First of all we have the concept of eternal being. Now the negation of eternal existence is that of sometimes existing or not always existing. But if a thing at some time is not, it is also necessarily inferred that at some time it is. For it someone should say that the sun shone all day and someone else contradicts him, the latter infers that at some part of the day the sun was not shining. He does not imply that the sun did not shine at all through the day. So in terms of existence we say that the negation of eternal being is that something sometimes be and some times not be. From the other extreme of eternal non-being, the same conclusion follows, for the negation of eternal non-being is that at sometime this thing is and at some other time it is not. Therefore the negations of eternal being (*semper esse*) and eternal non-being (*semper non esse*) are the same thing, sc., sometimes be and sometimes not be (*aliquando non esse*). We may illustrate this:

Eternal being—Sometimes is and sometimes is not—Eternal non-being.

Every man is—Some man is and some man is not—No man is.

To further illuminate the solution St. Thomas shows that this conclusion will hold in any terms. So he says: Let A and B be contraries which as we know cannot be in the same subject at the same time. Let G be the negation of A, so that they are opposed contradictorily. Therefore in every subject there is either A or G.

Let D be the negation of B, so that in every subject there is either B or D.

We may thus reason that if the subject be A, then it is not possible that it be G; or if the subject be B, then it is not possible that it be D. If, on the other hand, the subject is neither A nor B, then we must conclude that it is both G and D. Thus the subject that is both G and D is the medium between the subject with A and the subject with B. We know that while contradictories exclude any other possibility, between contraries there is a middle ground and that the negation of both these contraries is the medium between the extremes, just as what is neither black nor white is the medium between black and white.

The final step is to transfer this irrefutable truth to the notions of eternity and corruptibility and generability. Thus whether eternity is applied to being or non-being the negation is always the same, sc., being at some time and non-being at some time. If it were otherwise, if we should posit that something can be eternally and yet can also be generated or corruptible, it will follow that something is at the same time able to be always and not able to be always. Thus we have contradictories existing in the same subject at the same time. Therefore we have demonstrated that no eternal being can be generated or corruptible. That this principle has bearing on our problem in the *Summa*, that " what is possible not to be, at some time is not," is patent. To sum up the conclusion of this argument we may say that every eternal being is ungenerated and incorruptible and therefore at no time is it possible that an eternal being not exist. Conversely we have proven that no corruptible or generated being can be eternal. Thus we may

rightly infer that at some time a corruptible being is not possible to be and therefore is not.

(b) — Having demonstrated the conclusion from the aspect of eternity St. Thomas then proceeds to show that the mutual relations of the terms themselves likewise prove the point. He intends in this section to show that incorruptible and *ingenitum* are convertible terms, as also are *genitum* and corruptible. Firstly, the conclusion will be proven by the use of a supposition and, secondly, it will be demonstrated that this conclusion necessarily flows from the very notion of the terms.

i — If we presuppose that incorruptible and *ingenitum* are convertible terms, so that every incorruptible is likewise ungenerated (and vice versa), it follows logically that every corruptible being had been generated and vice versa, i. e., that these latter terms are also convertible. Let us posit a being that is corruptible. Of that being we must say that it is either generated or ungenerated as it is necessary to predicate one of these about every existing thing. Thus if we say that this corruptible being is not generated, then we posit it to be an ungenerated corruptible. However, in light of our presupposition that *ingenitum* and incorruptible are convertible terms, are we not forced to say also that this corruptible being which is ungenerated, is also incorruptible? For example, we say that this flower is corruptible because we know that in a short time it will wither and die. Now suppose that we say that, although this flower is indeed corruptible, yet it is ungenerated in the sense that it has always been and there has been no time in which this flower could not have been. But by force of our presupposition we must further say that there is no time in the future in which this flower will not live and bloom because it is incorruptible. An absurdity results: this flower will die because it is corruptible; yet it cannot die because having been placed as ungenerated it is also said to be incorruptible. Thus we must conclude that this impossibility follows from a not merely false but an impossible premise, sc., that this corruptible being is ungenerated. Now since either *genitum* or *ingenitum* must be said of

every existing thing, since it is impossible that a corruptible being be ungenerated, it follows logically that every corruptible being is generated. Is then every generated being corruptible, so that they may be truly called convertible terms? An affirmative answer is evident from what has been said above. For as either *genitum* or *ingenitum* must be said of every existing thing, so too must each thing be either corruptible or incorruptible. Therefore to posit a generated thing that is incorruptible, is by reason of the presupposition to place a generated thing that has never been generated. It is to assert the manifest absurdity that this rose which we see to bud and bloom has existed for eternity. Therefore, as every generated being is corruptible, it is most true to state that *genitum* and corruptible are convertible terms.

However, since a structure is no stronger than its foundation, it is clear that we must prove the presupposition that formed the basis for the previous deduction. To prove what he has supposed, sc., that *ingenitum* and incorruptible are convertible terms, St. Thomas reverts to his proven principle that, as every eternal being is ungenerated, so too it is incorruptible. It must here be noted that the terms are to be understood in their proper sense, sc., of that which is not able not to be. This understood, it is easily proven that they are convertible. It is a proven principle that things equal to the same thing are equal to each other. But *ingenitum* and incorruptible are under the same aspect equivalent to the concept of eternity, because there is no time in which they are not. Therefore they are equal to each other and are convertible.

ii — Now St. Thomas proves his proposition from the very habitude of the terms between themselves. Firstly he concerns himself with *genitum* and corruptible which he shows to be convertible from what he has already said about their being a medium between two terms contrarily opposed. He has said that between the notions of eternal being and eternal non-being there is a medium which has not eternity, neither of being nor of non-being. This means, we say, that it is a thing both generated

and corruptible, since what is so, is possible both to be and to not be according to some determined time. If we consider a being which has been generated, we must consider it as existing in some determined time and as not existing in another determined time. Likewise, the notion of a corruptible being implies existence and non-existence in some finite time. But each of these considerations is equivalent to the medium between eternal existence and eternal non-existence, because that medium is necessarily that which sometimes is and sometimes is not. Since *genitum* and corruptible are equivalent to the same thing, they are equal to each other and are therefore convertible.

We may illustrate this procedure thusly:

Let A be eternal being and B eternal non-being.

Let D be corruptible being and G generated being.

We say that it is necessary for G to be the medium of A and B. The reason for this is that while there is no time (neither *a parte ante* nor *a parte post*) in which A and B are and are not (both according to potency and act), it is necessary that there be some time of non-existence for that which exists as G. Now it is evident that to eternity is contradictorily opposed the notion of sometime, inasmuch as infinite time is contradictorily opposed to finite time. Then to the concept of eternal being is opposed the notion of non-being sometimes, and to the concept of eternal non-being is opposed the notion of being sometimes. As we have seen the notion of being sometimes and non-being sometimes is rooted in the same subject. Therefore the subject G is contradictorily or equally opposed to A and B. Therefore G is the medium between A and B. If we repeat the same process with the substitution of D (corruptible) for G (generated) we come to the very same conclusion. Therefore inasmuch as both G and D are the medium between A and B, we must of necessity conclude that G and D or *genitum* and corruptible are convertible terms.

St. Thomas now employs an objection to point out an apparent flaw in the deduction. For, the objection runs, though

the conclusion be correct, the inference drawn is false. Although it is true that each term (*genitum* and corruptible) is a medium between eternal being and eternal non-being, yet it does not thereby follow that they are the same. For example, gray is a medium between black and white; red is also a medium between black and white. To conclude then that red and gray are each a medium between the same extremes is correct, but to infer from this conclusion that therefore gray is red is false. Likewise, although a corruptible and *genitum* agree in being mediums of the extreme, yet they differ substantially inasmuch as *genitum* has non-being before being and corruptible has non-being after being. Therefore they are not convertibles.

The objection is answered by reverting to the necessary premise that possible is said only in respect to a determined time. So a possible to be, whether considered according to inception or cessation of being, is referred to a definite period of existence and non-existence. In other words, both terms have non-being before being and non-being after being. Therefore there is only a nominal and not a real difference between *genitum* and corruptible.

St. Thomas completes the circle of this proof of the convertibility of the terms by showing this in reference to *ingenitum* and incorruptible. Having definitely proven that *genitum* and corruptible are convertible, the proof of the other clearly follows. Each existing thing is either generated or ungenerated, corruptible or incorruptible. Then if we place an incorruptible being which at the same time has been generated, we are at the same time positing an incorruptible being that is corruptible, since, as has been demonstrated, every generated being is by that very fact corruptible. If a corruptible *ingenitum* is supposed, the same inconvenience ensues for by the very force of the terms a corruptible *ingenitum* is an ungenerated being which has been generated. Thus there can be no doubt as to the validity of stating that these terms are convertible. In the light of the problem which has been posed from St. Thomas' words in the *Tertia Via*, that " what is possible not to be, at some time is

not," this principle can be most effectively applied. That which is possible not to be is a corruptible being and therefore a generated being. But this being is the medium between the two contraries of eternal existence and non-existence and is therefore itself contradictory to the notion of eternity. Therefore it is not possible that there be a corruptible thing which at some time is not. Thus the truth of St. Thomas' statement is shown from the very habitude of the terms used.

(3)—The question is concluded with a proof that any contrary opinion is essentially untenable. Specifically he treats the opinion of the ancients, among whom Plato seems to be a proponent, that although the world has been generated, yet by the power of God it is incorruptible; further, that from which the world has been generated, an unordered mass, was itself ungenerated but corruptible. Here it is the intent of St. Thomas following Aristotle to show that this theory is in direct opposition to established principles. First he reasons that this theory of Plato is in opposition to the principle that every potency is referred to a determined time; secondly, he proves this in reference to the principle of contradiction.

(a) We have already discussed in the preceding pages the necessity of determining the potency of a thing according to some time. St. Thomas based the necessity of this principle on the fact that its denial led to an absurdity. For if a thing's existence in being is not determined, then there will always be more time in which it can exist. There are beings, however, that are possible to be and not be. If we deny the principle of determined time, then we are forced to posit two infinite times, one in which this being can be and the other in which this being can not be, because the same thing cannot be and not be in the same infinite time.

In applying this principle in this place, St. Thomas says that all beings have the capability of existing either in a determined time of indefinite duration or in a determined time of finite duration. Here, it must be noted, St. Thomas accepts the infinite (of time) in the sense of " that greater than which cannot

be accepted." That is, here St. Thomas is considering the infinite according to its entirety in potency, so that no addition can be made which is not already in the infinite. Therefore St. Thomas can say that any being having the potency or capability of existing either in finite or in infinite time, is always in respect to a determined time.

On the other hand, the theory that posits an incorruptible world that has been generated, and a corruptible mass that has been ungenerated, cannot hold that the potency to exist of these beings is determined. This world would be neither simply infinite nor yet simply finite. It is not infinite because it has been generated; it is not finite since no limit is put on its continued existence. The reverse, of course, is true of the corruptible, ungenerated mass. Thus St. Thomas proves that this theory of Plato violates the principle that the potency to existence must be determined.

(b) Now St. Thomas shows how this theory negates the principle of contradiction in the light of the potency to and the cause of existence.

i — It is the understanding of this opinion that something which always was, is afterwards corrupted in some instant of time, and that something which has been generated in time will perdure forever. But what reason can be given why one should be corrupted after infinite time and the other generated? Why in that precise instant rather than in any of the infinite instants which preceded their corruption and generation. A reason could, of course, be given if their potency to existing was referred to a determined time; but since the preceding time is placed as being infinite, that reason cannot be brought forth. As a result we must say the *ingenitum could* not-be in any of those infinite instants preceding its corruption, and that the *genitum* could be in any of those infinite instances preceding its generation. If this be the case, then, there will be something corruptible in the infinite time in which the *ingenitum* always was; it also follows that there will be something generable in the infinite time in which the *genitum* was not, so that in any of the preceding in-

finite instants, that *genitum* could have been generated. Therefore, something will have at the same time the potency of being and not-being. But if it is a potency it is possible and a possible can be placed. Therefore we posit that an *ingenitum*, while it was and could not-be, was not; or a *genitum*, while it was not and could be, was. Therefore the opposites of being and non-being are simultaneous in the same subject. Thus the contrary opinion voids the principle of contradiction.

The obvious objection comes to mind that this reasoning doesn't follow because it is very possible that two potencies exist in the same subject at the same time, though it is not possible that both be directed towards opposites at the same time in act. What is simply possible is not thereby compossible, e. g., it is simply possible that while sitting, I stand; but it is not compossible, i. e., that I stand and sit at the same time. So, too, it can be said that what was already existing in infinite time, could during that infinite time not-be. It does not then follow that a thing is and is not at the same time. Seen from this aspect, the positing of a corruptible *ingenitum* does not violate the principle of contradiction.

As has already been observed, the objection does not achieve a complete parity between its example and application, for to sit or stand is contingent but to be or not-be is, given a thing's nature, necessary. What is incompossible to that which is necessary is at the same time simply impossible. Being in infinite time is indeed necessary because each thing must be as the nature of things has it; nothing defects in being unless it already can not-be, since all things by nature seek being. Therefore, if we place something as possible to be, by this very fact we place as compossible that it necessarily be. Thus when we place that which always was, at the same time was possible not to be, we are placing opposites of being at the same time.[56]

[56] *I De Caelo et Mundo*, lect. 29: "Sed dicendum est quod illud quod est incompossibile ei quod contingenter, nihil prohibet simpliciter possibile esse: sed illud quod est incompossibile ei quod simpliciter necesse est esse, est simpliciter impossibile. Id autem quod naturaliter est per tempus infinitum, necesse est esse: quia necesse est quod unumquodque tantum sit quantum natura rerum habet; non enim aliquid

Once again, we must be careful not to read anything into the words of St. Thomas not intended by him. Sitting and standing are contingent as far as I am concerned. I can do either or neither and yet *I* remain the same. But being or non-being are necessary to *me*. Now let us consider beings according to their nature and not as they are subject to the divine power. Let us place this being that has de facto always existed; that is, there has been no time in which it was not. It is therefore necessary. It has the potency to be always, to exist always, because it has always existed. Thus considering the nature of this thing, we say that while it exists, it must exist and as far as it is concerned, it cannot not-exist. Therefore we cannot place as compossible the actuality of existence and the potentiality of non-existence, as we can place the actuality of sitting and the potentiality of standing.

Certainly we must grant what St. Thomas says in that all things seek being. Therefore, as far as the thing is concerned, it must be as long as it can be. If a being is possible to be for a determined time, then from nature it is necessary that it be for that time. Beyond that time it has the potency to non-being. Now a being that is eternally existing has the potency to be always and thus it is necessary that it always be. How, in that same time in which it must be, can it have the potency to not-be, since the later potency could be exercised only in that same infinite time in which it must exist?

From this reasoning it follows that there cannot be given a thing corruptible in nature which is not at some time corrupted. For if a thing de facto is not corrupted, is it not then incorruptible, since "*ab esse ad posse valet illatio?*" Here St. Thomas and Aristotle come to grips with Plato saying that the world though generated in time will never corrupt. St. Thomas mentions that certain ones have defended Plato on the grounds

deficit esse nisi quando iam non potest esse, eo quod omnia appetunt esse. Si igitur aliquid ponitur possibile esse, ex hoc ipso necesse est quod ponatur compossibile ei quod necesse est esse. Et ideo si ponamus illud quod semper fuit, fuisse possibile non esse pro illo tempore, sequitur quod possit simul esse et non esse."

that Plato did not understand or intend this opinion in the sense that the generated world is by nature incorruptible but that God will always sustain the corruptible world in existence. However St. Thomas adds that no matter what the intention of Plato or anyone else holding this opinion, Aristotle argues against the words of the theory and their natural import. The words themselves lead to the contradiction that one thing is corruptible and incorruptible at the same time.[57]

ii — St. Thomas concludes his argument from logic by showing that from the aspect of the cause of existence, the contrary opinion of Plato is at odds with the principle of contradiction. We have seen that things which have been generated or corrupted are the medium between eternal being and non-being. As such it is in them by nature that they sometime be and sometime not-be. There is in them the same potency to contradictories, sc., to being and non-being. The reason or cause of this is taken from their matter inasmuch as it is subjected to privation of form. This is the principle of their generation and corruption. When a thing has been generated, we must say that the matter is yet subject to privation of the form and is therefore capable of non-being, then to place that this generated being is incorruptible is to place that opposites exist in the same being at the same time, sc., that this being can and cannot be corrupted. The same thing holds true for the corruptible *ingenitum*. For if the matter be subject to privation of form, it is also subject to another form and therefore capable of generation. Thus the same thing can and cannot be generated.

The adversaries might attempt an evasion by saying that the incorruptible that has been generated has indeed the potency to non-being, not in the future, but only in respect to the past. Likewise this being which is *ingenitum* but corruptible has the potency to eternal being in respect to the past. Thus the

[57] *Ibid.*: "Sed quod corrumpitur non semper est, quod est incorruptible, semper est: erit aliquid ergo simul possibile et semper esse et non semper esse, quod est impossibile . . . ; quia quod potest semper esse, ex necessitate semper est, unde non potest non semper esse."

potency to contradictories which is in matter is saved without the necessity of having opposites at the same time.

This is truly a weak objection since it imports a perversion of time. Those things that are past cannot be changed into the present, nor vice versa. We have said that a *genitum*, by reason of the matter from which it has been generated, still has the potency to non-being. It cannot be said that this potency is in regard to the past because no potency respects that which has been made in the past but only that which can be done in the present or in the future. To deny this is to subvert the whole notion of potency and time. For it would be as true to say that last year is now or will be next year, for by this reasoning it follows that the past is changed into the present or future.

Thus concludes St. Thomas' argument from logic. Perhaps it will be wise to place here a recapitulation of this proof from logic. St. Thomas following Aristotle is arguing against the position of Plato who posited an incorruptible *genitum*. By virtue of the square of opposition St. Thomas concludes that such a position is logically untenable. For a natural potency to exist eternally and a natural potency of non-being in some determined instant of time are two contradictory things and cannot be joined in the same subject.

He proves this from the fact that a potency to existence is the capacity or inclination to being that is inherent in the thing itself. Now this potency is of itself determined to be exercised either in infinite time or in time of a limited duration. As far as the thing itself is concerned, its nature of necessity seeks the existence that is possible to it. Those things that are limited in existence have the potency to be as well as the potency to not-be. But by a necessity of nature the thing must strive to be as long as it can be. For all things seek being and nothing ceases to exist unless it can not-exist.[58] On the other hand, if a being should have the potency to exist eternally, it necessarily exists at each moment of that infinite time, and of itself, it cannot not-

[58] *Ibid.*: " quia necesse est quod unumquodque tantum sit quantum natura rerum habet; non enim aliquid deficit esse, nisi quando iam non potest esse, eo quod omnia appetunt esse."

exist. Thus, from whatever aspect we view the question, we must come to the same conclusion: to that which is of its nature eternal, there cannot be attributed any intrinsic possibility of non-being; to that which is naturally limited in duration, there cannot be attributed any possibility of eternity, so that there must be predicated of it a period of non-existence, both prior and posterior to its being in time.

B — *Proof from Natural Science.*

In his *De Generatione et Corruptione* (Book I, l. 7, No. 57), St. Thomas has this to say: "And so it does not follow that what has been corrupted, vanishes from the total nature of things, because, although what has been corrupted in made *non-ens*, yet there remains something else which has been generated. Whence matter cannot remain but that it be subjected to some form. Thence it is that when one thing has been corrupted, another is generated; when one thing is generated, another has been corrupted." Thus we see that generation and corruption (properly taken) are the terms of an alteration by which contrary is made into contrary. Now, says St. Thomas, it is clear that from that contrary from which something has been made, which formerly was not, it is reduced again through corruption into the same contrary. For example, if something is chilled, it can again be reheated. The coffee is heated and then grows cold and then is reheated, but always retain the potency to the opposite contrary. What is generated can again be corrupted: that which is corrupted has at some time been generated.[59] Therefore, the position that destroys this, the opinion that places an incorruptible *genitum* or a corruptible *ingenitum*, is against the principles of natural science.

[59] *Ibid.*: "Et hoc probat quia omnia corruptibilia et generabilia sunt alterabilia; generatio autem et corruptio est terminus alterationis; alteratio autem fit de contrario in contrarium. Et sic patet quod ex illis contrariis ex quibus aliqua fiunt cum prius non essent, ab illis etiam postea corrumpuntur, et in eadem reducuntur per corruptionem; sicut si aliquid ex calido factum sit frigidum, potest iterum a calido calefieri. Et sic patet quod illud quod est generatum, potest iterum corrumpi; et illud quod est corruptum, fuit quandoque generatum."

III. *Conclusion.*

Now that St. Thomas has fully explained and illustrated the thought of Aristotle on the nature of things as regards their potency to existence, he has but one final word on the subject. It has been said that Aristotle set out to prove the eternity of the world against those who said that although the world was generated in time, yet by the power of God it is incorruptible. Did, then, Aristotle hold conclusively that the world is eternal? According to St. Thomas, who is the most competent to interpret the thought of the Philosopher, we must say no. St. Thomas holds that what Aristotle has said in this text was to prove the eternity of the world, not in the sense that it never came into existence, but in the sense that it did not come into being in the manner described by the ancients, i. e., through generation. In the *Summa Theologiae* (I, q. 46, a. 1), where St. Thomas inquires about the eternity of the world, he has this to say: "Nor are Aristotle's reasons simply but relatively demonstrative—viz., in order to contradict the reasons of some of the ancients who asserted that the world began to exist in some quite impossible manner. This appears in three ways. Firstly, because both in the *Physics* (Bk. VIII) and in *De Caelo* (I, c. 12), he premises some opinions, as those of Anaxagoras, Empedocles and Plato, and brings forward reasons to refute them. Secondly, because wherever he speaks of this subject, he quotes the testimony of the ancients, which is not the way of a demonstrator, but of one persuading of what is probable. Thirdly, because he expressly says in the *Topics* (I, c. 11) that there are dialectical problems about which we have nothing to say from reason, as 'whether the world is eternal.'"

However, if such be the case, how can we say, as has been proven, that the world is ungenerated and therefore not generated. St. Thomas repeats that the reasoning of Aristotle must be considered as proceeding against those stating that the world was made through generation. We know from faith that the world was indeed made; but we also know from faith the world

did not begin through generation. "In the beginning, God created heaven and earth." (Gen. 1: 1) That is, St. Thomas adds, it was caused, not by nature, but by the First Principle whose power was not necessitated to giving it existence in eternity. Almighty God to demonstrate His complete dominion over all being so willed to create a world after it was not, a world which from nature might indeed be eternal. Those things which have been produced by God that they might exist forever have indeed the potency and power of always existing and in no way are they subject to this, that at some time they should not be. Before they were created they did not have any potency to the non-being that preceded their existence because a potency is not in respect to the past but only to the present or the future. Thus, concludes St. Thomas, in no way are the conclusions to which we have reasoned repugnant to the revealed truths of faith. It is true to say that the world was ungenerated; not only in the sense that it was made, not through generation but creation, but also inasmuch as the world, though it was not, yet can be considered as always existing in infinite time, since time is but the measure of its motion. For such is the power of God over being, that at His word the permanence of things is instituted.

Thus, for example, the human soul begins in time and yet it is incorruptible. This does not negate the principle that incorruptible and *ingenitum* are convertible terms, even though *ingenitum* be accepted in the sense that this thing so has being that there was no time when it was not. We can assert this seeming contradication because although it is not in God's wisdom that a thing be in past time when it wasn't, yet it is in His almighty power to create a being in time whose nature is such that it is not able at any time to not-exist. The principles, then, stand true and the conclusions are valid because they flow from the physical nature of things as they are.

III. Synthesis and Solution

Application to the Proof.

There now remains only the task of applying this doctrine of Aristotle and St. Thomas to our problem of the *Tertia Via*. It should be plainly evident that what has been proven in the above text is also confirmation of St. Thomas' contention that " what is possible not to be, at some time is not." We have concluded from the *De Caelo et Mundo* that every eternal being is ungenerated and incorruptible, while no generated and/or corruptible being is eternal. But the being whence the proof proceeds in the *Summa* is possible to be and not be. Therefore it is generated and corruptible and so cannot be eternal. Thus at some time it must suffer non-existence.

When, therefore, St. Thomas says that this possible thing at some time is not, he means that this contingent being has non-existence before existence and non-existence after existence. Not only does this necessitate a cause to bring it into existence but of necessity it results in nothingness after its existence. It is wrong, then, to limit the *non-esse* of St. Thomas to either term, sc. either before or after existence. St. Thomas is considering the nature of a contingent thing in itself and sees in this contingent being the necessity of non-existence both before and after its limited term of being. Thus when he says that at some time it is not, he is expressing a truth that flows from the nature of contingent things.

Let us now review the proof in the light of this doctrine. The proof is based on the notions of possibility or contingency and necessity. As we have seen, the moderns' conception of necessity and contingency differs radically from the understanding of St. Thomas and his contemporaries. For the moderns necessity seems to be based on the identification of essence and existence, while possibility or contingency is denominated by the fact that a thing's existence is not necessarily connected with its essence. As a result, according to this conception, we must say that only God is a necessary being, while all creatures

are contingent beings. On the other hand, it has been shown that St. Thomas considered as absolutely necessary those beings which because of their removal from matter lack a real subjective potency to non-existence. All other beings, having matter subject to contrariety, possess this real potency to non-existence and so are contingent or possible to be and not be. Furthermore, St. Thomas envisaged two kinds of necessary beings, i. e., those absolutely necessary beings whose necessity is received from another and that necessary being whose necessity is not received but is *per se*. The former do not have in their proper natures, a real, subjective potency to non-existence, yet the cause of their necessity is in some extrinsic agent.

The evolution of the *Tertia Via*, then, proceeds from possible beings to a necessary being. From the concluded existence of necessity in things the proof rose to the necessary being which has its necessity from itself. Thus the proof concluded to the existence of God by the medium of received necessity. It had arrived at the existence of necessity by the medium of things possible to be and not be. Thus we may divide the third proof for the existence of God into four distinct parts.

a) *The beginning of the way*: "There are in the nature of things certain beings which can be and not be."

St. Thomas takes as the beginning of his procedure, the fact that some beings do exist which are possible to be and not be. Thus he proceeds from the existence of a real, subjective potency to non-existence. It must be noted that generation and corruption are not the fact of experience which St. Thomas uses as his point of departure. Rather, generation and corruption provide a medium of demonstration whereby we conclude to the existence in things of a real, subjective potency to non-existence.

b) *The first step of the way*: "It is impossible that all things which are be possible to be and not be, but we must arrive at a being which is not possible to be and not be, i. e., at a necessary being."

This part of the proof in the *Summa* forms the matter of this investigation, for it is in this part that the controversy is

centered. By what reason does St. Thomas conclude thus to the existence of a necessary being? He answers: " Because what is possible not to be, at some time is not." This is the basis of St. Thomas' first and most important part of the proof. This is the reason that he gives for the impossibility of all things being possibles. That this principle is true we believe to be amply proven from the text in the *De Caelo et Mundo*. Whence St. Thomas argues that if all things that now exist are contingent beings, then at some time nothing was, since to all possible beings it must happen that at some time they are not. But if at some time they are not, then at some time they (the " all things " that are possibles) were not. Thus at some moment there was nothing at all in existence. But if this is so, since nothing is sterile, then there could not be anything now in existence. The absurdity is completed. Since things do now exist, then there could not have been a time when there was nothing at all existing. Therefore there must have always been something in existence. But what is always existing is necessary. Thus St. Thomas proves the existence in the nature of things of a necessary being.

Therefore the crux of the argument is St. Thomas' principle that " what is possible not to be, at some time is not." To prove this we proceeded by saying that: " *ab esse ad posse valet illatio; ab posse ad esse non valet illatio.*" Thus the proof proceeds from act to potency. It supposes a possible as always existing. Therefore it *could* always exist. As a result there is the contradiction of one being having opposite potencies, both to be exercised at the same time under the same aspect. From the exercise of the act we can conclude to the existence of the potency. So if a thing is, we can say that it has the potency to be. But we cannot say that because a thing can be that it will be. Therefore if we suppose some possible being as always existing, then we can so conclude: if it always was, then it could always be, because if it did not have the potency of always existing, then it could not have had the act of always existing. Thus this being has a potency always to exist in an infinite dura-

tion of time, i. e., at every moment of infinite time. Yet this being is also by supposition possible and thus has a potency to non-existence at least in some moment of time. But there is no time outside of infinite time. Therefore this being would have a potency to exist in every moment (because it always was), and yet during the same time have a potency to not-exist in some moment (because it is possible) so that in some moment it was and was not, which is absurd. Therefore it is a contradiction to place a possible being as always existing. Thus it must follow that every possible being at some time is not. Thus in summary we have the basis of this first step of the *Tertia Via.*

c) *The second step of the way*: "We cannot go on to infinity in necessary beings whose necessity is received from another but must arrive at the necessary being whose necessity is *per se.*"

Having arrived at the existence of at least one necessary being, St. Thomas inquires whether its necessity is received or not. If it is not received, then the proof is complete; if it is received, then we must ascend in a series of necessary beings whose necessity is received from another until we arrive at a necessary being whose necessity is not received but which is the cause of necessity in all others. This is the absolutely necessary being whose necessity is *per se* and not *ab alio.* To arrive at this being, St. Thomas employs the principle underlying the preceding two proofs for the existence of God, sc., in a *per se* subordinated series we cannot go on to infinity but must arrive at a first in the series. For as in the series of things moved and things causing, if no unmovable mover or uncaused cause was attained, then there could be no motion nor causality. So in the series of necessary beings receiving their necessity *ab extrinseco*, we must arrive at the first necessary being whose necessity is unreceived, otherwise there could be no necessity in things.

d) *Conclusion of the way*: "This *per se* necessary being, all men speak of as God."

Therefore a necessary being truly exists which has its neces-

sity from itself and which causes necessity in others. This being is God because it possesses the attributes of Deity. Since it is necessary, it is eternal as it lacks any potency to non-existence. Since its necessity is of itself, it lacks even a logical and objective potency to non-being and so is immaterial. Since it is immaterial, it is also intelligent, since immateriality is the root of knowledge. It is also uncaused, pure act and pure perfection; it is its own existence and the cause of all other beings. Thus the proof which attains to the existence of God from the notions of possibility and necessity.

This interpretation of the third proof seems most apt and in accordance with the words and thought of St. Thomas. Certainly this exegesis adds nothing novel or foreign to the mind of the Holy Doctor, for whatever has been said here has been fully drawn from the works of the Master. Therefore it must be held as a valid proof for the existence of God.

What objections are levelled against the thesis? It has been said that it does not seem evident that a corruptible being must corrupt. In the light of what has been said in the *De Caelo et Mundo* this objection is reduced to a contradiction. For so to place an incorruptible corruptible, is to place a being which can be and not be at the same time. Is it then absolutely impossible that a being, by nature corruptible, should never corrupt. We must distinguish: if we consider only the pure nature of the being with its real, subjective potency to non-existence, then we answer affirmatively. If however there be considered an extrinsic agent which has the power to impede the corruption of this corruptible being even unto infinite time, then we must reply in the negative. However this cannot be adduced against St. Thomas' principle which is taken from the nature of corruptible things, i. e., according to their real, subjective potencies to non-being.

A similar objection, sc., that the generation of one thing is the corruption of another, may be raised to St. Thomas' dictum that if all things are corruptibles then at some time nothing was. Indeed this objection may be applied to the statement whether

the non-existence be taken as preceding or succeeding the existence of possible things. That is, on the supposition that all things are possibles, is it true to say that there was a complete absence of being in the past or that there will be a complete lack of being in the future? In either case it is not a valid objection. We must keep in mind the supposition that *all things* are possible to be and not be. The objection may then be raised that, granting the truth that what is possible to be and not be has a limited duration, yet in view of the fact that the generation of one is the corruption of the other, how can St. Thomas say that if all things are possibles then at some time nothing was? Does he not himself teach that in a *per accidens* series of generations one can go on into infinity? But the two statements of St. Thomas are not parallel. In the *Tertia Via* he arrives at his conclusion under the supposition that all things are possibles. When he is considering the series of generations he is proceeding under no such hypothesis. For in the third proof he so argues: if all things are possibles, then each thing is possible and the whole, in the sense of the universal nature of things, is itself possible. This " all " being possible not to be, at same time was not, because if it always was in infinite time then it could not be possible. In a series of generations and corruptions, although each being exists for a limited duration, yet the matter underlying each change remains. Therefore to posit an infinite series of generations and corruptions is to place an infinite being, sc., the matter or substratum underlying the series. Since the matter is of infinite duration, it cannot be possible but must be necessary. Thus an infinite series of generations and corruptions evades the hypothesis of St. Thomas that *all things* are possible not to be. Since the series itself is possible, then at some time it was not. Thus at some time there was nothing in existence in the nature of things.

Neither can this doctrine of the third proof be adduced as proof for the non-eternity of the world. For even if it could be proven that contingent beings began in time, there would remain the problem of demonstrating that necessary beings also

did not exist *ab aeterno*. At any rate, the teaching of St. Thomas in the third proof that if all things are contingent then there must have been a period of total non-being in the past, cannot be used as an argument demonstrating the inception in time of material things. The obvious reason for this is that here St. Thomas is proceeding under a supposition that is to lead to an absurdity. The conclusion that follows must then be understood only in the frame of this hypothesis.

This completes the exposition of our interpretation of the third proof for the existence of God. It is an explanation of the text of St. Thomas which seems to be logical and valid. As such it defends the doctrine of St. Thomas against those critics who would reject the text in the *Summa* and yet it does no violence to St. Thomas' words in order to preserve their value.

IV. Critique of Other Theories

Having explained our interpretation of the third proof, we must now compare it with the other theories that have been advanced. First of all we have the opinion of Fathers Gény, Descoqs, and Van Steenberghen who hold that in view of the evident incoherency in the text of the *Summa*, we should abandon it in favor of the formulation in the *Contra Gentes*. It is the opinion of this school that the core of the proof is that what is by nature corruptible must corrupt, and therefore, if all are corruptibles, then there must come about a total corruption of being. However they doubt that this is a valid conclusion. It is their contention that St. Thomas has thereby contradicted what he has said in other places. For St. Thomas has taught that the corruption of one thing is the generation of another. He has also said that since a series of generations is *per accidens*, it may be potentially infinite. Finally it has been St. Thomas' expressed opinion that it is impossible to demonstrate the non-eternity of the world. Yet here in the third proof he seems to say that a series of generations and corruptions must come to an end, resulting in a total annihilation of being.

The defense of St. Thomas, however, as professed by Fathers

Sertillanges, Boyer, and Degl'Innocenti is capable of destroying the contentions of the above theory. For according to the defenders of St. Thomas, the critics of the Holy Doctor have neglected to consider the question in the framework of St. Thomas' hypothesis, sc., that this will occur if all things are possible not to be, or, as this school would have it, corruptible. As the defenders of St. Thomas point out, " all " must also be applied to the matter underlying the series of generations and corruptions, so that the series itself cannot be of infinite duration. At some time it must reach its term of existence and so pass out of being, thus bringing about a total annihilation of being. As Père Sertillanges says, everything, including matter, forms, ends, ideals, cosmogonies, etc., is by supposition corruptible. They admit that it is an absurdity but stress that this absurdity proves St. Thomas' contention that all things are not corruptibles. If the conclusion is impossible, that is because the premise is imposible. Since the total nothingness is impossible (as things now de facto exist), then it is impossible that all things be corruptibles and so a necessary being must exist. The objection of Père Gény and his supporters seem strongly in the tenor of the objections against the third proof that Capreolus and Bañez answered centuries earlier.

Abstracting, however, from the validity of these objections, we may ask if the physical interpretation of the proof as understood by both the critics and supporters of St. Thomas is basically sound. For, whether agreeing or not on the truth of the proof, both factions of this school so interpret the basic principle of the third way: What is corruptible, must at some time corrupt. But if all things are corruptibles, then they would have already corrupted and so now there would be nothing in existence. For this school, then, St. Thomas' non-existence is limited to the period of non-existence that follows on the period of existence.

However this does not seem to be an exact paraphrase of St. Thomas' text. For when he says that what is possible not to be at some time is not, he is not limiting the non-existence to

that which preceded or that which follows the existence of the contingent thing. He uses the phrase " possible not to be " to indicate an already existing being. This being is both possible to be and possible not to be. Before it was, it was possible to be; now that it is exercising the act of its existence, it is in a sense, no longer possible to be, since it actually is. Yet as existing, it has a real, subjective potency to not-exist. Therefore it is possible not to be. As such it is, by nature, corruptible and generated. It has being after non-being and before non-being. To hold otherwise is to place a contradiction.

When St. Thomas adds that if all *are* such then nothing *was*, he is definitely limiting the non-existence to that which preceded the present existence of these beings. To say that he is here maintaining that if all are corruptibles then they would have already corrupted and hence have resulted in total nothingness seems to be doing violence to the text. Moreover such an interpretation appears to be an unfounded conclusion. If we apply the period of non-existence to that which followed on the existence of contingent beings, it is doubtful that the conclusion of total nothingness is valid. It is quite true that, supposing all to be corruptibles, at some time all would corrupt, since it is impossible that such a series (corruptible in itself) could exist for an infinite duration. Yet what reason can be given for the total corruption at that moment of time which this exegesis is bound to place? Such a moment would have to be placed if St. Thomas is saying that if all things are corruptibles then they would have already corrupted.

As a result it seems to us that such a doubtful and involved interpretation should be abandoned. The exegesis which we have presented earlier, while also being gathered from the notion of time and duration, is free from the doubts and difficulties inherent in the opinion of those who maintain that St. Thomas is talking about a total corruption of contingent things. It is our opinion that St. Thomas' principle " *quod est possibile non esse, quandoque non est* " must not be limited to the non-existence that follows on the corruption of a contingent being, but

rather it is a principle that is true without any exclusive limitation to either period of non-existence. On the other hand, in St. Thomas' hypothesis we hold that here he is definitely talking about a non-existence that preceded the existence of possible things.

As a result we do not feel compelled to accept the interpretation of those who read the proof in the light of the similar proof in the *Contra Gentes*. Admitting the weakness of the modern physico-temporal exegesis, we are yet not constrained to rely on the strictly ontological reasoning of the *Contra Gentes*. Certainly it is a valid and unshakeable proof for the eternity of God. But we deny that it is a *third* proof for the existence of God. The text in the *Summa* differs radically from that in the *Contra Gentes*. There was never a question of what St. Thomas meant in his proof for God's eternity. Why, then, if he was using the same proof in the *Summa*, did he couch it in terms that have caused such a discussion? We can only reply that this admirable proof in the *Contra Gentes* did not suit St. Thomas' purpose as a third proof in the *Summa*. Indeed, in the *Contra Gentes* the chapter on God's eternity (c. 15) is only two chapters after the chapter on God's existence (c. 13). In chapter thirteen he proves the existence of God in four distinct ways that corresponded to the first, second, fourth and fifth proofs in the *Summa*. Why then, if the proof for God's eternity is the same as the third proof in the *Summa*, did not St. Thomas use it in chapter 13 of the *Contra Gentes* and thus complete the five ways that he gives us in the *Summa*? The only evident reason is that in some way this proof in chapter fifteen does not differ from one or more of the four proofs in chapter thirteen. If this is so then it can hardly be the same as the third proof in the *Summa* for so it would not be a *third* way of proving the existence of God. It seems that this proof in the *Contra Gentes* which is based on the principle of sufficient reason and participation in being can be reduced to either the second proof from causality or to the fourth proof from the grades of being. Indeed in the proof in the *Contra Gentes* St.

Thomas concludes that this *per se* necessary being is God, since He is the First Cause. At any rate, St. Thomas' procedure in the *Tertia Via* seems to us to differ from the *Contra Gentes* not only verbally but also conceptually. The reason we give is that to present a proof that would be different from the other four proofs in the *Summa*, he could not use the proof in the *Contra Gentes*. For although these two proofs agree in many ways, yet they are essentially different. One proceeds to God according to the ontological principle of sufficient reason and causality; the other is derived from the physical nature of contingents with reference to their duration in time. Admitting that these reasons are extrinsic, yet we believe them to be conclusive.

Finally we reject that opinion that interprets the third proof according to the notions of potency and act. Although this provides a valid and impugnable proof for the existence of God, we likewise maintain that it is not an entirely separate proof in itself but reducible to the first proof in the *Summa*.

This interpretation of the proof, as presented by Fr. Deandrea, rightly maintains the temporal significance of St. Thomas' principle that what is possible not to be at some time is not. Over and above its temporal signification, they see in it an ontological application of the relation of potency to act. It is from this ontological consideration that the principle gets its validity. This consideration is based on the truth that what is possible to be and not be is first in potency and then in act, at least by a priority of nature.

When Fr. Deandrea and his school consider the hypothesis of St. Thomas that if all things are possibles then at some time there was nothing, they maintain that must be understood as an application of potency and act. For if all are possibles, then there must have been a priority (at least of nature) of their possibility of being in regard to their act of being. This period of non-existence then would imply a complete absence of being. To explain the third proof in any other manner, they say, is to render it logically unintelligible.

It seems to us therefore that this school admits that the basic

principle, "*quod est possible non esse quandoque non est*," has a temporal significance in itself but it loses its validity when it is applied to the hypothesis that if all things are such then at some time there was nothing in existence. Father Deandrea cites the *De Caelo et Mundo* in proof that the principle is true even in the temporal order. He adds that it is ontologically valid since it is based on the priority of potency over act. In this we are perfectly in accord with his understanding of the principle. Yet when he applies the principle to the hypothesis of St. Thomas he insists that the ontological basis of the principle can be the only valid interpretation, thereby denying any valid temporal significance to the principle when it is used in this capacity. So, this school might re-write St. Thomas' text: What is possible to be and not be is first in potency and then in act. But if all things are such, then at some time there was nothing, because potency would always precede (at least by a priority of nature) the act of each or all possible things' existence. Admitting the validity of such an ontological proof, we again maintain that it does not provide us with a *third* proof that is essentially different from another of the five ways. The procedure of the first proof from motion encompasses in its scope not only local motion but all change including the transition from potency to act. If in the *Tertia Via* it is impossible that all things be possible to be and not be because what is such is first in potency and then in act, it seems that the *Tertia Via* then is merely a particular application of the process of the first proof from motion. On the other hand, if the third proof is based on the impossibility of a possible thing to perdure in infinite time, which impossibility flows from its physical nature, then the third proof becomes not only a valid but also a specifically different argument from any of the other four ways of proving the existence of God.

In conclusion we may ask of what value is this inquiry into the *Tertia Via*. Especially it can be considered as a defense of the Angelic Doctor against those who would too quickly reject his doctrine which they have not rightly comprehended. For

despite the magnitude of his writing, it is according to the mind of the Church that what St. Thomas has written must be held in reverence. Thus to defend the words of St. Thomas is always a work of great importance.

We have attempted to preserve the distinct character of the third proof by showing that St. Thomas meant exactly what he said. We believe that by using only references to other works of St. Thomas, this purpose has been achieved. In this manner, any novelty of explanation is excluded from so sacred a topic.

THOMAS KEVIN CONNOLLY, O.P.

Dominican House of Philosophy,
Somerset, Ohio

TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF BEAUTY

THE cosmological view of things is not only legitimate, but richly rewarding, for a consideration of the inner constitution and activity of even inanimate things reveals their integrity, harmony of parts and splendor of form, and thus beauty is perceived and relished. There is a degree of beauty in everything, just as there is a certain amount of truth, at least as long as man does not intervene with his productions and constructions that destroy and profane it. The experimental scientist observes that inward truth, as it unfolds before his eyes, in the laws of nature, in formulas, in statistics, in action and reaction, and unless he be lacking even the rudiments of a philosophy, he advances beyond all the limits of experiment and scientific hypothesis to an ineffable *quid*, the principle of coherence and of activity, cosmic being, concretized and, as it were, solidified into a formality which gives to things substance, unity, truth. But, this same palpitating reality thrusts itself upon the eyes and the heart of a poet, and he delights in it. Through the vehicle of his senses the poet attains truth, vibrant and resplendent in its concreteness, as it irradiates his soul, and echoes in all his being. There is here a 'sympathy" (in the Bergsonian sense) with things, and the fulness of joy. It is this intoxicating discovery of beauty which endows the poet—anyone who can recreate in himself the beauty of things and communicate its fascination—with the magic power of lively impression and of life-like expression.

Pulchrum est quod visu placet, the ancients said, e. g., St. Thomas;[1] and whatever be the esthetic theory devised to explain or to describe the phenomenon, it is difficult to express

[1] *Summa Theologiae,* I, q. 5, a. 4, ad 1; I-II, q. 27, a. 1, ad 3; II-II, q. 145, a. 2, ad 1.

more synthetically the wonder of a thing revealing what it is: a positive value of entity and truth, richly attractive and productive of delight. Beauty addresses itself not only to speculative reasoning (scientific and philosophic truth) only, nor to the senses (animal pleasure), but to the whole man. It seizes him, inebriates and startles him, giving to his mind the gleam of a thought, however confused; to his heart and senses a joyous vibration; to all his faculties a cohesive, delectable movement, which if it be not the highest, is certainly the most intense of human activity, and if it finds an adequate outlet for re-expression and revelation, it transforms itself into artistic operation, reproducing by a marvelous paternity, as it were, in lines, volumes, words, in sounds and colors harmoniously blended and truly representative, that *quid secretum* which palpitated interiorly.

Both the metaphysician and the theologian can know, consider and even experience this phenomenon. The metaphysician cannot ignore the reality of things, the object of the senses and intelligence, if he is to avoid shipwreck in a vast panlogical ocean. From *beings* he ascends to *being*, and returns to the former—to all beings: cosmic, historic, psychologic, ethic and artistic—in order to review and revaluate them in the light of the universal notion he has reached, a notion which he meets and rediscovers in all of them as their fundamental constitutive —being. He can, then, start from beauty and return to beauty; he can rise from esthetic intuition to metaphysical speculation and return in a circular movement from one form of knowledge and enjoyment to another, strengthening the bonds of reality, expanding his power, until he collates all formalities about the supreme concept of the metaphysician in a perfect synthesis.

The metaphysician, and even more the theologian, sees that the reality of things, although substantial in itself, is referred to the First Being, the Supreme Value, the Absolute on which all depend. This is not the *ens commune*, in which every being shares, it is *Ens a Se*, *Subsistent Being*, the *Being-Person* who is the fount of all reality. The reference is necessary because no created thing—an actuality, true, but a limited one—has

in itself the sufficient reason of itself, much less of its truth or of its beauty. Truth and Beauty, which are *realities*, depend upon the supreme reality of Subsistent Truth and Subsistent Beauty: God. Nevertheless, things are not a mere bundle of appearances or shadows, a quasi-fictitious body of the one Whole, a tenuous projection of the Spirit. The metaphysician and the theologian recognize their entity, their truth and their beauty, and not even the mystic can deny them, even though in his awesome experience of the Divine All, when he expresses the psychological repercussion in himself of what he has experienced, he seems to speak of things as though they be not, or as fitful shadows, unsubstantial truth and beauty. That is a problem of psychology and language. But the reality of things is inescapable when discovered as a marvelous *analogy* to God's Reality on which it depends and in which it participates, however great the infinite distance between them is. In everything there is a semblance of Infinite Reality, materialized, so to speak, or solidified, which man's intellect grasps and knows as truth—a reflection of Eternal Truth, and which it savors as beauty—a spark of Eternal Beauty. Thus from things re-emerges the Idea in which they are eternally contemplated, according to which they have been made, in which they themselves participate. It is an Idea vibrant with love because under the impulse of Eternal Love the Idea is shared, has become the constitutive form of things. Thence is seen and relished a most intense beauty, a beauty in its " ultimate causes " which the metaphysician and theologian contemplate and in turn unveil to the scientist, lest in his application to nature he become withered, and to the poet, lest he become a mere sensualist.

Further, the theologian knows, from Revelation, that things are drawn from God's Heart by creation; that the Eternal Gaze regards them with benevolence. " God saw all things that He had made, and they were very good." [2] While He serenely watches over creation, He says to the poet and to the artist, to whomever loves and appreciates beauty, that esthetic joy,

[2] Gen. 1: 31.

that act poignant with discovery and pleasure, basically is nothing more than a reflection, a participation, of that eternal act of contemplation and pleasure just as the activity which reproduces beauty in a work of art is a collaboration in creation. The artist "*is, as it were, the nephew of God*"!

However, the distinguishing feature of the theologian's vision is his *theocentrism*, counter to every form of cosmocentrism or psychocentrism. It is the faith itself that produces this reorientation in the human spirit so that the focus is not on the effect but the cause, not on participated truth but on the Infinite, the Absolute and Eternal. The concept of First Being and First Cause, the center of metaphysical thought, does not suffice for the theologian. He rather contemplates and studies the Living God, God-Love, Who in the eternal act of His infinite existence, thinking Himself and loving Himself, also knows and loves things in Himself. And He causes things to be outside of Himself according to the degree of perfection and beauty proportioned to the measure (to use a quantitative term to express the ineffable) with which they are eternally loved. As Dante says, in God all is collected in one book which is opened in the universe, since God is the cause of all truth and beauty, comprehending all things in a suprasubstantial unity, so that "a creature's beauty is nothing but a similitude of the Divine Beauty participated in things." [3]

God is the cause of the beauty of things, because He is the cause first of all of their *splendor* inasmuch as "God gives to all creatures a certain splendor, a transmission of His luminous ray which is the source of all light; and this fulgent transmission of the divine ray is to be understood as in the manner of a participation, and these transmissions are the artificers of beauty in things . . ."; secondly, of the *harmony* which is in things, since God draws all things to Himself as their End, as well as ordering them among themselves in such a way that perfect harmony reigns among them and in order to the End; [4] and thirdly, of the *integrity* and totality of things, which in-

[3] St. Thomas, *De Div. Nom.*, c. 4, lect. 5, n. 337.
[4] *Ibid.*, n. 340.

exorably depend on Him in all their being. God extends His hand to fill everything with beauty.[5] Each is more beautiful if it has received more from Him, and it has received more only if loved more. All creation, therefore, is a resplendent manifestation of Eternal Love! Like an artist, God has not only impressed the seal of His eternal Concept on things, He has also infused something of His Love. All things, therefore, tell of God (their Exemplary Cause), and all tend to Him (Final Cause) by reason of the very dynamism impressed on finite reality by the infinite creating Act (Efficient Cause). To see in things this relation with the Other Being and to conform one's spirit to them in a profound sense of critical judgment and feeling, a depth of esthetic preference, is but to place oneself in harmony with the eternal Thought-Love and to grasp and enjoy in its comprehensive and expressive totality the beauty of things. Then is understood how " the heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands. Day to day uttereth speech, and night to night showeth knowledge. There are no speeches or languages where their voices are not heard. Their sound hath gone forth unto all the earth; and their words unto the ends of the world. . . ." [6]

Such a profound comprehension of beauty is found in that theology of terrestrial reality which St. Thomas has condensed in the article of the *Summa* where it is asked if God is the subject of theology. He answers in the affirmative, since " all things are treated of *under the aspect of God*; either because they are God Himself; or because *they refer to God as their principle and end*." [7] Beauty also comes from God and tends to Him in the universal cosmic process by which all creatures, made by God to the likeness of God, tend toward God to realize perfectly that very likeness. Above all emerges man, the image of God, who joins in this movement, with knowledge and liberty.

These notions of the theology of beauty give a better explanation of the esthetic perception itself which attains a reality

[5] Cf. Ps. 144:15.

[6] Ps. 18:2-5.

[7] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 7.

which is only finite, it is true, but in which are felt or intuitively perceived vibrations of a mysterious presence which exceeds all limit; it palpitates within created things but it transcends them; it condescends to the poet but it ever exceeds his capacity and escapes him. Truly the poet sees the unseen world, he touches the intangible, as Thompson wrote, but this is no more than a reflection or a power that springs from the unattainable, like the flowing energy of Christ, when He cured a poor woman who had but touched the hem of His garment, or when He traced a gesture of benediction in the air, or when in a voice, that not one could ever again forget, He called her by name who had gone to search for Him in the tomb on the morning after the Sabbath.

The poet does not explain this " earthiness " of what is transcendent, but he feels it; he prefers, perhaps, precisely as a *poet*, not to inquire too deeply lest he lose the very thing that fascinates him, the sense of mystery. But dissatisfaction and even torment follow when he sees most of the beauty escape him like the flicker of lightning that fades in the night, or like a fragment of the eternal symphony perceived with inexpressable joy, but soon revealing to him, precisely because more capable than others of understanding, his limitations, especially when he attempts to transform his thought into a " little verse." Face to face with the abyss of Beauty, it is always a " little verse," even when it is a question of the *Pietà* or the *Ninth Symphony* or the *Thirty-Third Canto*.

The poet achieves no union, either in things or in himself, between the finite and the infinite; in his very dissatisfaction there is a sign of the duality and an invitation to a dialectic. The whole and the part. Light and its rays. Being and beings. Infinite Beauty and its reflections in creatures. If he possess even the least of spiritual perception, he is soon seized with awe and a need for prayer, like Moses on the Mount before the burning bush who heard the command to remove his shoes. It is the very ground of God!

The theologian learns all this from Revelation, which teaches the entire nobility of things, all the meaning of beauty, and the

drama that is immanent in them, which the poet and the mystic re-live in diverse ways. "The invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; His eternal power also, and divinity."[8] This is but one instance from St. Paul, but sufficient to establish the entire theology of beauty; it could be analyzed more than it has been up to now. Another text serving as a complement to the first is:

> The expectation of the creature awaiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him that made it subject, in hope, because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain even till now. And not only it, but ourselves also.[9]

What wonder if intensely poetic souls not wholly devoid of theology, or at least that natural metaphysics which is as the cup ready to receive the wine of Faith, have traced the course of beauty, rising from creatures to God by a natural movement of the spirit?

Consider how the dialectic rises in Plato's *Symposium*:

> Please to give me your very best attention. For he who has been instructed thus far in the things of love, and who has learned to see the beautiful in due order and succession, when he comes toward the end will suddenly perceive a nature of wondrous beauty—and this is that final cause of all our former toils, which in the first place is everlasting—not growing and decaying, or waxing and waning; in the next place not fair in one point of view and foul in another, or at one time or in one relation or at one place fair, at another time or in another relation or at another place foul, as if fair to some and foul to others, or in the likeness of a face or hands or any other part of the bodily frame, or in any form of speech or knowledge, nor existing in any other being; as for example, an animal, whether in earth or heaven, but beauty only, absolute, separate, simple, and everlasting, which without diminution and without increase, or any change, is imparted to the ever-growing and perishing beauties of all other things. He who under the influ-

[8] Rom. 2:20.

[9] Rom. 8:19-23.

ence of true love rising upward from these beings to see that beauty, is not far from the end. And the true order of going or of being led by another to the things of love is to use the beauties of earth as steps along which he mounts upwards for the sake of that other beauty, going from one to two, and from two to all fair forms, and from fair forms to fair actions, and from fair actions to fair notions, until from fair notions he arrives at the notion of absolute beauty, and at last knows what the essence of beauty is. This, my dear Socrates, said the stranger of Mantineia, is that life above all others which man should live, *in the contemplation of beauty absolute*; a beauty which if you once beheld, you would see not to be after the measure of gold, and garments, and fair boys and youths. . . . But what if man had eyes to see the true beauty—the divine *beauty,* I mean, *pure and clear and unalloyed,* not clogged with the pollutions of mortality, and all the colors vanities of human life—thither looking and holding converse with the *true beauty divine and simple,* and bringing into being and educating true creations of virtue and not idols only? Do you not see that in that communion only, beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but realities; for he has hold not of an image but of a reality, and bringing forth and educating true virtue to become the friend of God and be immortal, if mortal man may.[10]

And St. Basil's ladder of ascent in his Homily on Faith:

If you wish to say something of God or experience it:

I.

(First station: just beyond earth)
Leave your body,
Leave your corporal sensations,
Abandon earth.
Abandon sea.
Place the air beneath you;
See beyond the seasons,
The regular disposition of the years,
The baubles about the earth.

II.

(Second station: just beyond the heavens)
Balance yourself on the ether,
Bypass the skies,
Their wonders,

[10] *Symposium* (Jowett transl.), pp. 334-335.

Their order,
The greatness,
Their great utility for the universe,
Their regular movement,
The splendor,
The position,
The motion
By which they approach and leave each other.

III.

(Third station: just beyond the spirit world)
Having surpassed reason's power,
And passed the sky,
Resting on its higher sphere
Behold with thought only:
The beauties that are there:
The heavenly armies,
The angelic choirs,
The precedence of the Archangels,
The glories of the Dominations,
The privileges of the Thrones,
The Powers,
The Principalities,
The Authorities.

IV.

(Fourth station: just beyond the created world)
Having attraversed all
And by reasoning elevated
Above all creation,
The mind rises
Even beyond these (the heavenly hosts),

V.

(The end of the climb: The Cause)
Contemplate the Divine Nature which is
Immutable,
Invariable,
Impassible,
Simple,
Non-composed,
Non-divisible,
" Inaccessible Light,"
Ineffable Power,
Incircumscribed Greatness,

Resplendent Glory,
Desirable Goodness,
Immense Beauty
Which vehemently calls the wounded soul
But which is impossible to be manifested
In words. . . .[11]

And how many others, like St. Augustine on the shore of Ostia, have likewise travelled the same road in order to reach Suprasubstantial Beauty, as Denis says, with burning desire and unquenchable thirst characteristic of the ascent from things which, as St. Thomas says, have precisely the function of " leading us by the hand " to God.

No one is better disposed than the poet, if coherent and untrammelled in spirit, to grasp this inner sense of things as declared by the theologians, to make the journey traced by the mystic, surpassing all forms of immanentism, historicism and cosmologism in art and philosophy. He is joined to God, though not, indeed, penetrating the veils which conceal His visage; but, bathed in the rays of Infinite Light, he not only possesses the plenitude of reality, he becomes capable of synthesizing it. He actually sees all things flowing from God *divisim et multipliciter*, as St. Thomas says, as similitudes of perfections which in Him are supreme Unity. However much he sees God in all things (" wherever I turn my glance, I see Thee, immense God; in Thy works I behold Thee, I recognize Thee in me " wrote Metastasio); however much he views the universe in its totality, as a cohesion of all things, a cosmic community in which is contained all the participation of Being in being; never does it seem to him the most perfect reproduction of the likeness of God, the most complete representation of His Goodness and Beauty. From the world compressed in the understanding of the human spirit there resounds a hymn of divine glory.[12] Then it is that a man who is both poet and mystic produces a work like the Canticle of Creatures.

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[11] *Opera* (ed. Garnier; Paris: 1730), II, 131 c.
[12] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 65, a. 2.

But once, as St. Basil has said, "the soul is wounded" by this Beauty, the spirit cannot rest in analogies and faint shadows as long as it sees Beauty emerge from them and keep at an infinite distance wrapped in mystery. A *mere* poet could even desire this distance, and take delight in the anguish; but who is only a poet? Is there not in everyone a heart, a soul with infinite aspirations? "*Fecisti nos, Domine, ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te.*" In man above all there is the *man*; every man has the vocation to be in a certain way a theologian and a mystic. He feels the need of enfolding the intimate essence of Beauty, of possessing it entire. If he lacks the key, he experiences the distress evidenced in Plato's *Symposium*, and which is easily transformed into restlessness and torment. No one can heal his own wounded soul.

The key is Faith. It teaches us and makes us believe with the deepest conviction of soul, that if "we see now through a glass in a dark manner," there will come a day when "we shall see face to face." [13] "But we all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory. . . ." [14] "We know that, when He shall appear we shall be like to Him; because we shall see Him as He is." [15] This is the infinite splendor of the divine vision in that "paradise" which poets, artists, and prophets have sought to describe with the brightest colors from the palette of creation, without succeeding, however, in capturing or even representing transcendent beauty.

Faith, too, gives us the first outlines of the infinite Beauty of God, all of which is concentrated in His inmost essence, in an eternal immanent feast of truth and glory. God is a Spirit, alive; nay, He is Thought Itself. God contemplates Himself, expressing Himself in an Idea of Himself which is as a Word, immanent in the Mind that expresses It, a Conception proceeding from a spiritual generation. God is the Word, as infinite and eternal as the mind thinking Him, identical to It. God is

[13] I Cor. 13:12. [14] II Cor. 3:18. [15] I John 3:2.

the Father and the Son, Who know and contemplate each other, and so love each other. The love proceeds as the infinite *act* of that spiritual identity whose very life consists in contemplating itself, and just as knowledge terminates in the Idea, so love places a *term* which, so ineffable is this immanent procession, is also called Love. Together with the Mind and the Word, Love (the Holy Spirit—Person) is a suprasubstantial Unity of being and life; It vibrates with the same infinite Act in the indivisible reality of the Trinity.

This is sublime Beauty, too brilliant for us to see and understand now. How can we behold It if our eyes cannot even be fixed on the sun, if our intellects are not capable of analyzing themselves in order to understand the soul? Still, what we know by Faith, even though very little, is such that it transcends immeasureably all the data of reason and enriches and gladdens every noble soul who seeks sincerely to see something of the mystery of God.

Consider the Eternal Word, resplendent as the perfect Image of the entire Substance of the Father, and as such becoming Subsistent Beauty, "Beauty Personified." Beauty truly pertains to the Three Persons as do Truth, Goodness, Sanctity, Eternity and all the other perfections which are in God insofar as He is God. But as Wisdom is attributed *by appropriation* to the Son inasmuch as He is the Word perfectly expressive of the Mind thinking Him, so too Beauty can be *appropriated* to Him inasmuch as He is the perfect Image, the clearest picture of the Father. Indeed St. Hilary says, "Species is in the Image." [16] As St. Thomas explains,[17]

> Species or beauty has a likeness to the property of the Son. For beauty includes three conditions, integrity or perfection, since those things which are impaired are by the very fact ugly; due proportion or harmony; and lastly, brightness, or clarity, whence things are called beautiful which have a bright color. The first of these has a likeness to the property of the Son, inasmuch as He as Son has in Himself truly and perfectly, the nature of the Father . . .;

[16] *De Trin.* II, 1; *ML* 10, 51 A.
[17] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 39, a. 8.

the second agrees with the Son's property, inasmuch as He is the express Image of the Father . . .; the third agrees with the property of the Son, as the *Word,* which is the *light* and *splendor of the intellect,* as Damascene says.[18]

And more precisely,

Inasmuch as the Son is the perfect *Image* of the Father, He has perfect *harmony*; in fact He is equal and similar without any inequality and dissimilitude whatever. . . . Inasmuch as He is *True Son,* He has the Father's nature perfectly: so that He also has the *perfection* of the divine nature. . . . But inasmuch as He is the *perfect Word of the Father,* He has *the brilliance which beams on all things and in which all things shine forth.* . . .

Again, St. Thomas says that there is in the Word a triple harmony constitutive of His Beauty:

His harmony with the Father, to Whom He is completely equal and similar . . ., His harmony with Himself, insofar as all the attributes in Him are not distinct, but one . . ., and His harmony with creatures, whose ideas are in Him and they are but one thing in Him as He is one with the Father.[19]

The Beauty of the Divinity, then, is especially expressed in the Son to Whom it is appropriated as to the "brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of His goodness."[20] From Him, Beauty is poured into and is reflected in all things—rainbow and children's eyes, mountains and flowers, sunrise and coral reefs, matter and spirit, the refinement of a face and the sanctity of a soul. . . . In each there is a similitude of the Word—Beauty, as also of the Word—Truth; the higher the grade of being, the more perfect the likeness, until the perfect image is formed in the glory of the Beatific Vision.

The theologian sees this Eternal Beauty gleaming in things; hence his vision of the world is not only *theocentric,* but in a way *trinitarian,* since He perceives in everything an image, or at least a vestige, a faint shadow of the Trinity, and in equal

[18] *De Fide Orth.* I, C. 13; *MG* 94, 857 A; cf. St. Aug., *De Trin.* VI, C 10; *ML* 42, 931.

[19] *I Sent.,* d. 31, q. 2, a. 1.

[20] Wisd. 7:26.

proportion he sees the ray of divine Paternity extend over the created order. For him each thing has a contact with God, a reflection more or less weak or distant of the perfect union of paternity and filiation between Father and Son in the Trinity. God in a way is Father of all things, of the dew [21] and all corporeal things least of all, inasmuch as there is a shadow of His Being in theirs; of rational creatures in a higher mode because they bear His image through their spirituality; of souls in the state of grace in a still more perfect way, for they are His adopted sons because of their participation in His nature and are called to the heavenly patrimony, bearers of the Spirit Who gives witness to them interiorly of their divine filiation; [22] of the Saints in a perfect and definitive way, for they now possess the "glory of the sons of God." [23] When a theologian like St. Thomas considers the world in this light,[24] can he avoid experiencing that mysterious throb of beauty, make the illation between the infinite and finite, which is the basis of the poet's longing and anguish?

* * * * * * *

But there is more in the theologian's view. The Eternal Word of the Father has become incarnate and has dwelt among us. The Light which from the beginning of creation enlightened every man and thing assumed a soul and human body "in the fulness of time." He was the Truth that came to man so man could more surely move to the Truth as St. Augustine says; [25] He also was Subsistent Beauty Who took on the soul and face of man. All visible things are manifestations of God's invisible perfections, but this certainly is the most sublime and definitive, the Word made flesh.

In the world, Christ is the revelation and splendor of Eternal Beauty, both in His physical beauty (which was truly awesome, according to ancient tradition, as well as the fact of His moral beauty), and in the perfect order which reigned in His being between body and soul, passions and will, nature and grace, humanity and divinity.

[21] Job, 38:28. [22] Rom. 8:16-17. [23] Rom. 5:2.
[24] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 33, a. 3. [25] *De Civ. Dei* XI, c. 5.

The fulness of grace is in Him the root of a complete harmony which extends to every gesture, to every word, as the Gospel attests in its story of Christ's life, where nothing is disordered and discordant, but all is noble and divine, a sign of the divinity.

There is the crisis of Gethsemane and the Cross, but even then, there was in Christ's soul a peace and infinite joy (the beatific vision); but His lower sphere of mind and body experienced desolation, but with what superior self-control, dignity and virile serenity. It may be said that in Christ the beauty of pain itself shone forth, which Fra Angelico was able to capture and reproduce better than any one else in his paintings of the calm, silent Face of the Crucified, full of mysterious attraction. But the Cross is not the last chapter in Christ's story: He conquers the earth in the glory of His Resurrection and Ascension when His Humanity is immersed and clarified in the dazzling light of the Word Which transforms all into Its own infinite beauty. He is endowed with a universal kingship coextensive with the light of the Word, embracing all things: the things of heaven and of earth, matter and spirit, nature and grace, according to the sweeping vision of the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, and according to the very words of Christ Himself, " All power is given to me." Christ is then King of Beauty because He excels in all things, He has the primacy among all and in all He reflects His image. Even beauty is an earthly reality which falls under his dominion and is destined to sing His glory.

In fact, the art of all the centuries, inspired by Him and offered to Him, testifies to this by grasping and reproducing more and more completely and vitally the mystery of His Being, in Whom the human and divine meet to give Him all the beauty of earth and the splendor of heaven. The Church's liturgy, authoritative expression of the thought and love of Christ's Mystic Spouse, calls upon Art in the Vespers' hymn of the feast of Christ the King to represent and celebrate the glory of the Great King together with Nations, Schools, Laws,

and Tribunals—" *Te nationum Praesides honore tollant publico, colant magistri, judices, leges et artes exprimant.*"

In a word, if all mundane reality and all human values are elevated and redeemed by Christ in the new world synthesis, beauty also and its cultivation, and art and the poetic soul should be admitted to participation in the salvific power of His Blood.

The Incarnation is a renovation and revaluation of *flesh*, assumed by the *Word*. If to art, the cult of material beauty, is joined the temptation to materialize and sensualize man and his values, from Christ has come the power of resistance and delivery for the poet, his art, and his works.

Christ with His Sacrifice re-establishes in man the image of God which sin had obscured, spoiling its beauty. The Fathers delight in considering the redemption thus. Surely the restoration of spiritual beauty extends its renewing influence to the body which is united to the soul (hence the extraordinary, ineffable beauty of the Saints). All creation is rejuvenated along with the new man in whom already is found the " manifestation of the sons of God." Gradually the " vanity " to which creation has been subject is displaced; the redemptive powers are penetrating the world; the Light shines in the darkness, dissipates the reign of shadows and ugliness, brings about a renewal of the interior. All this is in the sphere of the spirit, but in relation to this, it also takes place in things, until there comes the day of the definitive manifestation when in " a new heaven and a new earth " will occur a rebirth of the world which will then be the setting for the holy city of God, Heavenly Jerusalem, which " hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it. For the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof." [26]

Meanwhile Christ, the Lamb Who takes away every stain and ugliness from the world, gathers about Him men reborn in faith and love and forms a society of truth and of life to whom He communicates the splendor of grace. This immense throng is the Church, the Spouse of Christ, brilliant in divine beauty.

[26] Apoc. 21 : 23.

Now it is " as a bride adorned for her husband "; [27] as a city built of precious stones which St. John in the Apocalypse lovingly describes and which the Church extolls in the liturgy for the Dedication of a Church, opening to the worshiper stupendous horizons. " *Urbs Jerusalem beata, dicta pacis visio, quae construitur in coelis vivis ex lapidibus, et Angelis coronata ut sponsata comite. . . .*"

Thus is brought about more and more fully what Christ besought in His last prayer and which He proclaimed as the magnificent result of His mission: the participation by His followers in His eternal glory. " Glorify thou Me, O Father, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee. I have manifested Thy name to men . . . And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them. . . ." [28]

The Saints in particular appear as successfully attaining this beauty of spirit, to the perennial revelation of God's glory in the world, above all, Mary, Virgin Immaculate and Assumed into Heaven, the " All Fair," the Glory of the Jerusalem which is the Church, the Flower of Our Race, the Boast of Our People. In Mary feminine beauty reaches its sublimation and transfiguration as the most perfect reproduction of God's Image as found in Christ, the Eternal Word made flesh in her virginal womb.

With this virginal beauty as a standard, humanity moves towards its goal and the Church grows until the day when, made like to Mary and through her more like to Christ, He shall " present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." [29] In that day when all darkness has been overcome, the human spirit, permeated with infinite light, shall finally have revealed to it the secret of Eternal Beauty.

RAYMOND SPIAZZI, O. P.

Collegio Angelicum
Rome, Italy

[27] Apoc. 21 : 2. [28] John 17 : 5, 22. [29] Ephes. 5 : 27.

THE INCREASE OF CHARITY

ALTHOUGH charity is essentially supernatural and cannot be adequately defined, we can learn something about it by using positive analogies and by distinguishing it from what it is not. In the treatise on charity contained in the *Summa Theologiae*.[1] St. Thomas expounds some positive notions which we have received about the nature of created charity. It is obvious that in order to make determinations, terms and concepts common to this and the other parts of theology must be used. I am concerned here with a special determination and with the means by which it is made. The special problem arises from the fact that a man who loves God is bidden to love God with his whole heart, and with his whole soul, and with his whole strength, and with his whole mind,[2] and thus to love God as much as he can love. But the infused virtue of charity is not possessed in its fullness by any man in this life. If, therefore, a man is to strive for anything in this life, he must strive to love God more. It follows that questions can profitably be asked about what is meant by the strengthening or increase of the virtue by which a man loves God.

The particular question with which I am concerned asks whether charity can increase to infinity.[3] It adds to the problem of how we can discuss "increase" of charity by posing the question of what can be meant by measuring such increase in order to find out whether or not it has a limit. I intend to consider briefly the terms and likenesses by which St. Thomas fixes the notion of the nature of created charity, as well as the means by which he is able fruitfully and scientifically to discuss its "increase." I shall merely summarize the conclusions he reaches about measurement of its quantity.

[1] *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, qq. 23-27.
[2] Luke 10:27.
[3] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 24, a. 7.

I

Charity is a Kind of Friendship.

In the course of the question about the nature of charity,[4] St. Thomas gives three partial and analogous definitions of charity. First, he establishes that it is a kind of friendship of a man for God, based on something truly common to God and man, and, therefore, that charity is something supernatural and incomprehensible for men in this life, although they may have it, and they may know that there is such a thing. Charity makes a man will and strive for the supreme good, which is God Himself in Himself, the supernatural goodness. It makes him will and strive for that good as he wills and strives for good for his own self. The foundation of charity is the communication to man by God of the divine beatitude, which is God Himself in His own true life. Charity is founded upon grace, and grace is the inchoate participation of the divine nature, in a man who is still on the way toward his ultimate end.

Charity is a Theological Virtue.

Secondly, charity is said to be a theological virtue,[5] that is, a kind of "set," or habitus of the soul, a firmly fixed, albeit non-necessitating disposition to will and strive for the divine good as it is in itself, precisely inasmuch as the soul, with the help of God's inspiration and illumination, perceives that this good is man's true goal. In merely natural things the kind of love which is "friendship" may indeed be a virtue, when it is friendship for a truly virtuous man, insofar as he is truly virtuous.[6] Thus the theological virtue of charity has at least a remote correspondence to the natural virtue of friendship. But because the knowledge we have about supernatural realities is imperfect analogical knowledge, more can be known analogically by separate considerations of friendship in general,

[4] *Ibid.*, q. 23, aa. 1-8.

[5] The following paragraphs include a summary of the doctrine taught in *ibid.*, I-II, q. 26, a. 4; q. 49, aa. 1-4; q. 62, a. 1.

[6] *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 23, a. 1, ad 3; a. 3, ad 1.

and of theological virtue in general, than is known by consideration of charity as the theological virtue which is specified as friendship. For friendship has certain properties and effects apart from its being a virtue.[7] Whatever is perfect in these effects may be attributed to the divine friendship. On the other hand, a theological virtue has the special property that it makes a man good not merely by joining him to his true end, but by joining him immediately to God. Therefore it will be profitable to consider the two elements separately in order to discover a greater number of properties which may be analogically attributed to charity.

Charity is a "Participation" of the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly, charity is said to be a participation of the divine love itself, which can be considered in two ways. It may be considered inasmuch as it is the divine essence itself by which God loves Himself and by which God wills that creatures exist and have goodness in order to manifest His own goodness. Secondly, in accordance with the valid principles of appropriation in theological names, it can be considered as the divine person who proceeds in the manner of love, the Holy Spirit.[8] It should be expressly stated here that created charity is not the same as the Holy Spirit and is by no means to be identified with Him. Nevertheless, with this negative restriction, St. Thomas says that charity is a participation of the Holy Spirit.

Comparison of the Three Definitions.

The three quasi-definitions have different functions in discussion and investigation. The analogy of friendship sets forth certain perceptible facts from which the mind can rise to that which is similar to them, but which possesses the foundation of the similarity in a way infinitely surpassing them. Discussion of charity in terms of the philosophical notion of "virtue," in general, contributes much to the practical work of striving for perfection, and yields a more scientific knowledge. On the other

[7] *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 28, aa. 1-6. [8] *Ibid.*, I, q. 37, a. 1.

hand, once a man begins to have a participation of the divine nature he may be able to benefit by knowing what it is that is participated, not merely inasmuch as it is a kind of abstract standard for him to school himself by, that is, not only the virtue, which he must copy and practise, with the help of God, but as it is in itself. It is indeed true that a man cannot know he has charity without special revelation. But if a man who knows that charity is a participation of the Holy Spirit also loves the Holy Spirit in fact and loves Him in the love of charity, then, by a kind of reflection of his love for God upon the love itself, such a man may be increased in the reality of his love and thus begin to be more teachable by the Holy Spirit who wants to lead him to God as God is in Himself. This may be one of the reasons why St. Thomas stresses the third notion about charity, to wit, that it is a participation of the Holy Spirit.

What it is for Charity to be "in the Will."

The theological virtue of charity is in the will. It is peculiar to the will that whatever is "in" it, as in its subject, is voluntary, that is, it is not something about which choice must be made but it is a principle of election. If something is "in" the will more or less strongly, this means not so much that the will uses the thing "more" or "less" as it means that the will itself acts more or less decisively in the production of an act which involves more than one appetitive power, and which is related to the thing that is in the will. In other words, it means that the will is more or less defective in the production of such acts.

Charity is not merely fastened to the Will, but is an Actuality of a Will that has been elevated by Grace to what is above its natural power.

When the will is actually related to a good which transcends the natural object of the will, there must be something in the will enabling and disposing it to will such good.[9] St. Thomas'

[9] Cf. *de Caritate*, a. 1.

investigation of whether charity is something created in the soul does not inquire whether the charity that is in the soul is really in the soul or whether it is something that is only fastened to the soul, so to speak, or a kind of new soul. The doubt which St. Thomas intends to determine is whether charity is something of the soul, belonging to the soul, or whether it is the Holy Spirit Himself. Once he has answered that charity is something created in the soul, he assumes that the one same soul is the remote subject of charity and he proceeds to determine that the soul's own will is the proximate subject of charity. Therefore charity is a created something, consisting in a settled orderliness of the will disposing it to will the good which is divine. Charity is in and of the will, yet it is supernatural.

There cannot be inconsistencies here, although the matter is difficult to understand. A few remarks can be made about it. In the first place, the natural good is superabundant from the divine good. Elevation of a naturally good thing, to participation of the divine goodness neither overwhelms nor removes the natural goodness of the thing. The result of such elevation is not the erection of a new being upon the old but a continuation of what formerly was, yet in a new relation to the source of its being. It could be said, perhaps, that the being which is elevated superabounds to itself, in a way, so that the natural goodness hangs from the supernatural, in the sense that the natural essential godness, which indeed was always had from God and not from itself, graces and enhances the supernatural goodness which is had directly and gratuitously from God; and that this takes place without change of the subject, which is a created being. Again, conversion of the soul to God is conversion to the source of the being of the soul. For the soul to be elevated to God in such a way that God is present to it in a new manner is not for the soul to be removed from what it formerly was, but for it to be, in greater measure, than it formerly was. For it to be elevated is for it to be a being, in a more perfect way than it formerly was a being. For the foundation, as it were, of the things is being. Since God is the

cause of being it follows that for a thing to be converted to God, or to be elevated toward God, is for it to be more deeply rooted or more solidly founded. On the other hand, the division of the natural and supernatural is definitive and ultimate in such a way that the elevation of the creature cannot make what was supernatural before the elevation become natural afterwards. It seems, therefore, that the mystery of charity is not a mystery of something more or less securely fastened to the will. The mystery lies in charity's being a supernatural actuality of a man's own will, caused by the divine action and dependent on supernatural concurrence. In its supernatural actuality the will overflows, so to speak, to maintain and preserve its inclination to the good which is naturally proposed to it by reason. It does not merely add new objects to those which it has by nature.

It may be concluded that the virtue of charity is a created accidental form or actuality in which a man tends immediately to God in Himself as He is the supernatural good. Charity is infused by God and it cannot be acquired by any other means since its object transcends all the powers of the whole of nature. On the other hand, because the soul remains a soul having the nature which it formerly had, it does not become something other than what it formerly was, although it has indeed a new actualness. This is to say that the soul participates charity in the sense that charity is a created partial actuality of the soul. St. Thomas shows that such participation can become greater in the sense that the will comes to be more and more entirely actuated in charity, and in more and more perfect charity; in other words, that created charity comes to be more and more the single actualness of the will and comes to be more and more like to that after which it is patterned.

This Created Actuality, or Form, is capable of increase: and, as a matter of fact, it is sometimes increased.

From reason and revelation St. Thomas shows that charity must be capable of increase.[10] For in this life men are on the

[10] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 24, a. 4.

way to beatitude. Anyone who is " on his way " to somewhere must needs go ahead; otherwise he fails to accomplish his purpose. But a man goes ahead toward God, his ultimate end, by means of charity which is the source of merit and the principle by which God is attained in this life as well as in the future life.[11] If a man is not to fail, therefore, he must increase in charity. He cannot increase in charity unless charity can increase. Consequently charity must be said to be capable of increase. The force of this argument lies in its identifying the need for increasing conversion to God, with the need for increase of the virtue of charity. If charity were not an actuality of the will itself, that is, an actuality of the source of human actions, but were some other kind of virtue that might be merely used by the will, it would be possible that increased use of charity might suffice for greater conversion to God. But since charity seems to be an actuality of the will itself, it follows that greater conversion to God requires an increase of the virtue of charity itself. The conclusion is significant and positive because it says that for progress on the way to God the divine action is not only required as concurring to preserve charity, but also as giving increase in charity.

II

Use of the Term " Increase " is based on capacity for further Perfection.

St. Thomas expressly states what he is able to determine about the meaning of " increase " of charity. The term " increase " is used properly in reference to bodies, but it is transferred to things that are simply intelligible and not material and sensible. The common element of bodied and incorporeal things, by means of which such extension of the term " increase " is possible, is the notion of perfectness. Perfectness is a term which is used correctly of any kind of created being, and that, in two ways. In the first place, every creature has goodness of its own, which is its own perfection. Again, all

[11] *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 4.

beings are interrelated in a scale of perfection, as this is carefully described by St. Thomas.[12] In this scale of perfection, the higher variously perfect the lower, in more and less efficient ways, by completing the order of the universe to the supreme good. St. Thomas seems to hold that each corporeal nature has a fixed quantity to which it tends and beyond which it does not grow, except by failing to be a perfect instance of its nature. Therefore the growth of a physical body toward its natural size is a consequence of the natural perfecting of that body in its kind. If a body grows inordinately or fails to reach its natural size, its "increase" is said to be abnormality. We conclude that the notion of increase, in corporeal nature, is a consequence of the notion of perfectness in that kind of nature. An incorporeal being also has a measure of perfectness. If it is in potency in any way it is able to become what it is meant to be, that is, to be perfected. When it is being perfected it may be said to be increasing, or to be "more" than it formerly was, that is, more perfect. Any creature has at least the kind of potency that is based upon the composition of being and essence in it. Thus all incorporeal creatures, including those that are not substances in themselves, can be said to be at least capable of "increase" in the extended sense which is taken from the notion of perfection.

There is an important difference between bodies and incorporeal beings in that quantity is something positive in bodies, while it is not something positive in incorporeal things. The size or number of a corporeal nature may be considered as distinct from the thing itself which has the nature. The size or number of an incorporeal nature cannot be considered as something distinct from the thing itself which has the nature. For example, the perfectness of a tree requires the possession by a body of a principle of nourishment sufficient to perpetuate the existence of the tree. It also requires a definite amount of watery and solid substance of the tree proper and natural to the kind of tree that it is. The amount of material is conceptu-

[12] *Contra Gentes*, especially Bk. III, c. 17, c. 20, c. 21, c. 22.

ally distinct from the material inasmuch as it is animated by the principle of nourishment, and the two may even be separated in being, although a tree perfect in its own kind, yet not having the full amount of matter at the time when it is of the proper age to have that amount of matter, will be and be said to be "stunted." Moreover, because the amount of matter in the tree is something positive, beyond the substance itself of the tree, increase in quantity is brought about by addition of matter. On the other hand, the perfectness of knowledge, in its own kind, involves actual or proximately potential possession of all conclusions about the objects of a science, in adequate resolution to its first principles. But the "amount" of knowledge is the same thing when the principles have received actualized being in the mind and thus actually form the science; that is, the intellectual grasp of the principles in their order to the conclusions. The science is not perfect in its kind until all the conclusions belonging to it are drawn, or made proximately deducible. "Increase" is not produced by addition of something distinct from the science itself.

A Virtue cannot be said to be "more" or "less" Perfect in itself because of the fact that it embraces a greater or lesser Number of its Objects.

A form, then, is said to be "greater" or "smaller" or "more" or "less" in accordance with the perfectness which it has in its subject, in comparison with the ultimate degree of completeness and goodness the form is able to have.[13] There are two possible measures of such perfectness in habitus and virtues; to wit, their objects, and the participation by their subject in the form. It is indeed true that certain habitus can become more perfect as they come to embrace more of their special objects than they formerly embraced. But this cannot be said about charity or about any other virtue. For in order to exist at all, a virtue must extend to all the objects falling

[13] The following paragraphs contain a summary of the doctrine taught in *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 52, aa. 1-3.

within its scope. For example, a truly courageous man shows the same kind of courage in respect to every kind of danger. But a man who correctly evaluates the danger of losing his life relatively to the good to be obtained by facing a deadly peril and who acts in accordance with this judgment, yet who runs headlong from the risk of losing a sum of money when he is equally able to make a deliberate judgment, can scarcely be said to have the virtue of courage. Virtue concerns the production of a work. In the production of a work the end or goal is the source and beginning of activity, both in intention and also effectively, since means are chosen only because they are really proportionate to the end, and only insofar as they are really proportionate to the end. The end toward which truly virtuous acts work is the good found out by right reason. If there is an actual choice of means the means must either be so chosen that they are in accordance with the good found out by right reason or not so chosen. If they are not so chosen the work cannot be done out of virtue, since no connection is made with the end necessarily involved in any work done out of virtue. If the work is begun out of virtue the means are chosen in at least an attempt to place them under the direction established by reason. It follows that by the very nature of the act, whoever acts out of virtue must relate all the means he choses to the end of the virtue. Thus the virtue extends, in proximate potency, to all the objects falling within its scope. On the other hand, a science proceeds toward its end, but does not begin from the end. For example, a man who is able perfectly to demonstrate the first proposition of Euclidean geometry may be unable to prove more complex theorems. His knowledge of the principles does not, of itself, enable him immediately to unify all the data of geometry by means of the principles. Since charity is a virtue in the strict sense of the term, it follows that charity is not said to increase in that a man comes to love more and more objects of charity, although his loving more and more beings for the sake of God may very well result from increase of charity.

A Virtue may become more Perfect only inasmuch as it is in a Subject which has it more or less perfectly.

The second way in which a habitus may become more perfect is by the subject's participating it more. By exclusion of alternatives St. Thomas shows that this is the only way in which a virtue may be said to be " increased." Since, he says, a form can be considered either as it is in itself, or as it is in a subject; and since a virtus cannot be increased according to itself, that is, in accordance with its objects, it follows that if it can be increased at all it can be increased only in accordance with its being in a subject. We have seen that there must be a way in which charity can be said to increase. It follows that charity must " increase " inasmuch as it is participated in a subject. St. Thomas says that there are only two ways in which something can " participate " a form, or, in other words, there are only two ways in which something, being a subject, can have a special form or actuality. For either it has its species, or kind, through the form (which is to say that it is made to be what it is, through the form); or it does not have its species from the form. St. Thomas says that if a thing has the being what it is, through a form, it cannot have the form in one of a number of possible ways, or " more " or " less " but only in a single and perfect way. Otherwise it would not have the one name and one being that it has in truth, but would be something other than what it is truly made to be by the form. On the other hand, if a thing has not its species from a form which it has, the mere fact that it may have the accidental form in greater or lesser completeness does not lead to inconsistency, since the subject does not need the perfectness and entire oneness of such a form in order to be what it is. Now there are certain forms which are indivisible in themselves, that is, the actuality expressed in the participation of them does not involve any kind of manyness except the manyness of substantial and accidental form. If no manyness is involved, the subject either has the form perfectly, or the subject does not have the form at all. If any kind of manyness is involved in the notion of

the form, degrees of perfection in the possession of the form are possible, in accordance with the kind of manyness, and to the extent to which the multitude involved is more or less perfectly oned in the actuality of the subject. For example, the number 184 is itself a unity. It ceases to be what it is if it is divided in any way. There is no way in which a man who is 46 years old can be said somehow to be 184 years old, although 46 is one fourth of 184. A man who is 184 years old is in no way equivalent, say, to four 46 year old men. On the other hand, a pink ribbon can justly be said to be imperfectly red, and a research-worker who has mastered both astronomy and geology can be said to be potentially even more useful than two research-workers, one of whom has mastered only astronomy, while the other knows only geology. But an accidental form that contains manyness can involve a oneing only of order in its subject, not a oneing of the substance of the subject: otherwise it would be an essential form. For example, the simultaneous presence of all the causes of pure redness, in equal force, merely perfects the disposition which the ribbon had when it was pink, when the causes of redness were not only equally powerful and well arranged in respect to it. The substance of the pink ribbon is not altered in the ribbon's becoming red, although its disposition relatively to being red is bettered.

It seems, therefore, that whenever an accidental form involves an ordering or disposing of its subject, either in itself or toward something else, there may be degrees of perfectness in the subject's possession of the form. But a virtue consists in the settled ordering of a faculty, through the due means, to the end found out by right reason; that is, to the ultimate end of man. Consequently, if any form can be had in various degrees of perfectness, it seems that a virtue can be had in that way.

What it means for a Subject to have a Virtue more or less perfectly.

A remark should be made about what has been called " more or less perfect order." The notion and characteristic of a virtue consists in an ordering. Whatever has a form has the perfect characteristic of the form, that is, it has some aspect of each element, in more or less complete oneness. If it has the form " more " or " less," this does not mean that it lacks one of the constituents of the definition, but that it fails to express the form in the consequences of the being of the form in the subject's own matter or kind in the way in which the form can be expressed in the most perfect instance of itself. For example, for a piece of cloth to be " less " white than a painted box is, perhaps, for the cloth to absorb the true color, but less fully than the wood absorbs it, or, again, for the color to be in the cloth in truth, but to be confined to a smaller proportion of it than the part of the box which is white, or something else of this kind. The same thing may be said of two pieces of cloth or of the same piece of cloth at different times. The subject must truly have the actuality defined by the definition of the form, although it need not have the form in the way in which it might have it, that is, the form need not be so perfectly oned in and with the subject as it might be. St. Thomas uses various words to express this matter. He says that the subject " participates the form more or less perfectly," that is, the actuality which is the form in the given subject is more or less of the total actuality of the subject than it might be. Again, he says that the subject " has the form more or less intensely, or slackly," that is, the actuality of the subject which expresses the form is more or less potent than it might be, relatively to an effect produced by the informed subject as such. Again, he says that " the form is more or less rooted in the subject," that is, the power inherent in the nature of the form is more or less strongly made effective, and, as it were, nourished and invigorated by the subject itself. When St.

Thomas talks about the increase of charity,[14] he uses the three notions, participation, intensity, and radication, to demonstrate what it is for charity to be " more " or " less " than itself at another time, or in another subject.

The Usefulness of the Notion of " Participation."

When he talks about the " participation " of charity he tends to speak in terms of the exemplar of charity, which is the divine love, and the Holy Spirit. The reason for his doing so seems to be that " participation of form " has the special value of referring a thing that is caused, to its primary cause, to the self-subsistent cause. On the other hand, when we speak of " participation " of a form, and when the form in its subject is referred either to its exemplar or to that which " gives of itself " by producing an effect, we ought to pay close attention to the manner in which the exemplar can be said to exist, and to the way in which an effect is " part " of its cause. In the present question, analogy must always be used, both as to existence and as to manner of causing.

The Sense of the term, " Intensity."

When St. Thomas talks about the " intensity " of charity he tends to speak in terms of that analogue of charity which is love in general. The reason seems to be that " intensity " signifies in terms of the effects of form. The special, although not unique advantage gained from the analogy of charity with love in general is a likeness of perceptible effects and signs of natural love, with the effects of charity, which cannot be known or perceived with certainty. Therefore use of this likeness is especially enlightened about the effects of charity.

The Figure of " Rootedness."

When St. Thomas talks about " radication " he tends to speak directly of the specific created form which is charity. The reason seems to be that the figure of a plant sending deeper

[14] *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 24, aa. 4-7.

and deeper roots into the ground which provides nourishment for it and supports it, is especially apt for setting forth the several elements of charity: to wit, that it is a virtue, that it is something supernatural and is regulated by the divine " reason " together with human reason under the light of faith, and that it is infused, not generated by repetition of its acts.

The third way of speaking occurs more frequently than the others in St. Thomas' development of the notion of " increase " of charity here. It is also richer in conclusions that are relevant to systematic theology, since it touches the essence of charity more directly, fully, and squarely than do the other ways of expanding the notion of " increase."

The Rootedness of a Plant.

A plant which is rooted in the soil has a being of its own, separate from the being of the soil. It is a being which moves from an intrinsic source, which sustains itself, and produces acts that are distinct from its mere existence. A plant uses the soil in which it is rooted as the means by which it obtains what it turns into food for itself. As the plant becomes stronger and more perfect, it tends to send out longer and more powerful roots, until it is, so to speak, " of " the ground itself, that is, it becomes so firmly fixed in its order to self-preservation that it seems to possess the ground which it uses. It could also be said, at least by a natural appearance, and sometimes in a true, albeit extended sense of the words, that the plant makes or seeks the natural storing places of water and minerals which are in the ground, and it even enriches the ground itself. The plant appears to be tending to become part of the whole environment, as though there were only one subsistent being there.

Elements of the Charity of the Will.

This figure may be transferred to charity but only in certain aspects, and only to various aspects of charity taken separately, and in various orders. Charity is indeed not a being which is separate from the actuality of the will, and it is not a thing

which has its own intrinsic sources of motion truly other than that of the will. The will is elevated so that it, as a power of the soul, is the source of the movement which is made through charity. On the other hand, however, God is also the first source of this movement, and He is its direct and first source entirely gratuitously, in a way that is different from the way in which He is the first principle of all created action in general.

1. Charity as a Disposition: it tends to seem to arise by nature from the will, as though it were the natural being of the will; as the plant is assimilated to its environment.

There are three aspects under which charity can be considered. First, one can think of the actuality itself of the soul, which is charity in its subject. In this way, for charity to be more deeply rooted in the will is for it to arise almost naturally from the will, as though the will were determined by its very nature to act out of charity and were not merely disposed to do so. Again, it means that created charity has a kind of nourishment from the soul, which means that it has its continued activity from the fact that a greater number of the works of the soul are ordered to its act. This is indeed reasonable, since it is characteristic of any virtue to tend to become a kind of second nature. The three traits of a virtuous act, which are promptness, ease, and pleasantness, indicate that such an act is performed after the manner of a natural act. No virtue truly becomes nature, since the use of a virtue is always subject to free choice, and, therefore, such an act is not determined in advance. But a virtue tends to become like to what is natural. An infused virtue, however, unlike acquired virtues, is not the actualization to which a faculty is naturally in potency. Therefore it has not its source entirely within the subject. But it is indeed the actuality of the subject, and it enables the faculty in which it is to bring forth an act of the vritue. The more perfectly a faculty has this ability, the more does the virtue arise from the soul itself, and the more entirely is the activity of the soul turned to maintaining the activity of

the virtue. A theological virtue has the further property that, unlike acquired virtues, it is regulated directly by the divine "reason," with no more than mere assistance from human reason, and without genuinely effective support from any but the other infused virtues. Therefore it is less easy and pleasant for one who has "little" of a theological virtue to bring forth its act, than for him to bring forth the act of an acquired virtue, or even of an infused moral virtue.[15] But this lack of promptness, ease, and pleasantness, which are inevitable concomitants of acts of acquired virtues, arises accidentally from the fact that the subject is not perfectly disposed to the object of the virtue through previous exercise of acts of the virtue, whereas this must be true about acquired virtues, which are generated by repetition of their acts. Consequently, the theological virtue tends to become more and more like to nature as the obstacles to its acts are removed. Finally, it is truly "of" the soul, and its act is truly brought forth by the soul.

2. Charity as the Form and Mover of the Virtues: it seems to take possession of its subject; as the plant seems to dominate the soil.

The second aspect under which charity can be considered is inasmuch as charity is the will itself, but in the actuality which is the charity of the will. For charity, so considered, to be more deeply rooted in the soul is for this being of the will to be so firmly fixed that the being of the subject seems to be more and more the same as this being of the will. There is a way in which such depth is to be found also in acquired virtues, since all the acts of a man should be subsumed under his intention of his ultimate end. But the oneness of his intention here is of an abstract kind, since the ultimate and, as it is perceived by mere reason, is not perceived except by many reasonings which do not focus on the one clearly-defined object. On the other hand, the object of charity is a thing that is perfectly one and charity touches its object directly, precisely as it is a real being. More-

[15] Cf. *de Virtutibus in Communi*, a. 11, ad 15.

over, charity does not do this from the diffuse powers of the created intellect and will, but by divine power. In other words, charity is the finite form by which the infinite power of God brings the created soul to the infinite and real good.[16] The object of charity includes all good acts within its scope, but the object itself is attained as the perfect oneness which it is. For charity to be "greater" in this sense, is for the soul to tend more and more to make its every act an act of charity, and for the oneing of such acts, in the single end, to become more perfect.

3. Charity as Source of the Supereminent Activity of the Will: by referring all natural acts to the supernatural end, it tends to make them more excellent; as a plant enriches the soil.

The third way in which charity can be considered is inasmuch as it is the actuality which is the effect of the divine action. In this way, for charity to be more deeply rooted in the soul is for it to draw more and more of the natural under its power, so that what is performed naturally flows more and more from the supernatural. This seems to be the tendency to superabundance which was mentioned above, in which the soul comes to be led by the Holy Spirit, and to peform even its natural acts out of its (necessarily analogous) participation of the divine power.

In summary, therefore, it can be said that charity is "of" the will itself, in such a way that the act of charity is brought forth by the will, with God helping, while the nature of the will remains unchanged. Again, it can be said that the accidental form which is charity becomes or is able to become more deeply rooted in the will, in the sense that the act of charity becomes more and more "natural," in a way, for the will, that more and more of the total activity of the soul tends to be directed to the end of charity, and that the act of charity tends more and more to become the source of natural acts.

[16] *De Carit.*, a. 1.

III

Conclusions about the Amount of the Increase of Charity.

1. The Basis of "Measurement" of Charity.

St. Thomas next asks how much "growth" of charity is possible: whether charity can be increased to infinity.[17] The notion of quantitative measurement is thus extended to something incorporeal, which has no proper "quantity." But if it is true that the "amount" or "size" of a material thing is truly dependent on the nature of that thing, so that the amount or size can be said to be "perfect" or "imperfect," not absolutely, but only in reference to the purpose for which the thing has quantity and measurable quality; and if this purpose is the full actualization of its nature as a created perfection made and willed by God for His own external glory: it follows that there is a basis for valid transfer of the notions of "size" and "amount" to incorporeal things, since they, too, have potency for perfectness. The ultimate measure is the complete nature of the thing that is measured, when that nature has its due existence in the order of the universe.

The term "infinite" is used negatively here to name that which fails to have any aspect, element, or part of itself which serves as an end beyond which it is impossible to find another part, element, or aspect of the same kind.

2. Essential Limits of Increase

The conclusions which St. Thomas reaches may be summarized as follows. Charity cannot be increased in such a way that it becomes a subsistent form or a subsistent accident. It must remain a finite, created, accidental form, having an infinite effect, formally, but not as agent. The efficacious cause of its effect is the divine power. But charity can be increased, and it could never become uncreated, even if it were increased indefinitely, because it must remain what it is, to wit, an analogous participation of the infinitely perfect and infinitely effi-

[17] *Summa Theol.*, q. 24, a. 7.

cacious divine charity. Because of the infinitude of its efficacious cause and of its effect it is capable of ever greater perfectness, in its own kind. I believe St. Thomas would say that the only boundary that can be fixed for created charity in general is its createdness, that is, its distinctness from and dependence on the divine charity. On the other hand, in each individual subject there is another boundary which is not fixed by a reason arising from the nature of charity itself but is established by the divine wisdom and will in respect to the dispensation of charity. It follows that no amount or degree of charity, as such, can ever be the maximum which can be had.

When it is recalled that the use of charity falls under man's free choice; that God does not deny grace to him who does what is in him; that charity is the principle of merit; and that acts of charity can dispose a man to acts of charity: it is possible to see that the love for God can become incomprehensibly great even in this life. It can become greater than any greatness which can be thought, in the sense that whatever is thought is always less than what charity can be. It is limited in being something created, and in being something of this life—which is to say that it follows the knowledge of faith.

The charity possessed by those who see God through His essence is finite, because, like the charity of this life, with which it is the same in species, it is a created actuality of a finite being. Since it is not capable of being increased in them, however, it is not even potentially infinite in them. But St. Thomas seems to say that although there is a way in which the future glory of a man who is predestined is the divinely purposed measure of the charity of his soul, it does not prefix a limit to the increase of charity which is possible for him in this life. The charity of those who have the beatific vision involves a more perfect kind of fullness than any increase of charity can effect in this life.[18]

ANN CONDIT

St. Mary's College
Notre Dame, Indiana

[18] *De Carit.*, a. 10.

NOTES ON OUR CONTRIBUTORS

THOMAS KEVIN CONNOLLY, O. P., S. T. Lr., Ph. D., is Professor of Philosophy at the Dominican House of Philosophy, Somerset, Ohio.

RAIMONDO SPIAZZI, O. P., Professor at the Angelicum, Rome, is the Director of its Institute of Social Sciences. He is editor of the new editions of many works of St. Thomas and has written extensively in many European scholarly journals.

ANN CONDIT writes from St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana.

FR. M. RAPHAEL SIMON, O. C. S. O., is a Trappist Monk of St. Joseph's Abbey, Spencer, Mass.

IGNATIUS MCGUINESS, O. P., S. T. Lr., S. T. D., formerly Professor of Theology at Providence College and the Collegio Angelicum, Rome, is professor of Dogmatic Theology, Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D. C.

DOM GREGORY STEVENS, O. S. B., S. T. D., contributor to THE THOMIST is a professor at St. Anselm's Priory, Washington, D. C.

DOMINIC ROVER, O. P., S. T. Lr., S. T. L., is engaged in graduate study at Yale University.

BOOK REVIEWS

Blueprint for a Catholic University. By LEO R. WARD, C. S. C. St. Louis: Herder, 1949. Pp. 376 with index. $5.00.

General Education and the Liberal College. By WILLIAM F. CUNNINGHAM, C. S. C. St. Louis, Herder, 1953. Pp. 278 with index. $4.00.

Theology—A Course for College Students, Vol. I. By JOHN J. FERNAN, S. J. Syracuse: LeMoyne College, 1952. Pp. 309. $3.50.

However antiquated it may be, the notion that the chief purpose of schools is to teach is still incontrovertible, and consequently, the chief purpose of the directors of schools should be to promote whatever will improve teaching and discourage whatever will hinder or impede it. The variety of schools that faces us today springs from a further problem of what to teach, since "teach" is a transitive verb. A school of forestry differs from a school of theology not by the fact that in one learning is imparted and in the other not, but by reason of the emphasis on what sort of learning. Hence all school administrators have certain problems in common, as well as those that are peculiarly their own.

Among the most peculiar problems are those of the heads of Catholic colleges, who must strive to maintain a presentable college and to be uncompromisingly Catholic as well. The increasing welter of secularistic courses introduced in shameless subservience to accrediting agencies, the Graduate Record Examinations, the N. E. A. and non-Catholic professional schools is suffocating distinctively Catholic disciplines. Many of the voiceless "hands" in Catholic mills have come to see that the collegiate preparation, through the courtesy of General Hershey, of a Catholic student to live a supernatural life is bounded by the College Entrance Board on the one hand and the Graduate Record Exam on the other, and thus must consist of exposure to courses carefully scaled down to the lowest tuition-paying denominator, which are arranged chiefly according to the demands of the R. O. T. C., but also according to the teaching load of the instructors and the quantitative credit hour requirements of the great non-Catholic Graduate schools which are also prone to require or suggest undergraduate texts embodying materialistic, Freudian, and evolutionistic doctrines, supplemented by recommended reading lists nearly always inclusive of books officially stigmatized as dangerous to faith and morals. Finally the class itself is conducted, more often than not, by a layman in a classroom from which crucifix and prayers may have been banished as lacking educational

" value." Let me hasten to add that the lay professor is nearly always an exemplary and zealous Catholic; he would have to have supernatural motives to compensate for his meager wages and uncertain tenure! In other words, the great American heresy of conformity and mediocrity, to say nothing of athletic prowess and sheer " bigness," has invaded many Church-administered schools, and by restricting and in some cases totally excluding Catholic teaching and practice, has reduced them to the level of their secular competitors, leaving Catholic colleges open to the serious charge that they are not essentially and thoroughly Catholic, but only incidentally so, by reason of the name, student body or majority of directors. If Catholic college administrators do not exert every effort to permeate their schools with uncompromising Catholicity, they are no better than their a-religious competitors who in the last analysis must be anti-religious; indeed they are worse, because they are parties to a fraud.

Such a problem leaves our hardy breed of college administrators undismayed. Their shield and their proud blazon of Catholic culture is their religion course, which may even attain the dignity of a department. The sole advantage of a Catholic college then would seem to be that courses in religion are offered to the student. Dr. Oliver Martin in an address to the Rhode Island Philosophical Society, entitled the " Iron Curtain in Education," has described how non-sectarian institutions evade the charge of religious indifference by loud and repeated reference to their professor or even a whole department of religion while they secretly harass the instructors and strangle the course by denying credit and limiting class time to a minimum. He, a non-Catholic, pleaded that religion should enjoy as much importance as English composition or domestic science in State universities; what would he have said of the one and two-hour fresh-air courses in Christian doctrine which are the distinctive contribution of the so-called Catholic college? The incredulous, shocked and even hostile reaction of some Catholic teachers to the three-hour-a-week four-year course in rigorous Thomistic theology that the Dominican Fathers require of their students at Providence College strikingly exemplifies how little religion has come to mean in an educational scene bounded by the G. I. Bill, rising costs of maintenance, the R. O. T. C., and Graduate Record Exams.

Hence books which offer a plan for a University of Studies which is clearly Catholic are needed, and to men of good will, welcome. Further, the undoubted success of their University lends additional weight to the observations of Fr. Ward and of Fr. Cunningham of Notre Dame. The central question to which Fr. Ward addresses himself is what makes learning Catholic (p. 8), and for a solution he turns to the rise of universities to find in their essential constitution the answer to his question. He writes much as an elderly professor would lecture to a particularly

backward class, with painstaking repetition, and so it soon becomes evident that a university becomes Catholic ". . . only by a particular relationship of other disciplines to theology, which must be a developing science." (p. 17) In Part II he discusses the Nature of a University and in a concluding section, " the Ideal in America," which enables him to discourse on a variety of problems connected with Catholic schooling but not essential to his thesis, the heart of which is thus stated: " In sum . . . a university is the home of the intellect, and a Catholic university is the home of the intellect as Catholic. . . . Catholic higher learning . . . can be only on condition that Catholic theology be given the primacy and be allowed and encouraged to specify this university. Not Catholic religion as praxis, but Catholic theology as a science is what makes the Catholic university to be." (p. 97) He then shows the two-fold implication of the primacy! " The first place in the school is given to the highest theoretic Christian wisdom, in all its profound perspectives; and in the Catholic school there must be a Catholic art, a Catholic sociology and a Catholic philosophy." And then he goes on to base these three on Scripture. " Theology based on the Scriptures is the first of all sciences, and philosophy, sociology and art learn from the Scriptures and are in a measure dependent, in a negative and a positive way, on the Scriptures." He does not develop the importance of Scriptures any further so what he appears to mean by Scriptures is the general truths of Revelation however they may be proposed. Theology as a science is then the core and keystone of a truly Catholic school. The rest of the book deals with the intellectual virtues, moral virtues, teachers, research and other problems that confront college administrators.

Father Cunningham covers much of the same matter, but since his viewpoint is rather that of the professional educator, a teacher of teachers, and since his purpose is avowedly " the crystalization of the thoughts and ideas of a number of Catholic educators working . . . on this problem of Catholic liberal education," his arrangement gives more prominence to the liberal arts, mentions theology only in passing, and ranges much farther afield. Indeed Hutchins, Howard Mumford Jones, and the Harvard Report seem more prominent in these pages than any Catholic educator. Because in the first part he grandly describes the goal of education in terms of the *whole* man in a whole world, in which he commendably includes the supernatural order, he demands of his school tasks which originally and ordinarily exceed its capacities. Thus formal classes and classrooms are incidental in his general theory of education. There are other examples of vaguely disquieting ambiguity in his use of terms, to which I shall return in a moment. In the second and largest part of his work he treats of what to teach, a rather original approach to curriculum. In the final part he treats of how and where to teach, method and administration, in which he

displays an almost naïve regard for the virtues of democracy. Rousseau himself could express no higher trust in the natural ability of the average college student to run, i. e. to administer, his own college, and perhaps could not equal the author's strictures on the autocratic, European, anti-scholastic nature of the administration of Catholic colleges by religious superiors.

In the question of the curriculum, we find, of course, the magic words, philosophy, theology, and integration many times. But philosophy is not to be studied in its intensity as the science of ultimates in the natural order; rather it must be gone through as a whole, however superficially, to give the student a " complete view of reality." " Theodicy, psychology, and cosmology are departments of special metaphysics. Behind them lie ontology . . . and epistemology, completing the realm of speculative philosophy," (p. 138) and deforming the natural order of knowledge. Theology in the description of the curriculum (p. 103) has its brief day as being superior to the vague emotionalism implied in the name " religion " and requiring the intense application of the highest rational powers of man. But later we discover it is not a discipline of thought, but of action, called Christian life ideals, that it studies the Bible according to the liturgical cycle, and that the moral virtues are " taught " by example. Never does it attain the dignity of a science — much less a wisdom, except in the suggestion that as it is the social science *par excellence,* it be taught in first year not as a separate course but integrated with history and social science. (p. 165) As a final insult, in his discussion of what qualifies a teacher " to develop the fully educated man through the liberal arts," Father Cunningham asserts that the only teacher " fully prepared to be a teacher in a Catholic college of liberal education is one who is fully grounded in the traditional philosophy." (p. 195) Father Ward would, I am sure, have substituted theology for philosophy. In a word, while Father Cunningham's wide acquaintance with the writings of many in the field of education enriches his survey of the problem of general educat' his contribution to the problem of making a college Catholic is of litt. alue because he seems not to know what theology is and cannot truly appreciate it. Nevertheless, he approves of something under that label.

Nor are he and Father Ward alone in their admiration for theology. In fact, it has become quite a fad; like the people who put up a television aerial, even though they cannot afford a set, colleges have begun to relabel their old religion courses in order to be up-to-date, without a single theologian on the faculty or the faintest notion of what theology really is. Theology is now a magic word which covers a lot of new sins, and all the old ones; for a swindle that was perpetrated on Catholics seeking a fuller understanding of the Faith in a Catholic school was sometimes little short of sinful.

It is moreover dubious what Father Ward understands by "theology," since he adds the qualification "as a science." Since the redundancy may not be immediately evident, perhaps a few clarifications are in order. The great body of truths both necessary and useful for salvation, manifested by God through prophets and above all, Jesus Christ, contained in Holy Scripture and in Apostolic tradition, is entrusted to the Church to be preserved and expounded. These truths are sometimes called Revelation, from the manner in which they come to us from God, or Sacred Doctrine, from the teaching of the Church, or the Faith, from serving as the object of the habitual assent to them on faith in the veracity of their Author or, even Scripture, from their most available source. Belief or faith, then, is the minimum necessary for salvation, and assent to whatever is taught by the Church suffices. But this does not make a Christian a theologian. A child reciting however correctly the Apostles' Creed is not St. Augustine writing the *Predestination of the Saints*; the Decalogue is not the *Secunda Secundae*. The faith is couched in human terms, illumined by human examples and subject to the natural inquisitiveness of the human intellect. But not any human elaboration of the faith is theological; for men study truth and above all expound it in a variety of ways for a variety of ends, giving rise to an approach that is scientific, or dialectical, or merely rhetorical. The rhetorical or dialectical exposition of Sacred Doctrine, however profitable it may be, is not theology, at least not in the universities from which Fr. Ward draws his inspiration, and according to the great teachers of the Christian tradition. Hence the expression "theology as science" is tautology, unless Fr. Ward shares the confusion of old-fashioned religion teachers recently transformed into theologians by a stroke of the Dean's pen.

Historically, the first method of teaching Sacred Doctrine was catechetical and rhetorical, because it is best adapted to simple untrained minds. The Apostles and Fathers proposed what God had said, just as the good Sisters do today, and then sought to move their hearers by various emotional appeals to embrace these truths and conduct their lives accordingly. How good little Jesus is, how much He loves us, how much sin "hurts" God Who is our friend, how terrible hell is, are appeals to the will and not the intellect. The extreme of this attitude is, of course, Evangelical Protestantism, but there are many Evangelicals in surprisingly high places in our Catholic schools. The other extreme, armed with profound psychological principles, such as "nothing is loved unless known," and carefully culled quotations from the Encyclicals on Scripture, finds a study of the life of Christ sufficient for the formation of the Catholic intellect, which may indeed be true of the kind of intellect which is appearing in increasing numbers on Catholic campuses. But rhetoric is not science, and such a discipline should not be deliberately mislabeled theology. It seeks to per-

suade by appeal to emotions, not to convince by appeal to intellect. Perhaps it is this unsubstantial, un-intellectual, non-rational exposition of Sacred Doctrine which Fr. Ward precludes by the phrase "theology as science," in opposition to Fr. Cunningham, the Educationalist.

But neither is dialectics science. Science begets certitude and conviction, dialectics begets probability and opinion. Dialectic is here taken not in the Hegelian sense, but in the Aristotelian sense of argument from common and general principles rather than proper and immediate reasons, and even for a kind of rhetoric in that it proceeds from premises not proved or provable but generally conceded by most men. In other words, the mind assents to truth dialectically not because intrinsic evidence is clearly seen, but for some other reason, which leaves the mind unconvinced, and as the authors say, more or less in fear that the truth might be otherwise. Much of what masquerades as theology, even in clerical seminaries, is really a doctrine of this sort, particularly in that sphere which has come to be called moral theology. This clerical malformation may explain the bewilderment and impatience of many priests in the presence of someone who seriously proposes a strict theological approach to Sacred Doctrine. Their experience of theology has been unsatisfactory because it was not really theology, it was a dialectic which never expelled the fear of error. Their teachers never furnished them with the science, but with conclusions, ready-made, to be applied under proper conditions to meet a particular need. Hence they instinctively accuse their pseudo-theological teachers of what Aristotle said of the Sophists: "For they used to suppose that they trained people by imparting to them not the art, but its products, as though anyone professing that he would impart a form of knowledge to obviate any pain in the feet, were then not to teach a man the art of shoemaking or the sources whence he can acquire anything of the kind, but were to present him with several kinds of shoes of all sorts: for he has helped him to meet his need, but has not imparted an art to him." (*De Soph. Elen.* 184 a 2.)

The good name of theology is also injured by this dialectical counterfeit by the fact that the book which was first widely acclaimed as a text-book of theology, and is still so used, proved unsatisfactory precisely because it was rhetorical and dialectical rather than theological. Father Walter Farrell, O.P. never proposed his *Companion* as a text; he was as much surprised as anyone at the enthusiastic reception it found among those untrained in anything but the rudiments of Sacred Doctrine. Difficulty and dissatisfaction are to be expected when science is demanded of a book which has little of science about it, except the order. It can be the basis of a successful course, much richer than Creed and Commandments, in Sacred Doctrine, especially for the devout feminine sex to whom the style and argumentation by example particularly appeal, but it cannot be labeled theology.

Theology, then, is the strictly scientific investigation and exposition of the truths of faith. Historically it did not appear in its perfection until the principal instruments were sufficiently developed to be applied to Sacred Doctrine: Logic and Metaphysics. It is not the study of Scripture, it is not the study of the Fathers, it is not erudite citations from the dusty works of forgotten authors, it is not the Liturgy, it is not Catholic Action, it is not Church History, it is not even the Magisterium of the living Church. It is the human effort to fulfill the behest of the Prince of the Apostles, to be ready to give an account of the hope that we cherish (I Pet. 3: 15). It is the supreme human wisdom, the fruit of the union of reason and revelation, in which the riches of the wisdom of God gradually come to light through the patient industry of man's noblest faculty, his intellect. It is based on Scripture, faith, as on most certain principles, and it teaches what the Church teaches but it does more. "A kind of magistral lecture . . . is held not to remove error but to lead the students to understand the truth . . . ; and then it should be based on reasons investigating the root of the truth, and making known how (and why) what is said is true; otherwise if the master solves the problem by mere authority, the student will be assured *that* it is true, but he will acquire nothing of science or understanding, and he will depart empty." (Quodl. IV, q. 9, a. 3) Hence Fr. Ward is absolutely correct when he proposes that a Catholic institution aiming to produce a distinctly Catholic intellect should give the primacy to theology.

At the risk of belaboring the obvious, a course in Sacred Doctrine on the collegiate level should 1) receive as much time and importance as any other subject, 2) be conducted on the level most profitable to the student. An honest appraisal of the student's abilities should determine what courses he follow in this, as in any other field. Those that are fitted for nothing better than the "Jesus loves us" approach should not, of course, be in college; those that are in college should be, and are, insulted by such refined revivalism. The average student must be informed about his faith in a clear and orderly manner, and the principal conclusions made for him. If he can be stimulated, by reward or punishment, to cooperate in the process and think for himself, so much the better. In this regard the excellent article on "Collegiate Theology" by Philip L. Hanley, O. P. in the Farrell Volume of THE THOMIST, *From an Abundant Spring*, (pp. 259-298) gives a stirring account of what can be done by hard work. Finally, the better student is capable of theology in all its heady grandeur, and the refusal to introduce him to it is one of the greatest defects in the formation of a laity that is intelligent and Catholic.

If it be platitudinous to remark that such a thorough religion course requires as much time as any other subject, what Fr. Cunningham would call a core discipline, then by what Dodgsonesque logic do administrators

allot the most important course the least number of hours, and even then use this meager time for pep rallies, ticket sales or practice for the May Crowning. The labors of the hard-working curriculum planners seeking to find our standard religion course that will fit with equal success the lean and the fat, the brainy and the brawny, seem to incline towards the minimal and mediocre, or at least what gives least trouble to both teacher and student. Thus, for example, Fr. Cunningham submerges theology in five semester hours of World Civilization and Christian Culture.

There are almost as many different plans of college religion (not theology) as there are instructors, to say nothing of colleges. Strangely enough, the University which is graced by Fr. Ward and Fr. Cunningham has one of the worst, consisting of an eclectic *mélange* of patristics, liturgy, theology, and a large dash of, for want of a worse word, what may be called sacred rhetoric, although the preface to Fr. Hesburgh's dogma text plays lip service to theology and then proceeds to hopscotch through Christian doctrine in a manner that barely rises to the level of dialectics. Walter Farrell's *Companion to the Summa* has been made the basis of another plan which strives to be more rigorously theological, at least in order and content, but can be and indeed has been eviscerated by poorly equipped teachers. Hence a group of Dominicans in Dubuque are composing a more conventional text which embodies more of St. Thomas, leaves less to the individual teacher, and retains the material order of the *Summa*.

It is not surprising, considering the extensive part it plays in American higher education, that the Society of Jesus has directed some of its clever and most fertile minds to this problem. The Doyle-Hertzog-Chetwood formula has been revised; and in accord with the times, the new approach is labeled Theology, although it varies from institution to institution, according, one might suspect, to variations in the students. Jesuits, in general, do not understand or define college theology in the way a Thomist or even Fr. Ward would; they tend to emphasize the positive and scriptural aspect of Sacred Doctrine, so that it becomes as factual, let us say, as history or literature, and the speculative aspect is covered by the compilation and recitation of opinions, making it at the most a dialectic. Beyond this, they disagree among themselves as to how and what to teach, which is a striking confirmation of how complicated is the problem of planning a religion course. Fr. Casey, S. J. of Boston College is the patron of an attractive plan, well-worked out, based heavily on Church History and Scripture, because, he says, of the exhortations of the Holy See on the reading of the Scriptures. This plan, which, of course, is labeled Theology, is unique in that it explicitly *excludes* moral theology as such, since the student is assumed to have had a course in ethics. There is a great deal of reading and reflection required of the student in this plan, however, and it seems to have ended up with the students reading the

heterogeneous essays of Canon Smith's *Teaching of the Catholic Church.* One cannot help surmising that students capable of as much reflection as this plan expects could spend their energy with greater profit on the *Summa* of St. Thomas itself, under competent guidance.

The plan propounded by Fr. Fernan in the preface to this text is known as the Le Moyne plan, although it is also in use at Canisius and St. Peter's, Jersey City. Even if he were not explicitly acknowledged as the architect of the original plan, the typical cavalier attitude of Fr. J. C. Murray, S. J. to what is traditional and Thomist would be detected in this proposal.

The plan centers around Christ as manifest in Scripture, so texts for the four years, of which this is the first, will be guides to Scripture, pointing out to the student what he is expected to find in various places. The first year considers Christ as Prophet and King in the four gospels; the second year considers Christ the Priest from the history of the Passion and Resurrection, the Epistle to the Hebrews, Councils of the Church and teaching of theologians; the third year considers Christ in His Mystical Body in the Acts of the Apostles, in the Epistles of St. Paul, and in the Encyclicals on the Holy Spirit and the Mystical Body; the fourth year considers Christ in the individual members of His Body in the Epistle to the Romans, and finally, a complete dogmatic study of all the elements of Justification is made from the Councils of the Church and the analysis of the theologians.

The first volume before us comprises 82 pages of introduction to the Gospels, 61 pages of background to the life of Christ covering Jewish history, mores, and Messianic hopes, 126 pages on the public life divided into 8 sections and then in a fourth part labeled "Dogmatic Summary" 14 pages of Christology and 18 pages on the Church.

From what has been said, this is no ordinary religion course; but neither is it theology. The best that can be said of it is that it offers much material for an extensive course in what is called Christology or perhaps a commentary on qq. 26 and 40-46 of the *Tertia Pars.* Fr. Fernan blandly shifts theology from the scientific study of faith, which embraces all revealed truth, to the scientific study of Christianity, thence to Christ, and then neatly replaces science, to know how and why, with history, to know who and what (pp. x, xiii), which is, of course, much easier for the average student to grasp, and consequently, potentially more interesting. As an introduction to the Gospels, it is competent, and because it is brief, it would be handier than Riccioti's *Life of Christ.* It is also less expensive, even though it is beautifully arranged and printed.

Judged, however, as a basis for a course in "theology as a science," it is deceptive, inadequate, and impractical, and throws theology back seven hundred years to the state which St. Thomas deplored in his prologue to the *Summa.* A book containing over 250 pages on Scripture and only 30 pages on one particular tract of theology should be more accurately

titled. It is inadequate if the purpose of a theology course is to present a mature, or equivalently a college-level, reasoned exposition of what Christ reveals and His Church teaches. Anything gives best results when it is treated according to its proper and specific nature, a college student is no exception. Christ, it is true, taught great truths by story and example to the childish minds of His unlettered hearers, but our collegians feel justly resentful at being treated as children, and being put to children's tasks will never make adults of them. Interest is not the true measure of the value of a course; battle-scarred professors are wary of what students like, they seek to give them what they need. For intellectually mature Catholics, an orderly, reasonable, clear, brief presentation of their faith is imperative. To explain Christian doctrine in the order in which it occurs in reading the Gospels is superficial the first time, because of the pressure to cover ground, as well as repetitious and confusing the second time, leaving the student with an undigested series of events or facts, without rhyme or reason. These are precisely the obstacles to learning which St. Thomas seeks to avoid. Thus such a plan is impractical since it does not lead to the end sought. As a discipline of the mind it lacks order and proportion, subordinating the whole of theology to a part. It ignores the doctrine of St. Thomas on the subject of theology, which is God; it overlooks the fact that the Holy See looks with disfavor on those who minimize reasoning and the scholastic method; it fails to enrich the student with the highest achievement of Christian man, the theocentric culture of the Middle Ages. May the students who use it well learn through Christ of His Heavenly Father, and may teachers of religion learn from experience that old ways may still be good ways, especially when fashioned by the Angel of the Schools.

IGNATIUS MCGUINESS, O. P.

Dominican House of Studies
Washington, D. C.

Christian Ethics. By DIETRICH VON HILDEBRAND. New York: David McKay, 1953. Pp. 480 with index. $6.00.

This new work of Dietrich von Hildebrand is a profound and enlightening study of basic moral philosophy. The title: "Christian Ethics," does not indicate that the author subscribes to Maritain's "adequate moral philosophy," but rather describes the "philosophical exploration of the totality of morality, including the natural moral law and all moral and morally relevant values accessible to a noble pagan, as well as the morality embodied in the sacred humanity of Christ and in those men and women who have been transformed into Christ-the saints." (p. 454) The analysis is a strictly philosophical one, not based on arguments from principles

known by faith but on natural reason. The author proposes a philosophical study of the immediately given data in the field of ethics, without claiming adherence to any particular system of philosophical thought. This analysis seeks to attain these elementary data. The " given " in this sense is a " necessary, intelligible entity," and an " absolutely certain insight " is to be attained by severe purification of the mind. The inquiry will not reach its " climax " with mere definitions, but will aim at a full grasp, a more profound and richer insight and intuition. The author reveals thus the influence of his contact with Husserl and Scheler, but his approach is by no means merely phenomenological, any more than it is purely Aristotelian. Without the prejudice of any system to support or apply, and yet avoiding a merely descriptive ethic, von Hildebrand pursues his study often with remarkable insight, if not always with lucid expression. The student of Thomistic ethics should welcome this presentation of moral philosophy, if for no other reason than to see the value of a different approach. The Thomist, while not always agreeing with the author, should be able, through von Hildebrand's analyses, to penetrate more deeply into the thought of the *Doctor communis*. The author is greatly indebted, in many places, to St. Augustine, and many Augustinian and Platonic positions are adopted.

The author's method itself provides sufficient material for a detailed commentary. We should like to know more about the author's views on the nature of intuition, and the type of " irreducibility " of the primary data. On these matters, though, one may better consult von Hildebrand's: *Vom Wesen des Philosophischen Fragens und Erkennens*. The author does not seem to base his moral philosophy so strictly on metaphysical considerations of the good and of being as does St. Thomas, for example. The emphasis on descriptive analysis, while producing real benefits, often leaves one with only partial intellectual satisfaction as to the nature of what is being discussed.

What is to be said of von Hildebrand's " Christian " ethics? Actually, though he denies it explicitly (p. 19), such an ethic is a form of moral theology. Even though the author excludes recourse to truths of faith as bases for his proofs, yet his acceptance of the morality embodied in the Man, Christ, is one of faith, and the consideration of this " total morality," while carried out by the light of natural reason is truly theological, not only in its subject matter (*obiectum materiale*), but implicitly, at least in its formal object *quo*. The use of reason concerning revealed truths, or revealed morality does not, in itself, render the investigation merely natural—it is a truly theological analysis. Some of the incompleteness of the author's investigations is due precisely to the fact that a full theological method is not employed, and is even consciously avoided.

The volume is divided into two parts, with eight sections, and thirty-six

chapters. Part One is devoted to a study of the notion of value, and Part Two deals with the moral aspect of values. It is certainly impossible to even attempt here to summarize the entire volume, for it is detailed in its analyses, and too rich in content to be patient of summarization. We may confine ourselves to some of the principal theses of fundamental importance.

Of primary concern is von Hildebrand's division of values into three classes: the subjectively satisfying, the objective good for the person, and the important-in-itself. The distinction between these, it is insisted, is one of essence and kind, not of mere degree. Aristippus is criticized for reducing all to the category of the subjectively satisfying or agreeable while Scheler, too, is criticized for failing to distinguish sufficiently the satisfying from the true value. The author sees in the historical use of the term *bonum*, a reference above all to the objective good for the person—not a hedonist position, but yet one different from that of genuine values. The value, or important-in-itself, is not the same as the end, it is not merely the object of a " direct importance," and Aristotle is seen as having erred in reducing considerations of morality to one of means and ends. Thus, it would seem that the author would not in anyway see his division of the good as equivalent to that into: *delectabile, utile* and *honestum*. The end, in Aristotle, is willed in and for itself, but the author says that this direct importance, with its opposite form of indirect importance, can be applied to any of his three categories, and thus, the division of ends and means has a different *fundamentum* than does the division he proposes. Even though value and the good for the person are not independent they are quite distinct.

It would seem that the author has a too limited view of teleology. The value response, he states, is definitely different from " any mere teleological tendency," and the " authentic value of a good for its own sake cannot be interpreted in the light of finality." (p. 305) He says also: " the relation between single goods possessing an authentic value and the Absolute Good, God, has not the character of finality, but of another much deeper connection." (p. 309) This rejection of finality would logically imply von Hildebrand's disagreement with St. Thomas, who bases his entire moral outlook on finality.

However, the author sees finality in the light of a " mere unfolding of man's entelechy," and thus the " free response to moral goodness in general . . . clearly differs from an unconscious teleological striving for self-perfection." (p. 258, n. 2) This merely intrinsic and " subjective " view of finality, while a legitimate aspect, is by no means the full doctrine on the end, as understood in Thomistic metaphysics or morals. In fact, what von Hildebrand says about the true value, the important-in-itself, can be said about the " end " according to St. Thomas. This latter sees in the

end a good-in-itself, an object towards which a being is directed. The notion of " end " does, in its subjective aspect, indicate a subjective state of perfection, but this refers to the possession of the end, and not to that object which is the end. The " first decisive mark " of the value response for von Hildebrand is its character of " self-abandonment "; for St. Thomas, too, this " mark " characterizes the relation of the rational will to the end. These remarks are not made in criticism of the author, whose insight into the nature of the " value response " is of great assistance in showing clearly the Thomistic conception of finality.

As for St. Thomas, so for von Hildebrand, the response to the important-in-itself does not include " indifference to our own objective good " (p. 219), and the " pure " love of God, the true value response to God, is an objective good for man, but only presupposing that the *ordo amoris* is observed. St. Thomas would completely agree that the response to God is the absolute response to the absolute Good.

What is the nature of the moral value as such? While we cannot even summarize all of von Hildebrand's thought on this, we may consider these points: the relation of moral and ontological values, the specific nature of moral values, and their relation to the so-called " morally relevant values."

For the author, the distinction between moral and ontological values is not the same as that between moral and physical goods, since he distinguishes ontological values from all " qualitative " values. The distinction is described at length: qualitative values (intellectual, moral, aesthetic, etc.) are more properly " values " than the ontological value of, say, the human person. Moral values are said to concern the *similitudo Dei*, while the ontological value of the person relates to the *imago Dei*. The author feels Plato's view of a Goodness transcending single goods applies more aptly to moral values, whereas the Aristotelian view more correctly describes ontological values. The author is dealing with the common feeling that the qualitative values take us up into realms higher than the merely ontological. This experience is well analysed: our first conceptions of God are more likely to consider Him as the Supreme Good, Beauty, or Justice, rather than as *Actus Purus*. As to the Platonic and Aristotelian doctrines on participation, and the relation of single beings or good to an absolute being or goodness, we may say that, in a sense, both views apply to ontological and moral or qualitative values. The human substance participates in the Divine just as human goodness is a likeness to the Absolute Good—whatever is relative implies a necessary relation to the absolute. But one cannot affirm Platonism in one place, and deny it elsewhere. One may see reality once with a Platonic mentality, and again with the mind of Aristotle, but the philosopher must reach a more satisfactory conclusion than that von Hildebrand arrives at. The author does not really offer a final philosophical explanation of the exact relations between ontological

and qualitative values, between value and being, but rather describes one way of conceiving these entities.

Moral values are distinguished from other qualitative values in being personal and free, and in the fact that man is held responsible for moral values, feels their need, and sees them in reference to merit and punishment. Furthermore, " moral goodness has its source in some sort of ' conformity ' to a norm." (p. 182) One can see this norm as the " immanent logic " of a being; but von Hildebrand considers this *secundum naturam* norm as impossible of application to morality. Thus " justice is not morally good because it is in conformity with our nature; rather because it is good, our nature is called to be endowed with it. . . ." (p. 187) The author's difficulty here is in having too limited a view of what is meant by *secundum naturam*. The phrase is taken in too " immanent " a sense. The author states that in the notion of conformity to our nature we are to include that of value response, which is seen to be morally good, not because consonant with nature, but because of its relation to the important-in-itself. In other words, morally good acts are such because they are responses to moral values, or morally relevant values, and no mere " factual " examination of human nature can reveal the moral or obligatory character of an action or attitude.

This is all quite true in the sense that ontological values are presupposed by the moral values (to use Thomistic terms), and the mere *convenientia* to human nature as such is not the final source of morality. Von Hildebrand is quite correct in rejecting a wholly " immanent " conception of conformity to nature as the ultimate moral criterion. However, he has not really supplied any finally valid criterion himself. He has not given any consideration to the Thomistic criterion of *secundum rectam rationem*, and he has not pushed his analysis far enough to explain fully the nature of the moral good. Cutting moral values qff from the " ontological " to some extent, he has not been able to give a really definite answer to the question of what morality is.

The author further distinguished the values " to which a right response is morally good " and calls them " morally relevant values." Thus, this latter term would include the ontological value of the human person as a value to which a proper response has moral value. In a loose and not altogether correct comparison, we could say that the ontological value is the *bonum in se*, the morally relevant value is the *bonum ut appetibile*, the moral value concerns the human response to this *bonum*.

It can now be seen that if a moral value, affecting a human act or attitude, depends for its goodness on the morally relevant value, the thing to be examined is the exact nature of the morally relevant value, and how, in von Hildebrand's mind, this is to be distinguished from the ontological value. To one with a Thomistic outlook, there seems to be confusion on

this basic point: the relation of moral goodness to the morally relevant goodness of the external object, given that this morally relevant value is not the same as the ontological value. For von Hildebrand, the moral value is an immediate *datum*, which is to be described and analysed, but one feels that the author never comes to grips with the metaphysical problems of the ultimate nature of moral goodness.

It is difficult, however, to pass any final judgment on the author's views. Profound and penetrating as may be his intuitions, the method he has adopted is not one suited to give such final answers, so that one is left with a realization of the existence and some properties of moral values, but not a clear view of their essence.

Part Two deals with freedom and the roots of moral good and evil. There are generally excellent discussions of these subjects, which are to be recommended to all serious students of moral problems. The author insists on a study of the moral character of the whole person, not merely an investigation of his single transient acts. Moral consciousness, the place of freedom in the development of the person's whole moral character are subjects for special treatment. The problems dealt with here are important ones, and the reading of these sections will be of great profit to the moralist.

Again, however, we notice a too restricted view of some traditional moral conceptions. Thus: willing and choice are seen in too narrow a light, so that love, for example, is termed an affective and not a volitional response, for the will is seen as only a faculty of choice, and this in too limited a sense. In the discussion of virtues, the Aristotelian notion of habit is rejected because its essential character of being a quality of the soul or faculty is not properly grasped. The doctrine of virtue as the mean between two extremes is likewise criticized, because the mean, the excess and the defect are all seen on a horizontal line, whereas really, one should conceive the virtuous mean as the apex of a triangle, rising above and "opposed to" the bases of the triangle-the excess and defect. The whole Aristotelian notion of freedom as a choice of means, not ends, is rejected, again, seemingly, because this doctrine was not fully comprehended.

Despite these criticisms, the volume is earnestly recommended to moralists and students of ethics, for there are many excellent sections, and some aspects of moral theory, rather forgotten in our manuals, receive their due consideration. Even those sections in which the author does not appear to have grasped the truth or significance of some traditional doctrine are recommended for they show the need of clearer and more profound exposition of these traditional conceptions.

DOM GREGORY STEVENS, O. S. B.

St. Anselm's Priory
Washington, D. C.

The Eclipse of God: Studies in the Relation Between Religion and Philosophy. By MARTIN BUBER. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952. Pp. 192 with index. $2.50.

Judaism and the Modern Man: An Interpretation of the Jewish Religion. By WILL HERBERG. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Young, 1951. Pp. 313 with index. $4.00.

Two sons of the race of prophets have taken up the prophetical office for modern man. Buber and Herberg wish to lead souls away from the practical godlessness of our times, beyond the self-imposed limits of materialism and atheism, skepticism and idealism to the God of Revelation. Their message should prove beneficial to the modern man without faith; however, certain serious theological and philosophical deficiencies preclude the recommendation of these books to Catholics, and even diminish their value for others.

Both authors survey the contemporary situation and its antecedents, but Buber is concerned with the philosophical antecedents, especially idealism, while Herberg exposes the modern substitute faiths, especially scientism. Buber works as an essayist, gently pointing his remarks which display excellent and delicate perceptions accurately expressed, although his meaning is not always made explicit. Herberg is rather a forceful and systematic expositor who shows genuine acumen in the analysis of contemporary attitudes. Both declare the solution of the problem to be a genuine religion which will embrace the internal and external life of the individual and extend itself to society. But Buber, while retaining Judaism as his point of view, is concerned with the "eclipse of God" rather than with any sustained effort to develop an interpretation of Judaism. Herberg, however, goes from the modern crisis to the solution he finds in his interpretation of the Jewish religion. Nevertheless, Herberg admits that Judaism is not the exclusive solution; he believes that Judaism and Christianity together have a divine mission. Indeed, both authors are free from what Herberg himself has characterized as the "negativism of minority group defensiveness." Both are at least tolerant of Christianity and speak as integral members of a modern society to which they uphold with some intellectual power and attractiveness the supremacy of God, of the God who desires to be the God of our hearts.

Martin Buber is a man of seventy-five, a famous man whose long career as a sincere Jew warmly devoted to God and at the same time an existentialist in philosophy is reflected in these lectures given at several American universities in 1951. In these studies on the relation between religion and philosophy, it is evident that by religion Buber means virtue of religion which leads the soul back to the Reality of realities. By philosophy,

he understands for the most part idealism with its intellectual constructions and their aftermath which he believes has resulted in the eclipse of God. It is this philosophy to which he addresses his criticism. He characterizes Spinoza (although he does not seem to recognize his pantheism), Hegel, Kant and Nietzsche as philosophers who led to the eclipse of God by denying in various degrees His reality. The existentialists—Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre—Buber, though existentialist himself, criticizes insofar as they neither rightly acknowledge nor interpret the faith of the Old Testament. Bergson, Hermann Cohen, Jung and Whitehead are also considered among the philosophers.

Buber's committment to Judaism and his existentialism limit his religious outlook to an insistence on the imageless God, Who has not revealed anything about Himself, His revelation being concerned only with His deeds. Perhaps his religious limitation is responsible for some of his astonishing assertions about Christianity which he finds "'Hellenistic' insofar as it surrenders the concept of the 'holy people' and recognizes only a personal holiness." (p. 138) Similarly inaccurate in his statement that "the peoples won to Christianity . . . did not stand, like Israel, in a fundamental relationship to Him as the people of a covenant." (p. 139) Likewise "the Pauline and Paul stic theology depreciated works for the sake of faith." (p. 140)

Moreover, even as a philosopher, Buber betrays a fundamental ignorance of Aristotelian and scholastic philosophy about which he nevertheless permits himself to make repeated depreciating remarks, laden with existentialist bias. Aristotle indeed did not take the existentialist way of solving the problem about the knowability of the individual, for the existentialist denies the validity of speculative knowledge which, Aristotle saw, as the existentialists do not, results in skepticism as a logical consequence. But Aristotle did assert, and that twenty-five centuries ago, that only the individual is real, and that the primary intention of knowledge is the individual. The existentialists would do well to investigate the position of Aristotle and St. Thomas, for it is a stronger and truer mean between their own extreme outlook and that of idealism.

Despite these errors, Bauber must be praised for his warm and sincere devotion to God, which reflects the spirit of prayer, as well as the reiteration to which it has led him, that religion should bind us to God in a personal relation to which all activity must be subordinated lest He be eclipsed from our minds and hearts.

The first part of Mr. Herberg's four-part work analyzes the modern man's interior chaos in the absence of an absolute. The relativity of scientism, anthropology, Freudianism, Marxism, the illusiveness of "progress" he finds have produced a confusion in which there are no solidly founded values, no motivation, no hope. In the crisis, "idolatrous substitute faiths" such as totalitarianism, nationalism and socialism are tried

and found wanting because they exalt man and deny God. From the crisis, Mr. Herberg sees only the " leap of faith " which overlooks a philosophy of reality leading to God, or a rational foundation for the revelation of God which we call the rational prologomena to Faith. The faith which the author proposes is the " biblical faith " of " historical Judaism " this time overlooking other alternatives such as the reasonable possibility that the divinely instituted religion of his fathers might be more truly represented in Christian Catholicism. However, Herberg is constrained to admit the inadequacy of modern Judaism from the very fact that he, like Franz Rosenzweig before him, feels the necessity of remaking it, of rediscovering somehow the divine element contained in it. Nevertheless, the clear and terse exposition of the inadequacies of the false ideologies of our times is valuable, even for Catholic scholars who are overly " liberal," and his main thesis that divine Faith is needed to save man and contemporary society is a truth which cannot be repeated too often.

In the following two sections on God and Man, Religion and Society, the basic teachings of the " Jewish faith " are treated in their relevance to individual and social life, in the light of an existentialist philosophy and in the context of modern life and thought. The author's intention is to show the adequacy of the Jewish religion specifically, and of " Hebraic religion " (Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism) generically. Jewish and " Hebraic religion " thus defined are treated in parallel. However, the author's comprehension of Christianity is sometimes inadequate and indeed the device of " Hebraic religion " does not assign to the Christian Church the explicit credit due to it. For instance, to " Hebraic religion " is attributed the transmission of " humanitarian and social-reform " values to Western civilization. (p. 98) Likewise the words and teachings of Jesus are often quoted from the lips of the rabbis; thus, in regard to the love of neighbor, the author says: " to the rabbis, it implies . . . also loving one's enemies." (p. 100) It would seem that the principle of selection used between contrary rabbinical opinions is that of an implicit preference for the New Testament, which in fact has similarly influenced rabbinical writers of the past. At the same time, a truer interpretation of the Judaism which animated the saints of the Old Testament is attained by the help of the sublime ideals of Christianity, whose doctrine and morality were foreshadowed in the authentic Jewish religion.

This influence of Christian doctrine is similarly manifest in the author's frequently recurring ideal of " *fellowship* with God " through faith " (e. g. p. 101) which is Christian rather than Jewish in origin. Indeed to the Jew, such an idea must sound offensive; in fact, it would likewise be offensive to the Catholic, were he not adopted into brotherhood with the God-man, and thus, in Christ, permitted to enter into friendship with God. Throughout these two sections which treat of God and man, grace, sin, society, the

Messiah and the Messianic age which is heaven on earth as well as throughout the entire book, Herberg cannot be said to represent the common Jewish view on these topics.

In the fourth and final section on the "Mystery of Israel" Jewish faith is presented as redemptive history. The author, again following Franz Rosenzweig, explains his relativistic view of Revelation, and treats the Torah as Teaching and law. The influence of Christian ideas is evident in his view of the nature and destiny of Israel as a supernatural community constituted by the divine Covenant as the operative instrumentality of redemption. Thus he foresees the loss of Jewish identity when its vocation is completed. As Rosenzweig, he admits a divine mission for Christianity, which is appointed with Judaism to work out the salvation of mankind.

Herberg's book contains ample bibliography which reveals, as do other sources such as Runes' *Hebrew Impact on Western Civilization*, a considerable contemporary Jewish literature. Herberg himself writes with clarity, a certain objectivity, sincerity and a persuasive reasonableness. He has a marked tendency for systematic thought which, together with his honesty and fortrightness, gives a foundation for our hope that he will discover and resolve the inconsistencies of his philosophic and religious position.

Fr. M. Raphael Simon, O. C. S. O.

St. Joseph's Abbey
Spencer, Mass.

Bentham and the Ethics of Today. By David Baumgardt. Princeton University Press, 1952. Pp. 584 with index. $9.00.

"I have tried to make fruitful the consistent ethical position of Jeremy Bentham and to comment in detail on the importance (of his writings) for contemporary systematic ethics." In this manner does David Baumgardt announce his intention in this scholarly attempt to re-evaluate and repopularize the work of Bentham. As to the fact that Bentham is an identifiable progenitor of modern ethics there can really be no doubt, and the thesis of Professor Baumgardt is therefore entirely tenable and of considerable importance, to philosophy, to history and to jurisprudence. But that his influence has been a happy and a healthy one we ought seriously to question. Indeed it is ironic that the very success of the Baumgardt position will inevitably lead a defender of traditional philosophy to a more determined opposition to Benthamite ethics and jurisprudence. For the author has done more than to prove his case. He has laid bare the soul of modern ethics, repeating over and over again, sometimes in his

own words, sometimes in the words of Bentham himself, the postulates, the dicta, the unchallenged first principles and the clear-cut animosities of contemporary ethical thought.

We find already present in the works of the eighteenth-century Bentham, as those works are meticulously weighed and edited and annotated by Professor Baumgardt, all the major insights of modern thought: the cult of the practical, a militant opposition to speculation and to speculative principles, the confounding of the practical with the speculative, a tendency to judge the higher order by the lower, the identification of law and morals together with a proportionate exaltation of human positive law, a continued insistence upon the parallel between ethics and natural science and as a corollary to this the apotheosis of experimental knowledge and the scientific method, a prevailing mathematicism, a materialistic concept of the common good, and finally an affirmation of the absolute universality of the critical or censorial method. Bentham and his disciples, in private non-ecumenical session, have issued all the anathemas of a positivist culture: first, a crushing repudiation of tradition and authority, especially the authority of conventional terminology, then a long list of specific maledictions against the natural law and the law of nations, against right reason and the natural rights of man, against divine law and theology and the theonomic foundation of morals, against Aristotle, against poetry, against the common law, against dogmatic moralists and all the works and pomps of their " essentialist " morals, such as the principle of asceticism, common sense, moral sense, natural justice, good order, conscientiousness, etc. Alone in the midst of the ruins of this destructive, anarchic system stands " the principle of utility," " the happiness principle," " the greatest good for the greatest number "—a principle which is at once self-evident and hypothetical, but still the rule and measure of every other moral principle and of all human conduct.

But what is the validity and significance of the utility principle? We may put our critique in the form of a dilemma: either the utility principle has an analyzable content or it has not. If it has not, then it is of no more value than the traditional proposition that the will always tends toward the good in general, or that every act is done in view of an end. The science of morals begins with such factual premises but it is quite unscientific to resolve every concrete question of moral conduct by an immediate recourse to such premises, because they are universal and therefore indeterminate. If, on the other hand, the utility principle has a content, then what is that content? Professor Baumgardt finds sufficient evidence in the works of Bentham to conclude that the utility principle logically terminates in " the ethics of consequences," so that the entire morality of an act is made to depend upon its observable consequences, i. e. its calculated power to cause pleasure or prevent pain. Thus there is

only one font of morality, the effect or consequence, a sort of truncated *finis operis* in which actual measurable effects count for everything. That traditional source of morality which we call motive or intention is either ruled out as something too internal or subjective, or it is itself defined in terms of consequences, for it is denominated as a " pre-conceived consequence," or an " expected feeling of pleasure or pain."

In seeking out the content of the utility principle we are forced back therefore upon an analysis of the Benthamite notion of pleasure and pain. Was Bentham a pure hedonist, recognizing only sensual pleasure and sensible pain as the inner dynamism of the utility principle? Indubitably there are certain places where he states clearly that all pleasures and pains are of the body. Yet elsewhere he draws up a list of human pleasures which includes pleasures of the mind and soul. We may find a solution for this apparent contradiction in the words of Bentham himself, for he maintains that the difference between feelings of the body and feelings of the mind is slight, and the pleasures of the mind are said to result ultimately from objects of sense. In evaluating therefore the content of the utility principle we can conclude that Bentham admits a diversity of goods, or rather a diversity of pleasures, while denying an order or hierarchy of goods and pleasures. It is not surprising then to find that while admitting that there are degrees of happiness and misery he insists that the differences are only quantitative, not specific or qualitative.

This is the key to the resolution of the dilemma and the key also to the entire Benthamite ethics. We might call him a " mathematical hedonist," in an attempt to account for his almost grotesque effort to set a " moral calculus," a " felicific calculus," an " arithmetique morale," in which pleasures and pains, pleasure-causing virtues, pain-inducing vices, motives, intentions, duties, goods and consequences are codified in a fantastic, unordered, overlapping pattern which constitutes the mathematico-moral dream world of Jeremy Bentham.

The official exhuming of the " original," " fruitful " and " misjudged " Benthamite corpus is a task that certainly required the exacting scholarship and objectivity of Professor Baumgardt. Yet there is a point at which objectivity turns into comic high seriousness. What remarkable restraint must have been required to check the ironic commentary that might have been written upon the felicific calculus of Bentham! For the simplified, realistic " utility principle " which was destined to dissolve the complexities, ambiguities and tautologies of an idealistic ethics is actually used to construct an elaborate mathematicist caricature of the reprobated systems. So we are introduced to a *tabula affectuum*, a table of fourteen pleasures and twelve pains, with three dimensions for each, later extended to seven " properties " of pleasure and pain which are added and subtracted and balanced to give the final hedonist equation. We are led through a felicific

maze of nine different kinds of intentionality, nine distinct divisions of human acts, four orders of effects, four official sanctions, later enlarged to five and later still to seven human sanctions and one superhuman sanction, plus thirty-two consequences influencing moral sensibility, fifty-types of pleasure, and fifty-seven types of pain—all of which Bentham hoped would issue in a great dictionary of virtues, vices and passions with appropriate "neutral" terminology. It would be drawn up under the direction of the strictest mathematicist and censorial formulas, and would ultimately constitute a new moral logic, an Organon of the will. In the presence of this felicific fantasia Dr. Baumgardt should not really find it so surprising that modern philosophy, both orthodox and heterodox, should be almost unanimous in mocking the pretentious crudities of Bentham.

Yet the author has rendered modern philosophy, and especially the history of philosophy, a great service in re-examining the bulk of Bentham's work, including his anonymously published pamphlets and certain hitherto unpublished manuscripts. The additional service he renders in examining the relationship of Bentham to modern ethical thought is of the highest importance because it reveals how the distinctive insights of Bentham are still bearing fruit in modern ethics. Bentham ought to be repudiated, but not by those who have in fact worked out in detail his rough-drawn plan for a hypothetical, censorial, empiricist ethics. Perhaps he was wiser than they. And when he remarked to Philarete Chasles that he would like to return to life each century for a short time in order to instruct himself as to the fate of his moral theories, he might have had a premonition of the sort of longevity which he has in fact enjoyed. But this too was part of his private moral calculus, for he provided for a reluctant posterity in two ways. First of all, he made arrangements to have his body preserved as a mummy, and then he managed to have his doctrine preserved by the careful way he selected the delightfully modern spices of a mathematicist, anti-traditional, censorial, sensist, satirical method. Consequently, there are two Benthams in our midst today—one in the Egyptian department at University College, London, whither his mummy was withdrawn for repairs after the Nazis, unmindful of their great debt to Benthamite ethics, had dropped a bomb dangerously near his remains; the other in the very air we breathe. For Benthamism is latent in our culture. He is not the father of modern positivism but he is its primitive encyclopedist and the sort of gleeful antagonist who would be forced by his premises to rejoice at the overthrow of all traditional morality, if only for the sake of verifying the universality of his own "censorial" ethics, which presumably has nihilistic jurisdiction to censor itself.

DOMINIC ROVER, O. P.

Yale University
New Haven, Conn.

BRIEF NOTICES

The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne. Edited by A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop. Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd. Vol. V. (Siris: Etc.). Edited by T. E. Jessop, 1953. Pp. 248. 30s. Vol. VI. (Passive Obedience, Etc.) Edited by T. E. Jessop, 1953. Pp. 264. 30s.

With the publication of volumes V and VI of their worthy edition of George Berkeley's (1685-1753) collected works, including a notable life of the famous Irish Protestant Bishop, editors A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop have, with the bicentenary of Berkeley's death, more than half completed their ambitious enterprise. In an earlier review of the first four volumes and the "Life," by Professor Luce (*The Thomist*, January 1952), this writer paid tribute to the scholarship, devotion, craftsmanship and perseverance which are going into this project on the part of both editors and publishers. As was also indicated there, although this edition of nine volumes includes some hitherto unpublished writings, it is likely to prove most valuable not so much for turning up anything new as for making the old more attractive and accessible. This, along with the editors' erudite introductions to the individual works, should contribute to a better understanding of Berkeley the philosopher as well as of Berkeley the Christian ecclesiastic devoted to the spiritual and temporal welfare of his people and countries—for he was loyal to both England and Ireland. It is with this latter aspect of the Bishop's complex personality that these two volumes deal.

Volume V contains Berkeley's writings about tar-water. An appendix gives a Latin ode, in Alcaic stanzas, written by Dr. Thomas Haytor (1702-1762), Bishop of Norwich, and dedicated to the author of *Siris*. It begins: "Thou who, mindful of our frailty, art always toiling to dispel the plagues of our bodies and souls. . . ." It seems to this reviewer that the Bishop of Norwich had a better appreciation of Berkeley and his preoccupation with the "salubrius fir" than critics who let their scientific and medical analyses blind them to what Berkeley's concern with tar-water signified. It memorably illustrates his humanity, his sympathy for suffering human beings. It imposes upon the image one may have of the speculative thinker and author of *Alciphron* the picture of the kindly Bishop of Cloyne, who, for the sake of the poor, wore shabby clothes and coarse wigs.

At a time when good medical care was rare and the privilege of the fortunate few, Berkeley thought he had an answer to men's ills, fevers, and "most diseases, especially foul cases, ulcers and eruptions, scurvies of all kinds, nervous disorders, inflammatory distempers, decays, etc."

Moreover it was inexpensive, available to all, safe for man and beast alike, and with no reprehensible effects. ". . . the fermented spirit of wine or other liquors produceth irregular motions, and subsequent depressions in the animal spirits; whereas the luminous spirit lodged and detained in the native balsam of pines and firs is of a nature so mild, and benign, and proportioned to the human constitution, as to warm without heating, to cheer but not inebriate, and to produce a calm and steady joy like the effect of good news, without that sinking of spirits which is a subsequent effect of all fermented cordials." (*Siris*, par. 217)

Berkeley's human and practical approach to speculative problems is further examplified in the contents of volume VI which deals realistically with delicate national, ethical, moral, religious and economic problems. Here if anywhere one might expect to find evidences of a well-rounded ethical system if Berkeley had one. In this connection Editor Jessop writes: "Being a philosopher, he (Berkeley) must, it is assumed, have had an ethical system, and his *Passive Obedience*, along with his *Alciphron*, has been examined to find it. The usual conclusion is that he was a utilitarian. He does, indeed, declare in his *Discourse to Magistrates* that the general good of mankind is the criterion of moral truth, and in the present essay (*Passive Obedience*) that it is the moral end. But I cannot find anything sufficiently developed to be called a system; and his utilitarianism was a current thought-form, which he qualified heavily. He was certainly not a hedonist; he did not regard happiness as the essence of the moral life; and he did not make the moral quality of all actions depend on their consequences. So far as he pressed the idea of a bliss hereafter he might be called with Paley (1743-1805) a theological utilitarian; but this misses the peculiar intention of piety . . . , such bliss being the fruition of righteousness, not of any natural satisfaction—living in the presence of God could bring no bliss to the unregenerate." (p. 7)

Uncompromising as Berkeley was about the absoluteness of conscience and the certainty of Christian truth as he saw it, he was astonishngly tolerant and exceptional in his attitude towards Roman Catholics. He advocated their admission to the University and solicited their cooperation to improve social and economic conditions in Ireland. Noteworthy for all time is the conclusion of his address to the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland, "*A Word to the Wise*"—"But, in truth, I am no enemy to your persons, whatever I may think of your tenets. On the contrary, I am your sincere well-wisher. I consider you as my countrymen, as fellow subjects, as professing belief in the same Christ. And I do most sincerely wish there was no other contest between us but *who shall most completely practise the precepts of Him by whose name we are called, and whose disciples we all profess to be.*" (Italics are Berkeley's) His "Word" was received by the Catholic clergy of Dublin with a public declaration of their

" highest sense of gratitude " and " hearty thanks to the worthy author." In every page, they said, " it contains a proof of the author's extensive charity." And they " were determined to comply with every particular recommended in it, to the utmost of their power." (pp. 248)

The vast labor and research of Professors Luce and Jessup are not likely to dissolve the antinomies of Berkeley's philosophizing. Whether or not one can harmonize the later idealism of his " *esse est percipi* " with the earlier empiricism of his insistence upon sensation will probably continue to be disputed. But with these beautifully produced works at hand, one should be better prepared to cope with Berkeley's want of a more developed and consistent system. He was too much a man of diversified interests and action, too much alive to the needs of his day, too much the Christian clergyman and supernaturalist to have the inclination or time to trade the company of men and the market place for solitude and an ivory tower and to channel his thinking into the ways of systematic, coherent rationalization.

As displayed by the editors, Berkeley more than ever deserves study and respect and more than ever challenges those who, instead of accepting his heterogeneity, would try to impose an artificial homology. One of the most recent attempts to simplify Berkeley is John Oulton Wisdom's psychoanalytic study *The Unconscious Origin of Berkeley's Philosophy*. Contrary to its thesis, the explanation of the Bishop of Cloyne's personality and thought is much more likely to appear in the genius of his intellect and Christian goodness than in cavalier theories and cloacal probings of his " unconscious."

The Philosophy of Nature. By ANDREW VAN MELSEN, D. Sc. (Duquesne Studies, Philosophical Series, 2.) Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1953. Pp. 253 with index. $4.50.

The achievements of modern science extend from the splitting of the atom and measuring of the infinitesimally small within its nucleus to the weighing of the unimaginably great in the depths of the galaxies. Yet scientists do not as a rule concern themselves with the really fundamental questions about the natural world. Most of them are busy with their specialties and are content to leave the problems of general methodology, basic principles and unification of natural and physical science to the logicians and theoreticians, or perhaps even to metaphysicians. In recent years an increasing number of thinkers have become aware that science is drifting precariously without basic principles which can stabilize it and give it unity. They are searching the history of science, both ancient and medieval, and particularly the crucial seventeenth century, in the hope

of finding methods and premises which will supplement those which have been found fruitful in modern times but are inadequate to support and unify the whole.

In this timely book Dr. Van Melsen looks to Aristotle for help in solving the basic problems concerning natural things. He emphasizes the fact that prior to all scientific experience we have a primary and primitive knowledge of the world which embraces those general aspects given in any sensory experience and which reveals to us the basic character of sensory things. This general and confused knowledge of physical reality is presupposed by modern science, and is implicit in its methods and content. The fundamental aspects of the world cannot be analyzed by the usual methods of science, because these methods are adapted to details which differ specifically from one instance to another and so can be known only by special experience. Scientific knowledge attained in this way needs to be completed by a consideration of the more general and basic aspects of the world.

The Aristotelian philosophy of nature is a philosophical reflection of this kind. It deals with the general aspects of the natural world and provides us with a background of certain truth, in the light of which we can appreciate modern discoveries and theories. Indeed, this philosophy of nature is well fitted for the needs of modern science. Tireless research has revealed the regular patterns of change in the world, but gives no ultimate explanation of change or the changeable. The Aristotelian philosophy renders change intelligible through principles which are adequate to explain its universality and regularity, and leaves room for specific diversity and for change. In this philosophy motion is rightly defined as an imperfect act, the act of something imperfect but potential and tending to further perfection or realization. Light is cast on problems concerning time and place, quantity and quality, and the causal activity of natural things.

For those whose knowledge of physical science is limited the author gives good insights into relativity and the quantum theory, and is particularly helpful when treating of determinism and indeterminism.

Less fortunate is his treatment of the relation between natural science and the philosophy of nature. The first hundred pages of the book are devoted to this important problem, which is treated both historically and critically. The author cites the texts of St. Thomas, *In Boetium de Trinitate*, q. 5, aa. 1, 4, and q. 6, a. 2, and decides that the Angelic Doctor attributes the philosophy of nature to the metaphysical order of knowledge. Crucial for this decision are the supposed difference between modern science and the philosophy of nature, and the supposition that the philosophy of nature employs concepts which belong to metaphysics, such as the concepts of substance and accident, act and potency, and regards natural beings under the aspect of being, asking what kind of being matter is.

It has always been recognized that mathematical physics is different from pure mathematics and from pure physics or philosophy of nature in the Aristotelian sense. By reason of its principles of demonstration it is more like mathematics, but by reason of its matter or term it is more like physics. From this point of view the author reduces it to physics, and denies that it is a mixed science. (p. 195) Texts can be found in the writings of St. Thomas which support this view, for example, *II Physic.*, lect. 3.

It is also true that the metaphysician can and does treat of material substance and motion, quantity and quality. He treats of all these things inasmuch as they pertain to participated being, and also because they lead to a knowledge of immaterial being. The eleventh book of the *Metaphysics* (bk. K) considers these things in a masterly way as a ladder leading to the knowledge of spiritual beings. But this, of course, is metaphysics, not physics or philosophy of nature.

The clearly stated and oft repeated doctrine of Aristotle and St. Thomas is that the natural philosopher or physicist does not consider substance or form or cause as such, nor act or potency as such. Nor does he consider mobile being as being, but precisely as mobile, and in this way physics differs from metaphysics. The physicist or natural philosopher considers the principles and causes of mobile beings, and he treats of act and potency insofar as they pertain to mobile being, not in all their universality. Moreover, the natural philosopher considers natural things not only in general but also in specific detail, as Aristotle points out both in the *Logic* (*Post. An* 1, c. 28) and in the *Physics* (bk. 2, c. 7) Hence natural science can and should embrace not only the general principles and conclusions known to the ancients but also all the certain and probable knowledge contained in the physical and natural sciences of our own day. Indeed, there does not seem to be any other way to stabilize and unify modern science, or to establish the existence of God and the spirituality of the human soul—and thus open the door to metaphysics—save on the basis of the ancient physics or philosophy of nature and by its realistic and naturalistic methods.

Dr. Van Melsen has undertaken the difficult task of relating the ancient and modern knowledge of physical reality. This task is as urgent as it is difficult, and we congratulate him for the measure of success which he has achieved. We think that his book would have been so much the better if he had followed Aristotle more closely in those physical doctrines which are still valid and will always remain so.

The Seven Deadly Sins. By MORTON W. BLOOMFIELD. East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1952. Pp. 482 with index. $7.50.

Very often a great work of art like a symphony or an epic poem will introduce into its major plan several minor themes which are carefully woven into the general texture. The *Summa* is a great work of art having subordinated to its universal plan such minor themes, of which one is the seven capital sins. For those interested in the origin and development of this theme in the history of thought, as well as its repercussions in pictorial and especially literary art, Morton Bloomfield has provided an authoritative volume which will undoubtedly serve as the first reference tool to any further investigation of any or all of the seven capital sins. A masterpiece of reporting on exhaustive research, *The Seven Deadly Sins* is divided into two equal parts, the first tracing the development of the idea from remote pagan and Jewish background to its mature period in the Desert Fathers and thence to its scholastic crystallization in medieval theology, the second applying the concept to literature from the early period before 1200 down to the fading period in the fifteenth century. The literature considered is that of England principally, though some Continental works are included.

Unfortunately in neither part is there critical evaluation, an obscure sermon book receiving as much space and attention as a major theological treatise, a long-forgotten and unimportant morality play being treated with almost the same care and reverence as the *Divine Comedy* or the *Faerie Queene*. This lack of discernment is especially disappointing in the first half of the book devoted to the idea itself. Endless pages are dedicated to practically fruitless investigations of possible connections with soul-journeys, and stars which, at least from the evidence adduced, have at best a very tenuous connection with the idea found for the first time in the ascetical writings of the Fathers of the desert. Even worse is the sin of omission, in regard to one writer the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* describes as the author of the crystallization of the idea. Little space (less than three pages in a work of monumental proportions) and less attention is devoted to the work of St. Thomas.

The less attention is evident in such a number of errors of fact about the teaching of St. Thomas in this matter that the Thomist may be led to suspect similar inaccuracies in areas in which he is less familiar. For instance, the *locus classicus* of St. Thomas for the capital sins is not "I. II, quaestio 84" but the *De Malo*. More important, St. Thomas does not use pride as a synonym for vainglory, but carefully distinguishes the natures of each. Nor did St. Thomas understand malice and hatred to be final causes of individual sins in the way that the capital sins are. The references are not only woefully inadequate; they are hopelessly misleading.

After confusing the issue considerably, the second page makes a few general remarks which obviously should have preceded the particular discussion. When the footnotes are checked (and in this volume that requires two distinct operations) the reason for the confusion and error is easily discerned. Despite his careful ransacking of European and American libraries, the author did not refer to the actual text of St. Thomas, but relied on secondary sources, several of them only of article or dissertation status in which the capital sins were only of incidental interest. It is unfortunate that the only major work we have on the capital sins should have a quantitative rather than qualitative value.

Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge. By KARL MANNHEIM. Edited by Paul Kecskemeti. New York: Oxford University Press, 1953. Pp. 335. $6.00.

This volume contains six essays written by Dr. Mannheim prior to 1933, and not previously available in English. They are: "On the Interpretation of Weltanschauung"; "Historicism"; "The Problem of a Sociology of Knowledge"; "Competition as a Cultural Phenomenon"; "Economic Ambition"; and "The Problem of Generations." The editor-translator has contributed an "Introduction" which contains an informed and objective enumeration of the major influences on Mannheim's thought; an analysis of each of the essays here translated; and a balanced criticism of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge.

Mannheim proposed his sociology of knowledge as a successor to epistemology. In it all knowledge is contextual and relative; but the relative becomes absolute. "The historicist standpoint, which starts with relativism, eventually achieves an absoluteness of view, because in its final form it posits history itself as the absolute." (p. 172) Mannheim performs this transformation with all the éclat which one has learned to expect from the Hegelian. But the veneer of plausability covering the hard core of impossibility does not escape even a sympathetic, though balanced, editor. Still, Mannheim's work is one of the most sheerly brilliant productions of recent German thought. Quite possibly the editor's evaluation is correct: "If we re-formulate the problem of the sociology of knowledge as that of the insight which participants in a process of social interaction can have into that process, it will appear to constitute one of the vital areas of research." (p. 132)

Moral Principles of Action. Edited by RUTH NADA ANSHEN. New York: Harper, 1952. Pp. 732 with index. $7.50.

The aim of this book, as set forth in the preface, is " to attempt to create a synthesis of the questions and ideas defined, including all their manifold implications which by virtue of their dispersion, atomization, subdivision and specialization have been rendered comparatively ineffectual." It is not, therefore, intended to be simply a symposium of differing opinions but rather an attempt to approach some community of thinking on moral problems. Complete success in such an undertaking is hardly possible in our world divided as it is on so many fundamental moral issues, yet the reader will find here beneath the conflicting views many a hopeful sign of common human thinking on the most crucial of human problems.

The editor's preface is one of the highlights of the book; the individual contributions by more than thirty contemporary thinkers range in value from the trivial to the highly illuminating. Modern preoccupation with practical problems colors many of the chapters and this emphasis on the practical tends to obscure the importance of the primary moral problems surrounding man's nature and man's goal that must be settled first if any practical moral solution is to have meaning. If many of the authors fail insofar as they avoid the primary moral problems, the book in general succeeds in pointing up the failure of modern moralists to come to grips with the basic questions of good and evil in human actions. This work is a worthwhile addition to the library of anyone interested in the contemporary thought that attempts to cope with the moral chaos of our day.

The Return to Reason. Edited by JOHN WILD. Chicago: Regnery, 1953. Pp. 383. $7.50.

This book is a product of the " Association for Realistic Philosophy " founded in 1948. The platform of that Association, here published as an " Appendix," is quite possibly the most permanently valuable section of the work. It is vaguely reminiscent of, though by no means identical with, the Twenty-four Theses. In content the essays are markedly Aristotelian while in method they are alleged to be phenomenological, not as that term is understood by the later Husserl, but simply as meaning " the disciplined attempt to describe and analyze the immediate data of awareness as they are given." (p. vii) It is not clear how this type of phenomenology constitutes a special philosophical technique.

One is happy, of course, that so impressive a group has discovered Aristotle. One is happy, too, that through these men a phase of the

perennial philosophy will have a hearing at the various universities at which they teach. But one fears the possibility of an unphilosophical zeal in the service of philosophy. Immoderate zeal works two injustices: 1.) recent and contemporary philosophers may be judged too harshly by the new traditionalists who in their enthusiasm for the old scorn the new; 2.) the latent openness of contemporary philosophers to the classical philosophy is sealed over by their resentment at the cavalier treatment of themselves by the new traditionalists. Lying behind, and moderating, loyalty to any philosophical school must be the simple love of truth wherever found and in whatever accent, Aristotelian or otherwise.

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