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CONSCIENCE, FREEDOM, RIGHTS: IDOLS OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT RELIGION

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THE UNDERLYING THEME of this article is the teaching of the Catholic Church on religious liberty. In order to address this much-contested subject one must first consider other subjects that are at least as important: the concepts of conscience, freedom, and rights. In this article, I will contrast St. Thomas's understanding of these concepts with the understandings of the Counter-Reformation and the Enlightenment, and will argue that St. Thomas's understanding is the one that should be adopted. In addition to providing a necessary preliminary to an examination of Catholic teaching on religious liberty, this discussion will put us in a position to understand the state of the Church as a whole, and the crisis she has been undergoing not simply since the Second Vatican Council, but since the Enlightenment.

Examination of these concepts will have to be carried out at some length. This is because I will be arguing for theses in the line of the *nouvelle théologie,* claiming that the nominalist and Counter-Reformation understandings of these concepts are wrong and damaging, and that St. Thomas's understanding of them should be accepted instead. Because St. Thomas's views on these subjects are still often misunderstood, and the opposing views remain well entrenched, the arguments for St. Thomas's position need to be substantial.

I. Conscience vs. Prudence

A) Conscience in St. Thomas

Discussions of conscience usually proceed on the assumption that its basic features are known and not controverted, or at least not controverted by morally decent and sincere people. Frequent rhetorical appeals to the rights of conscience and the inviolability of conscience rest on this assumption. In fact, however, this assumption is mistaken. The understanding of conscience to which such rhetoric appeals is not an evident notion that arises from universal human experience, but is rather the product of a particular philosophical and theological development. This development, together with the notion of human freedom with which it is connected, began to be elaborated in the Middle Ages, and was brought to completion by the theologians of the Counter-Reformation. It is radically different from the notion of conscience held by St. Thomas, and the understanding of freedom that it involves is radically different from St. Thomas's understanding of freedom. To attain the degree of clarity that we require about St. Thomas's understanding and the Counter-Reformation understanding, it will be necessary to put them in the contexts of the accounts of human action of which they are parts. This is particularly necessary in St. Thomas's case, in order to remove the layers of misinterpretation that have been imposed on his views by commentators trying to force his thought into the mold of Counter-Reformation moral theology.

Conscience, according to St. Thomas, is not a power or a *habitus,* but an act (*STh* I, q. 79, a. 13; *De Verit.,* q. 17, a. 1); it is the act of making a speculative judgment about the goodness or badness of a particular act of the will. The making of this speculative judgment need not occur in the course of deliberating about whether or not to do the act to which the judgment applies; it can be made about actions in the past. This understanding of conscience is at odds with the notions that conscience is an

authority, is "the most immediate giver of moral imperatives,"[1] or is the proximate rule of human acts, with the divine law being the remote rule.[2] The act of making a judgment of conscience does not as such give rise to moral permission or a moral imperative to act, nor does it contain the power to motivate an action. It is the reasons assented to in the judgment that perform these functions, rather than the act of making the judgment. As Herbert McCabe says, "it is not the strength and sincerity of my conviction that the use of nuclear weapons must always be evil, but rather the grounds for this conviction, that make it morally right for me to refuse cooperation with any such use."[3] On St. Thomas's view there is nothing that makes a judgment of conscience *closer* to an action than the divine law. It is misleading to think of conscience in his sense as authoritative or imperative, because the basic act of conscience is a passive one, in the sense that all judgments about reality are passive: they are formed in response to reasons and evidence. Moreover, when the content of a judgment of conscience is known to be true, it is misleading to speak of the reasons contained in such a judgment being the motivation for action, rather than the realities this judgment is about being the motivation. Saint Thomas holds that our knowledge of propositions does not stop short at the propositions known, but attains the realities themselves that the propositions are about. For such judgments, it is thus the good itself that is known that ultimately motivates action.

This passivity exists even in the case of an erroneous judgment of conscience. Saint Thomas holds that such a judgment must be obeyed, but this is not (contrary to what many of his interpreters say) simply because there is something about conscience as such that demands obedience. It is instead because built in to the notion of making a judgment of conscience—whether erroneous or not—is the fact that the person believes something about the act being judged that makes it a good or bad act, even if the belief

[1] Karl Rahner, "The Appeal to Conscience," in idem, *Nature and Grace,* trans. Dinah Wharton (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1964), 49.

[2] St. Alphonsus Liguori, *Theologia Moralis,* new ed. (Lyon, 1829), lib. 1, tract. 1, p. 2.

[3] Herbert McCabe, "Aquinas and Good Sense," *New Blackfriars* 67 (1986): 421-22.

is something as general as "this act is commanded by God." It is this *reason,* as believed to be true, that confers authority on the judgment of an erroneous conscience. Ascribing moral authority to the judgment of conscience as such is like giving the act of calculating the answer to a statistical problem a probabilistic value in itself, which raises the probability of the conclusion arrived at in the calculation beyond the probability conferred on the conclusion by the other evidence that the act of calculation takes into account.

Because there are no limits in principle to the kinds of knowledge that may be needed to establish that particular actions are good or bad—a doctor will need scientific knowledge, a civil engineer will need mathematical knowledge, and so on—conscience in St. Thomas's sense is not the product of any particular cognitive power. This was denied by some later theologians, who distinguished between actual conscience—conscience as St. Thomas defines it—and habitual conscience, which they conceived of as the power to form judgments of conscience. They situated this habitual conscience in St. Thomas's system by identifying it with his notion of synderesis.[4]

This glaring misinterpretation is an interesting example of the force of preconceived ideas.[5] Saint Thomas makes it clear that synderesis is the grasp of the first principles of *practical reason.*[6]

[4] This identification is explicitly made by Philippe Delhaye, who speaks of "habitual conscience or synderesis" (P. Delhaye, *La conscience morale du chrétien* [Tournai: Desclée, 1964], 96). A similar identification is made in M. Zalba, *Theologiae Moralis Compendium I* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autories Cristianos, 1958), 356.

[5] It should be acknowledged that the identification of the principles grasped by synderesis with moral principles is suggested by St. Jerome's account of the term in his commentary on Ezekiel (translated in Timothy C. Potts, *Conscience in medieval philosophy* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univeresity Press, 1980], 79-80) and by the account in Peter Lombard (see ibid., 93), and is explicitly advanced by Philip the Chancellor (ibid., 100), St. Bonaventure (ibid., 116), Albert the Great (see Eric D'Arcy, *Conscience and Its Right to Freedom* [London: Sheed and Ward, 1961], 31-33), and others. This fact makes St. Thomas's departure from this consensus a striking innovation.

[6] See *STh* I, q. 79, a. 12. Although the accounts of practical reason given by Germain Grisez and John Finnis differ radically from that of St. Thomas, they do underline that the first principles of practical reason in St. Thomas are not moral principles. This was a fundamental advance.

These principles are made up of the very first principle of practical reason, which is that good is to be done and evil to be avoided (*STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2), and the principles that specify basic goods to which humans have a natural inclination, such as life, reproduction, knowledge, and social existence (cf. ibid.). But these principles are not only the principles of right action, or even of action that is believed (whether innocently or culpably) to be right, but of *all* rational action whatsoever, whether or not it is good or approved by the judgment of conscience. That is what it means to say that they are the first principles of practical reason. What makes them the principles of all rational action is that all such action is motivated by the good as understood by the reason ("omne enim agens agit propter finem, qui habet ratione boni").[7] The subsidiary principles of synderesis specify in a basic way what the forms of good for humans are, and the first principle conveys what good as such is. Without a grasp of these principles, there could be no rational action. The subsidiary principles determine what morally bad actions are, because such actions are simply actions that are not good in every respect, and the principles determine what it is to be a good human action. These principles are not *proscriptions* of such actions.

This explains why St. Thomas holds that no one errs concerning these subsidiary principles (*STh* I, q. 79, a. 12, ad 3). If these principles were basic moral principles like "do not steal," "do not murder," and so on, it would be obviously false to claim that no one disbelieves them. But in St. Thomas's conception, a person who fails to grasp one of the subsidiary principles would not be a person who would fail to understand that acts that violate the good referred to in them would be wrong. He would be a person who could not do an act that is motivated by the good referred to in that principle—whether it be life, or reproduction, or social existence—because he would not understand that these features of human life are worth pursuing. The inability to grasp any of these basic forms of good as motivations for action would make someone irrational, and it is thus true that any rational

[7] *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 (Madrid ed., 610).

person will grasp these principles. (This grasp, because it is a feature of practical rather than theoretical reason, need not involve philosophical acceptance of these principles as principles of action—Kant and Mill were not practically irrational as a result of holding views on action and morality that were incompatible with St. Thomas's account of synderesis. But it does require the ability to act in pursuit of these goods as such.)

The idea that synderesis in St. Thomas can be equated with habitual conscience is an erroneous assimilation of his views to the position of later theologians—to the position of moralities of conscience, a school of thought that is more fully discussed below. One mistake in this assimilation is the one just noted, that of holding that only morally good actions can be motivated by the principles grasped by synderesis. This mistake necessarily follows from a further one, which is a wrong understanding of what St. Thomas conceives these principles to be. In moralities of conscience, the principles grasped by synderesis are understood in a way that conforms to the definition of synderesis as "habitual conscience." They possess two features that distinguish them from these principles as St. Thomas understands them: they have imperative force, and the fact that an action is done out of obedience to them makes that action morally good.

For St. Thomas, however, it is only the very first principle of practical reason—"good is to be done and evil is to be avoided"—that moves the will, because it is this principle that commands the pursuit of the ultimate end of man, which is in turn the motive for all rational action (cf. *STh* I-II, q. 1, aa. 3 and 6). All other goods are sought for the sake of the ultimate end, which is specified by the goal of human nature as such. This notion can be illustrated by an analogy with a car. It might be good for a car of a given make to operate at between 1500 and 4500 rpms. This way of operating will, however, only be good on account of the ultimate end of the car. If the car had a different end, such as emitting a certain amount of heat or producing a certain amount of CO_2, it could be the case that only operating above 4500 rpms would be good. Without the end of the car being given, it is impossible to

say whether or not such operation would be good. The same applies for the goods grasped by synderesis, in St. Thomas's understanding. Since the ultimate end is the criterion for good action, the fact that an action is motivated by one of the particular goods grasped by synderesis cannot suffice to make it a good action. A good action is one that pursues the particular good in such a way as to attain the ultimate good. This requirement to reach the ultimate good, a good not referred to by the principles grasped by synderesis, means that these principles cannot function as imperatives, obedience to which makes an action good as such.

A further misinterpretation of St. Thomas's account of conscience lies in the way it has been connected to prudence. Later members of the Thomist school, beginning with Billuart,[8] described true judgments of conscience as being acts of the virtue of prudence. Identifying the error in this position is very helpful in illuminating St. Thomas's account of conscience.

Billuart confines acts of prudence to *true* judgments of conscience because he is aware that prudence, being a virtue, only produces good acts. He wrongly identifies such true judgments with exercises of prudence, because he fails to understand that prudence—as St. Thomas understands it—is a virtue that is exercised in acts. Prudence is what supplies the intellectual component of good actions (cf. *STh* II-II, q. 47, a. 8). The assent to a true judgment of conscience will form a component of an exercise of prudence, but it cannot itself be an exercise of prudence, because an exercise of that virtue goes all the way through to the act. One can make a true judgment of conscience without acting upon it, and a person who does not act well is not prudent, even if all his beliefs about how he *should* act are true.

[8] "An upright conscience coincides with the act of prudence that is termed judgment" ("Conscientia tamen recta coincidit cum actu prudentiae qui dicitur judicium"; Charles Billuart, *Summa Sancti Thomae, vol. IV,* new ed. [Paris: Meillier Frères, 1828], 187). I owe this observation to M.-M. Labourdette's lecture notes on the Summa, *Cours de théologie morale: Les actes humains, 2a2ae, 6-48* (Toulouse, 1959-60); see esp. p. 150. The discussion of conscience and prudence in this paper is largely based on these notes. I have not been able to obtain the revised version of this course published by Parole et Silence in 1999, and have used the original notes.

But a true judgment of conscience is not an act, and need not be acted upon.

Saint Thomas's conception of prudence and conscience explains why he gives an extensive discussion of prudence, but no discussion of formation of conscience, and not much discussion of conscience itself. According to St. Thomas's understanding of prudence, identifying the formation of conscience as the way to moral improvement is a mistake, if such formation is understood as first an attempt to improve one's capacity for arriving at true speculative judgments about the rightness or wrongness of actions, in order then to be able to act upon this improved knowledge. On St. Thomas's view, this will not work. The natural way to get better at knowing what it is good to do is principally by doing what is good (the qualifier "natural" here is meant to take into account the possibility of divine grace producing knowledge of what it is good to do). One can acquire knowledge about the goodness or badness of actions through speculative investigation rather than through practice, but only in a subsidiary and introductory way. Such speculative investigation will primarily yield information about kinds of action that are intrinsically wrong, and the learning of such information belongs to the first stages of moral development. Apart from such intrinsically wrong actions, the goodness or badness of most actions cannot be deduced from an easily accessible description of them. It is part of the task of prudence to *discern* the relevant descriptions under which actions should be evaluated; and the capacity to make this discernment is developed through developing one's prudence, which is done through doing good acts. It is thus prudence, rather than conscience, that plays the central role in moral discernment for St. Thomas.

The notion of formation of conscience not only obscures the central role of good action in developing one's power to form true judgments of conscience, but also conveys a mistakenly individualistic picture of how this power is developed. The chief way in which prudence is developed is not by reasoning out moral judgments on one's own—"forming one's conscience"—and then

acting on them, but by accepting moral principles on trust from the persons charged with one's education, and then learning the truth of these principles for one's self by acting on them. This is indeed the kind of way one acquires practical skills in general. It applies not only to the overarching virtue of prudence, but to subsidiary practical skills such as those of a doctor, a lawyer, or an airplane pilot.

B) Moralities of Conscience

Counter-Reformation moral theologies are what Michel Labourdette disparagingly calls "moralities of conscience." The central role of conscience rather than prudence in these theologies emerges from an overall structure that is radically different from that of the theology of St. Thomas (one should not say "from the moral theology" of St. Thomas, because the very term and concept of "moral theology" belongs to moralities of conscience, not to St. Thomas's thought). Servais Pinckaers has rightly identified the notion of liberty of indifference as the fundamental source of the divergence between St. Thomas and Counter-Reformation thought.[9] Originally inherited from nominalists and Scotists, and preserved from criticism in part because of its perceived usefulness in combating Protestants and Jansenists,[10] the notion of liberty of indifference is defined by its rejection of St. Thomas's claim that there is something the will wills of necessity, and by its assertion that freedom consists purely in the power to choose between alternatives.

Pinckaers's term for St. Thomas's conception of liberty, "liberté de qualité," has been rather uninspiringly translated as "freedom for excellence," which sounds like the motto for an earnest service club—and misleadingly suggests that such freedom is directed especially towards excellence, rather than to any

[9] See Servais Pinckaers, *Ce qu'on ne peut jamais faire* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1986), 43-46; and idem, *Les sources de la morale chrétienne,* 2d ed. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1990), chap. 10, esp. pp. 259-61.

[10] On liberty of indifference as a weapon against Jansenism, see Pinckaers on Billuart, in Pinckaers, *Les sources,* 357-58.

goodness whatsoever. The term that will be used for this conception here is "teleological liberty." This term is intended to signify that all voluntary action, according to St. Thomas, is done for the sake of some good that is understood by the intellect as good; that the ultimate good sought is happiness; and that happiness is determined by human nature, whose teleology specifies the goal of human beings as such, achievement of which goal constitutes happiness. Possession of teleological liberty is a result of the possession of intellect and will, and its exercise is an exercise of those faculties. The source of moral obligation, on this view, is the fact that some actions are not good in every respect, and hence ought not to be done; it is not that they lack some specific kind of goodness that can be called "moral goodness." The source of the capacity to sin is the fact that actions, although seen as evil when adequately considered, can nonetheless fall under more general descriptions that refer to good sorts of action, and hence can motivate the will to pursue them. Freedom to choose between alternatives arises from the fact that more than one possible action can be good in some respect. Hence, the blessed in heaven, who, because of their direct apprehension of the divine essence, are unable to conceive of sin as good, are unable to choose to sin; but this is not a limitation on their freedom. The law of nature that specifies the goodness of the will is given by the goods to which human teleology is directed. This law, whose basic features are grasped in synderesis, does not specify kinds of good action, but features of reality that human actions are to realize, features that provide the measure by which to evaluate actions. A law is nothing other than a certain plan and rule of acting ("lex nihil aliud sit quam quaedam ratio et regula operandi").[11]

If liberty is conceived of as liberty of indifference, however, this conception of the ultimate motivation for human action has to be abandoned, because liberty of indifference must retain the power to reject any good at all presented to it by the intellect. The

[11] *ScG* III, c. 114 (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* [Rome: Leonine Commission, 1934], 366).

notion of such a power is incompatible with St. Thomas's very first principle of practical reason. It also denies the teleology of human nature, as St. Thomas understands it. For him, this teleology consists in the fact that voluntary action, and the human will itself, it directed towards the good as understood by the reason. If this direction does not exist, the end of man, as he conceives it, is removed. Liberty of indifference thus removes the basis of his account of the nature of the human good, of practical reason in general, and of good action.

A replacement for this basis is required for the purpose of moral theology, and it is furnished by the notion of the command of a superior as the ultimate motivation for doing what is good. For Ockham, the content of what is good is furnished by the divine command, as well as the obligation to do it.[12] For Suarez—a characteristic representative of Counter-Reformation theology, as the official theologian of the Society of Jesus—the content of what is good is given by the nature of things, and this goodness can provide a motivation for action. It cannot, however, make an action obligatory, and thus cannot furnish a basis for morality and for law. The command of God adds the extra ingredient needed to achieve this. Law, in the mind of the legislator, consists in a just and right act of will by which a superior wills to oblige an inferior to do this or that thing ("addo . . . legem mentalem [ut sic dicam] in ipso legislatore esse actum voluntatis justae et rectae, quo superior vult inferiorem obligare ad hoc vel illud faciendum")[13] In order for this act to apply to the inferior it must be promulgated, but this happens, in the case of the natural law, through rational beings inferring that God, as perfectly good, wills that the natural good be done by us (*De Legibus,* bk. 2, ch. 6, para. 8). In St. Thomas, by contrast, it is the

[12] This account of Ockham's views is contested—see Thomas M. Osborne, "William of Ockham as a Divine Command Theorist," *Religious Studies* 41 (2005): 1-22, for a description of this debate—but it will be accepted here, as providing one of the main theoretical possibilities for describing how the divine command determines moral obligation.

[13] Suarez, *De Legibus,* bk. 1, ch. 5, para. 24, in Franciscus Suarez, S. J., *Opera Omnia,* vol. 5 (Paris: Vivès, 1851), 22. This definition, radically different from the definition of law given by St. Thomas and cited above, is repeated in substance as late as the manual of Zalba, *Theologiae Moralis Compendium I* (1958), 173.

grasp of the first principles of practical reason itself, rather than any inference to conclusions about God's will for us, that constitutes the promulgation of the law of nature (*STh* I-II, q. 90, a. 4, ad 1). Suarez, in proposing a morality of obligation rather than a morality of virtue, was characteristic of a general outlook that had become common in the Middle Ages, and later became universal. Elements and causes of this outlook were the replacement of the virtues by the Ten Commandments as the basis of moral catechesis, the revival of Roman law in the Middle Ages, and the power and influence of canonists; St. Thomas in fact stood out against this movement, which was already strong in his day.[14]

The idea that the law of nature consists in commands is a reversal of St. Thomas's idea. The law of nature for St. Thomas works from the inside; the will moves towards the ultimate end, via the particular goods that participate in it. For Suarez, the force of the law of nature comes from the outside: the divine command replaces the first principle of practical reasoning as the ultimate source of obligation, and gives an imperative force to the law. Because this law has to govern individual actions, its imperative force has to reach all the way to commands, prohibitions, and permissions of specific actions, these being the categories of imperative that Suarez assigns to the law (*De Legibus,* bk. 1, ch. 15).

Because it is impractical to have a distinct divine command for every possible situation, the description of the kinds of action that are commanded, prohibited, or permitted is always rather general. Their application to particular cases is thus not straightforward. This is where conscience enters into the picture. Conscience, in the conception of Suarez and of other moralists of conscience, is the intermediary between divine commands and particular actions. Conscience is an active power—it has the task of discerning how the application of a command to a particular action is to be done. Since it is only by conscience that the divine

[14] On this see Thomas Gilby, "Appendix 1; Prudence and Laws," in St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* vol. 36 *(2a2ae 47-56)* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1974).

commands are applied to action, conscience becomes an authority. It is not simply the reasons upon which conscience judges that have authority; conscience inevitably possesses an authority of its own, since it carries out the selection and evaluation of reasons for judging an action. In this capacity, conscience becomes central to Counter-Reformation moral theology—in contrast to its very minor role in St. Thomas.

C) Conscience as Authority

This notion of conscience as an authority gives rise to a crucial difference between St. Thomas's notion of conscience and that of Counter-Reformation theologies. For St. Thomas, and for moralities of conscience, an erring conscience binds; if one falsely believes that a given act is good or bad, one is morally required to act in accordance with that false belief. An erring conscience does not necessarily excuse, however; if one's false belief is the result of previous bad actions, acting in accordance with it remains a sin. Only when a mistaken judgment of conscience is arrived at inculpably is acting in accordance with it not sinful. Thus far, St. Thomas and moralities of conscience agree. Where they disagree is over the question whether an action that follows an inculpably erring judgment of conscience is a good action or not. Saint Thomas denies that such actions are good. He asserts that the ignorance in question removes the character of voluntariness from the act, thus making it neither good nor bad (*STh* I-II, q. 19, aa. 5-6; see also *De Verit.*, q. 17, a. 4).

For moralities of conscience, however, an action done in accord with an inculpably ignorant judgment of conscience is not only not sinful, but good.[15] Such an action is put on the same moral level as an action based on a judgment that is actually true. This follows from the conception of conscience as an authority, and of good action as consisting in obedience to that authority.

[15] This is stated in Suarez, *De bonitate et militia humanorum actum,* disp. 12, sect. 4, 7-9, in *Opera omnia*, vol. 4 (Paris: Vivès, 1856), p. 445. He is preceded in this by Ockham; for discussion see Michael G. Baylor, *Action and Person: Conscience in Late Scholasticism and the Young Luther*(Leiden: Brill, 1977), 87.

That is not to say that moralists of conscience do not argue for this position. Eric D'Arcy makes a case for it:

> The will has only one way of recognizing good or evil: the picture presented to it by reason. If reason presents a false picture, the will cannot be blamed; there is only one standard for judging it: the good as apprehended. If it fails to live up to that, its only standard, its performance is bad. But if it is faithful to its only standard, its performance is surely good. What else is a standard for?[16]

This line of argument is offered by D'Arcy as the basis for the position that conscience has rights, and is a clear and characteristic statement of the case for this position. It is not controversial that someone has the right to act according to a true judgment of conscience; but it is not apparent that this right has anything to do with conscience as such. The right, in such a case, could more plausibly be based on the true moral facts that such a judgment of conscience correctly apprehends. For conscience as such to have rights, there need to be cases where it is the judgment of conscience as such that confers the right to act. A culpably erroneous judgment of conscience will not be a suitable case, so this leaves inculpably erroneous judgments of conscience as the only plausible basis for rights of conscience as such. D'Arcy gives a typical argument for the existence of such a right. He claims that such rights exist in the case where a judgment of conscience, to the effect that one has a moral duty to act in a certain way, is erroneous, but where this error is blameless as being due to invincible ignorance. His argument is that a condition for attaining the sovereign end of the human person is substantial fidelity to moral duty, and that such fidelity consists in following one's conscience. The sovereign end of the human person is not subordinate to the good of the state; instead, the state exists in order to promote the ultimate good of persons. The state thus has a duty to respect actions that are done out of fidelity

[16] D'Arcy, *Conscience and Its Right to Freedom*, 117-18. This argument resembles the one given in Suarez, *De bonitate et militia humanorum actuum*, disp. 12, sect. 4, para. 8 (Vivès ed., 445). We can take it that D'Arcy is assuming that such conformity exists not just for the action itself, but for any other actions that influence the judgment that is made about the good of that action.

to moral duty, even when this fidelity is based on an erroneous judgment of conscience—a fidelity that will exist in cases where the error of such a judgment is inculpable.

The falsity of this conclusion is readily established. For one thing, human stupidity does not have narrow limits; as a result, in the case of almost any just law it is possible that someone could, as a result of stupidity and/or bad epistemic opportunities, inculpably come to believe that we ought not to obey it, and inculpably be unable to figure out that this belief is wrong. Some suicide bombers, for example, may fall into this category with respect to laws that proscribe suicide bombing. But it cannot be claimed that stupid people of this kind have a right to act in accordance with their consciences. Moreover, a culpably erring conscience cannot as such ground a right; and the difference between a culpably and an inculpably erring conscience is not discernible to outside observers (and is not always discernible to the agent himself at the time of action). The distinction between a culpably and inculpably erring conscience is thus not something that a legal system can take into account. Possession of an inculpably erring conscience hence cannot be the basis of a legal right. Nor, obviously, can a claim to be inculpably acting in accordance with one's conscience form the basis of a right. Such a claim *is* an observable fact, but it is one that anyone can make about any action at all without fear of being shown to be wrong. To allow that an inculpably erring conscience confers a legal right would thus lead to the total undermining of the legal order. D'Arcy is however right in holding that such a right follows from the premises of the morality of conscience. Seeing where the argument goes wrong casts light on how that morality is mistaken.

The fact that D'Arcy's views sound very convincing, if we do not consider their unworkable implications, indicates the influence of moralities of conscience on our moral assumptions. The flaw in his argument is its assumption that St. Thomas is

wrong in denying that an action done in accordance with an inculpably ignorant judgment of conscience is morally good.[17]

We can see through the appeal of the argument, however, if we construct an analogous argument about belief, along the following lines: We can only believe in accordance with the grounds for belief our reason presents us with; if our reason gets these grounds wrong, our act of belief cannot be blamed, because there is only one standard for judging it: its conformity to the grounds presented to it by reason; but if it is faithful to its only standard, our act of belief is surely good. The problem is that there is not only one standard for judging belief. In addition to the standard of conforming belief to the grounds for belief present to the reason, there is the standard of actually being true. This latter standard is the fundamental one, because truth is what beliefs aim at.

A similar point can be made about action. Action aims, not simply at conforming to the judgment about the good made by the reason, but at conforming to what actually *is* good. The latter standard is the fundamental one; we conform to the judgments about the good made by reason for the sake of doing what is actually good. It is not true that conforming to the good as apprehended is the only standard for the will. It is a subsidiary standard, but it is not the prime standard, the attainment of which makes an action good. We tend to lose sight of the distinction between these standards because the influence of moralities of conscience has made us lose sight of the fact that actions have the purpose of *really* achieving some human good.

In St. Thomas's view the ultimate motivation of action, in true judgments of conscience, is the good itself that is judged to exist. This view in turn is based on his view that when true propositions are known, the ultimate object of knowledge is not those propositions, but rather the things that the propositions are about (cf. *STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 2, ad 2). This fact makes it possible for the

[17] D'Arcy is aware that St. Thomas's views differ from his own, but dismisses St. Thomas's positions in a rather hubristic manner, remarking that "one cannot but feel again the disappointment occasioned by some of the views of St. Thomas studied in the third part of this book" (D'Arcy, *Conscience and Its Right to Freedom*, 216-17).

will, responding to knowledge of some good, to have as its proper object not the mind's knowledge of that good, but the good itself existing in extramental reality. As a result, if this object is absent, the good to the knowledge of which conscience is ordered is absent. In moralities of conscience, however, the good to the knowledge of which conscience is ordered is simply obedience to the divine command, when that command is apprehended by the reason. This collapses doing good into doing what one inculpably believes to be good.

This collapse explains the different approaches taken to erring judgments of conscience in medieval theologians and in moralities of conscience. The medieval approach is that if one's judgment of conscience errs, one should correct the error. The possibility of making a correction is generally taken for granted by them. For one thing, proposed actions believed to be good are confronted with reality when they are actually performed, and this confrontation casts light on whether actions of this sort are truly good or not. Such a light, if carefully attended to, enables the agent to develop the capacity to bring the judgments of his conscience in line with the truth. For another thing, Catholics—who after all made up the audience for medieval theologians—have access to the teachings and the means of grace provided to them by the Church. These aids to action cannot fail to enlighten the consciences of those who sincerely avail themselves of them.

For moralities of conscience, however, a judgment of conscience is produced by factors internal to the agent: understanding of the divine commands, and the conscience's application of those commands to a particular situation. Any other influences on judgments of conscience—practical experience, or grace—must be mediated through these internal factors. In a case where the conscience errs, it is therefore hard to explain how such error can be readily corrected. The medieval approach cannot be applied, and the focus is moved to moral evaluation of the erring conscience, rather than to the task of putting it right.

D) Disastrous Results of Moralities of Conscience

This error of moralities of conscience about inculpably erring consciences has an important implication for the moral life. The fact that acting on an inculpably erring conscience is not morally good means that such actions do nothing to develop virtue in the agent. This gives a reason for correcting such a conscience that is recognized by St. Thomas, but not by moralities of conscience.

Much of the importance of conscience in moralities of conscience arises from the fact that the task assigned to it by these moralities—deducing from general commands the action that is appropriate to a particular situation—cannot actually be carried out, except in the case of applying exceptionless moral norms that forbid intrinsically evil actions. No such deduction can occur, because these commands, being more general in their content than typical descriptions of particular situations, cannot logically determine the rightness or wrongness of such situations. In real life, what happens in the case of good action is that prudence discerns from the realities of the situation what it is that is good to do (just as St. Thomas says). This discernment is possible because an account of realities, unlike a command to perform certain actions, can be developed through investigation to the point of containing enough content to be able to specify what it is good to do in a given situation. Accounts of realities can thus be suited to each individual situation, whereas commands cannot, since a command cannot be provided for each one of the (infinite) number of possible situations that may arise. This problem was addressed in the world of moralities of conscience, however, by developing casuistry to bridge the gap between commands and actions, producing numerous ready-made solutions to possible moral dilemmas (about twenty thousand in the *Resolutiones morales* of Antonino Diana).[18]

The difference between the law of nature for St. Thomas and the law of nature for moralities of conscience can be illuminated

[18] Diana, a laxist, was nicknamed "agnus Dei," on the grounds that he took away the sins of the world.

by an analogy. The law of nature for moralities of conscience is like a book of instructions for repairing a car. Such books are incapable of being complete guides to car repair. They provide norms for action in repairing cars, but they can never settle every question about what should be done to the car. What is more, the norms that they do provide always presume some basic (or not so basic) prudence on the part of the mechanic. The law of nature for St. Thomas is like the car itself. The car itself does always furnish enough information about how it should be repaired, if it is investigated carefully enough. Exceptionless moral norms, for St. Thomas, are like facts about how the car can never be made to work (e.g., by rearranging it to inject water rather than fuel into the pistons). Increasing one's knowledge about how to repair a car cannot effectively be done by learning the contents of more and more detailed repair manuals, either. It can only be done by actually practicing car repair, and moving from easier repairs to more difficult ones—a process analogous to the acquisition of moral knowledge by the exercise of prudence.

Since humans, unlike cars, have more than one activity to carry out, it would help to give a more complex analogy. The goodness of human actions for St. Thomas is like the goodness of the actions of a battleship (where "battleship" is meant to include crew as well as vessel). The good functioning of a battleship involves such things as navigating, signalling, firing accurately at the right targets, and keeping station with other ships—all of which are evaluated by the ultimate function of a battleship, which is to engage and defeat the enemy in pursuance of orders. Saint Thomas's assertion that an action is good absolutely speaking only if it is good in every respect, and bad absolutely speaking if it is not good in any one respect, has a parallel in the performance of a battleship; if the ship is firing accurately but at the wrong target, or moving at the right speed and time but in the wrong direction, its performance is bad absolutely speaking. There are rules that are absolutely true for the performance of a battleship (e.g., it is always a bad thing to capsize) and that are true as a rule (e.g., the admiral's orders should be obeyed

[justified exceptions like Nelson at Copenhagen being rare]). But no amount of knowledge of rules will suffice for good performance, which results principally from skill learned through practice.

The substitution of rules for reality by moralities of conscience helped to undermine morality, by disguising what is at stake in the moral life. Saint Thomas makes it clear that bad actions are bad because they are calamitous for the person who does them. If their badness is supposed to consist in breaking a divine command transmitted by the conscience, however, their calamitous character for the person who does them is obscured. Since it is this calamity that in reality constitutes the action's moral badness, obscuring it is a form of moral de-education—a de-education that substitutes for the actual basis of morality a sort of Freudian super-ego, an internalization of the wishes of a father figure. As well as undermining morality, this fostered infantilization. The internalization of the commands of parents is necessary for the moral education of children, who are not capable of formulating accurate moral rules on their own, and who lack the psychological resources to follow such rules without the aid of parental pressure. Development of moral maturity however requires leaving behind these aids to right action, and doing what is good because it is understood to be good. Moralities of conscience discouraged this maturing process, because they presented moral action as something resembling childish obedience.

The elaboration of moralities of conscience during the Counter-Reformation was accompanied by an emphasis on the confessional as a means, even *the* means, of spiritual formation. This meant that the outlook of these moralities was inculcated into Catholics in a most serious and intimate manner. The standard classification of kinds of consciences in moralities of conscience—as perplexed, scrupulous, or lax—were described in manuals of moral theology as offering a classification of natural forms of human character. However, these categories were in fact psychological tendencies or malfunctions produced by the inculcation of moralities of conscience. This is apparent from the

fact that the problem of scrupulosity did not exist as a serious and widespread disorder in the Middle Ages or antiquity, but became one of the gravest and most common spiritual problems for Catholics after the Counter-Reformation. Philippe Delhaye remarked in 1964 that at least half of the discussions in moral theology concerning problems of conscience dealt with scrupulosity.[19]

These disorders are connected to the fact that the law of nature in moralities of conscience has a radically different scope from the law of nature in St. Thomas. For moralities of conscience, there are possible motivations for human action that do not come under the law of nature, an idea that has no place in St. Thomas's thought. Such motives are allowed for in the notion of permissive laws, a notion that accepts that acting on motivations that are independent of the law of nature is possible, and can even be good. This divides up the terrain of actions between conscience and freedom, and presents conscience as a constraint on freedom. For St. Thomas, on the other hand, a true judgment of conscience can constrain freedom in the sense of ruling out certain actions, but it cannot constrain the will in the sense of denying it what it is ultimately directed towards. True judgments of conscience by definition direct the will towards what it will find satisfying. Moralities of conscience, however, present God as denying us what we will actually find satisfying, thus giving us a ready-made inducement to rebel against him. They thus gave a psychological boost to Enlightenment atheism.

More recently, the division of actions between conscience and freedom has resulted in a tendency to give unrealistically positive evaluations of people's actions. It has fostered a usually unexamined assumption to the effect that if someone is motivated to perform an action by some form of will for the good, that action

[19] Delhaye, *La conscience morale du chrétien,* 103-4. Delhaye gives an insight into how tiresome scrupulous penitents are for confessors: "they can describe their case for five hours and return the next day . . . they change confessors in order to have the pleasure of repeating their story" (ibid., 106-7); this tiresomeness may have been an important factor in the virtually complete abandonment of moralities of conscience by confessors between the 1950s and the 1970s

can be supposed to belong to the sphere of conscience rather than freedom, since the former is the proper home of the pursuit of the good, as opposed to the pursuit of simple gratification. This is probably a motivation for theologies of religious pluralism that argue, or even begin by assuming, that religions other than Catholicism ought to be considered as alternative ways to salvation. For St. Thomas, however, doing an action for the sake of some form of the good is simply equivalent to doing a voluntary action, and does not constitute a recommendation for it.

The separation of moral and spiritual theology that emerged in the Counter-Reformation period was an important result of moralities of conscience. In St. Thomas's view, we develop the capacity to make true judgments of conscience by developing the virtue of prudence, and we develop the virtue of prudence by doing good deeds. The way to improve the accuracy of our judgments of conscience is thus by reducing or eliminating the evil that we do, and increasing the good that we do. Spiritual theology is the discipline that studies how to increase our capacity to do good. It is by putting spiritual theology into practice that we improve the accuracy of our judgments of conscience, and the subject matter of spiritual theology—grace, virtues, gifts, prayer, sacraments, and other means of sanctification—describes the principal causes of accurate judgments of conscience.

For moralities of conscience, as we have seen, the conscience is an independent faculty of the theoretical intellect. Its development need not as such result from growth in holiness, and the study of growth in holiness is not the study of the means for improving judgments of conscience; the manuals of casuistry do not command acquisition of holiness as a preliminary to understanding the truth of the solutions they propose. In keeping with the imperative basis of moral law in moralities of conscience, the study of growth in holiness comes to be thought of as principally the preserve of those who have undertaken an *obligation* to attempt such growth, by vowing themselves to the religious life.

This consequence of moralities of conscience for the study of good actions had an equivalent result on attitudes to the

performance of good actions. Saint Thomas's position is that the pursuit of perfection is a matter of precept for all Christians, and follows from the two great commandments of love of God and love of neighbor (*STh* II-II q. 184 a. 3: cf. Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18; Matt 22:40). Perfection thus does not, in his view, consist in the following of the evangelical counsels; these counsels indicate ways to remove impediments to the attainment of the end of perfection that all Christians must seek, but they are not necessary for the attainment of this end. This position cannot however be accommodated to moralities of conscience, which conceive of the law that Christians are required to obey as consisting in imperatives that require performance of or abstention from specific kinds of actions. If a command to seek perfection is understood in this way, rather than as a command to pursue a particular end (which is how St. Thomas understands it), there must be specific actions that the command mandates. These actions could not fail to include the actions indicated by the evangelical counsels—voluntary poverty, chastity, and obedience—which are indicated in the Scriptures as the best path to perfection. But the evangelical counsels are counsels and not commands. Since a command to seek perfection, in the framework of moralities of conscience, would thus have to command performance of the evangelical counsels, these moralities cannot admit such a command—a command that, in addition, is quite opposed in spirit to probabilism's claim that minimizing the scope of moral obligation is a positive good.

The acceptance of moralities of conscience within the Church thus led Catholics to believe that the pursuit of perfection, identified with the following of the evangelical counsels, was the goal of religious, while the requirement for the laity was simply to save their souls by keeping the Decalogue. This view is exemplified in the (in many ways excellent) textbook of Tanquerey:

> for the faithful in the world there is no other obligation than that of preserving the state of grace. However, the question is precisely whether they can preserve the state of grace for a long time without growing in holiness. . . . in the state of

fallen nature, one cannot for a long time remain in the state of grace without striving at the same time to make progress in the spiritual life and to exercise oneself from time to time in the practice of some of the evangelical counsels. It is only in this restricted sense that we maintain the obligation of perfection for ordinary Christians. . . . To strike the target, we must aim above it.[20]

In addition to the principles of moralities of conscience, there is a line of argument that usually underlies this view. It takes this form: (i) the obligation for all Christians is to seek salvation; (ii) those Christians who do not commit mortal sins, or repent for the mortal sins they have committed, will be saved; (iii) therefore, the obligation for all Christians is to avoid mortal sin and repent for mortal sins committed. This argument is superficially plausible, but is not in fact valid, because the second premise refers to what Christians actually do, but the conclusion refers to what Christians pursue as their obligation. Telling the laity that they are not obliged to follow the divine command to seek perfection is obviously a very serious deviation from the truth, with crippling spiritual results for lay Catholics.[21]

The problem of scrupulosity is part of the explanation for the emergence of probabilism. Medieval thinkers held that if one had objectively serious reasons for doubting about whether or not an action was a sin, it was sinful to do it; thus, for example, if one were not sure that a sum of money belonged to one, it was sinful to take it (they of course did not hold that this was true for situations where every possible alternative might be sinful). The framework of moralities of conscience does not permit the general application of this sensible and correct principle. Since such moralities conceive of the law of nature as a set of imperatives governing kinds of action, and since these imperatives are not in fact sufficient to specify what should be done, the scope of doubt about the sinfulness of actions is extremely wide. If the medieval principle were adopted, such doubt would rule out all the actions

[20] Adolphe Tanquerey, *The Spiritual Life: A Treatise on Ascetical and Mystical Theology*, 2nd rev. ed., tr. Herman Branderis (Tournai: Desclée & Co., 1930), 176-77, 180.

[21] For defence of the claim that the pursuit of perfection is required of all Christians, see Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Perfection chrétienne et contemplation selon s. Thomas d'Aquin et s. Jean de la Croix* (Montreal: Milicia, 1952), vol. 1, ch. 3, art. 5, 215.

whose moral status is not adequately settled by moralities of conscience—which would impose an intolerable burden.

To avoid imposing such a burden, the probabilists made use of the division of actions between conscience and freedom that is central to moralities of conscience. Suarez argued that in a case of doubt, it should be assumed that the condition which is in possession should have the burden of proof in its favor; and hence that freedom, as being a good possessed by men, deserves that favor. But law is doubtful when it has not been sufficiently promulgated, and a doubt on the part of the reason about an action's being commanded by a law means that that law has not been sufficiently promulgated (*De bon. et mal. hum. act.,* disp. 13, sect. 5). Doubt about a law thus leaves freedom in possession. The basic structure of probabilism is completed when to this view is added the idea that a doubt is justified by a probable opinion in favor of the doubt, and that an opinion counts as probable not only when good reasons can be given for it, but also when a recognized authority rules in favor of it. The former kind of probability was described as intrinsic probability and the latter as extrinsic probability. Extrinsic probability soon came to play a larger role than intrinsic probability in questions of doubt, which contributed greatly to the Catholic identification of good behavior with obedience to authority. The basic structure of probabilism became complicated by various modifications and exceptions designed to answer objections or accommodate condemnations by Church authorities, but this structure persisted, and remained influential as long as moralities of conscience dominated the scene.[22] Its usefulness in dealing with scrupulosity contributed to its appeal.[23] The premise used by Suarez should be noted, as it is extremely important. It claims that freedom of choice is a good *as such,* rather than being good on account of its making possible the

[22] The best account of probabilism is still Th. Deman, "Probabilisme," in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique.* Henry Davis, S.J., wrote in 1941 that "the tendency of the great majority of modern theologians is towards the gentler and more liberal system," i.e. probabilism (Henry Davis, S.J., *Moral and Pastoral Theology,* vol. 1, *Human Acts, Law, Sin, Virtue* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1941), 86.

[23] See Davis, *Moral and Pastoral Theology,* 1:94.

choice of what is good. The notion of autonomy as an intrinsic good can thus be partly traced back to probabilism.

In an earlier article,[24] I criticized the probabilist approach to faith for presenting as a positive good the opportunity to avoid acquiring important knowledge. It is apparent that this criticism can be generalized to the probabilist approach as a whole. Probabilism describes the natural law as making us worse off in some respect, through infringing our freedom. It is however absurd to claim that the natural law can make us worse off in any way at all, because the natural law indicates how we are to attain our good. Thus, the Psalms describe the law of the Lord as delightful (Ps 1:2), and sweeter than honey (Ps 19:10), which is scarcely compatible with the probabilistic view. The exposition of probabilism given here indicates why probabilism leads to this absurd conclusion: that is, because it incorporates false conceptions of law, conscience, and freedom.

E) Moralities of Conscience and Reforms

Probabilist assumptions explain much of the approach to Church reform of the *nouvels théologiens*. The keystone of this approach was the supposition that the Church had failed to evangelize her secular opponents in European society because she had put them off by her intransigence, her following a "logic of confrontation that opposed truth to truths, faith to beliefs."[25] The course that needed to be followed was therefore to reduce as far as possible any such confrontation, in order to reduce prejudice and animosity and to make people open to hearing the Catholic message. Contrary to history, common observation, and sociology,[26] this approach stemmed from the probabilist assump-

[24] See John R. T. Lamont, "Determining the Authority and Level of Church Teaching," *The Thomist* 72 (2008): 376-77.

[25] Étienne Fouilloux, *Une Église en quête de liberté* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1998), 215; Fouilloux gives a useful description of this approach and its supporters.

[26] For the sociological evidence against it see the work of Rodney Stark, particularly Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005). This evidence is not Stark's debatable market analysis of the success and failure of religious groups and

tions of its adherents. If an obligation is stubbornly resisted, and resisted for a long time by an increasing number of people, that gives some grounds for thinking that it is too strict and needs to be relaxed. A probabilist approach will then suggest relaxation as the ideal option to take—indeed, it will treat the attempt to resist such relaxation as blameworthy and an act of oppression. In general, it will see any form of confrontation and command as at best a necessary evil. The notion of externally probable opinions also had the effect of creating an attitude according to which the permitting of an opinion that denied the existence of some obligation would in itself remove the obligation, without taking into account the intrinsic reasons in favor of the obligation. This dispensed reformers from any need to give serious consideration to the reasons given for a "logic of confrontation," once they had succeeded in banishing that logic.

It should be underlined however that the reformers were attempting to answer an important question that was not being adequately addressed. Why is it that the Church since the Enlightenment has been steadily in retreat, and that all her attempts to recover lost ground have ultimately ended in failure? This question is all the more pointed because the disasters that resulted from the Enlightenment project—the crimes of the French Revolution and of Communism—should have put the Church in a position to regain ground. Explaining this retreat as simply due to a general increase in human sinfulness is not satisfactory. The Church has the mission and the power to sanctify, and a general long-term increase in sinfulness suggests some interference with the exercise of that power. The fact that the reformers misunderstood the nature of that interference does not mean that there is no interference to be understood and removed. This discussion of moralities of conscience, together with the discussion of subjective rights in the next section, will put us in a position to answer this question.

religion itself, but his well-established claim that a religious group must differentiate its members from its nonmembers in important ways, and make significant demands on its members, if it is to thrive and expand.

This wholesale dismissal of four hundred years of Catholic moral theology perhaps requires some defence. One might ask the general question why, if moralities of conscience are as bad as all that, it was possible for the Church, guided as she is by the Holy Spirit, to go so far wrong for so long? And one may ask the particular question how the Church could have canonized St. Alphonsus Liguori, declared him a Doctor, and officially taught that his solutions to moral questions were safe to follow? Saint Alphonsus, after all, worked within the framework of moralities of conscience. If such moralities are wrong, his approach must be wrong, and he should not have been given this endorsement.

The answer to the question about St. Alphonsus is that his approach of equiprobabilism, by requiring that one begin by determining whether command or freedom should be treated as in possession, allowed reasoning about the actual moral issue to return to moral reflection through the back door. Partly as a result, his personal solutions to moral dilemmas were distinguished by good judgment. The answer to the question about moralities of conscience in general is that a key component of them, the casuistic method, could in fact be made to serve some useful purposes. If the general population are to be practicing Catholics, the spiritual life of the majority of that population will inevitably consist in a struggle to keep the Ten Commandments. The emphasis on the confessional as a means of spiritual formation was a realistic and necessary approach to this situation. And for the narrow task of training confessors—as opposed to the broader task of indicating how Christians should live—casuistry, the practical fruit of moralities of conscience, was useful. The one task that casuistry performs more or less adequately, that of judging whether or not actions are intrinsically wrong, is the principal task that confessors must undertake.

This emphasis on the confessional was a result of one of the postive features of the Counter-Reformation period: its attempt to develop a serious commitment to the Christian life in the whole Catholic population. This attempt was the ultimate fruit of the decisive step made by the Fourth Lateran Council, of requiring

every Christian to go to confession at least once a year. James Franklin remarks that

> The decree requiring confession was soon obeyed almost everywhere, and the effect on the European soul was profound. The mere effort to classify a year's sins was a greater demand for abstract thought than the common man or woman had experienced before. Guilt flourished, though without as much diminution as might have been hoped in things to be guilty about. Sin and conscience became prominent topics of study.[27]

There is an obvious connection between this decree and the eventual replacement of the virtues by the commandments as the basis for moral catechesis during the Middle Ages. This replacement was part of the struggle to move away from the situation in the early Middle Ages, when the Church was content to leave most of the population in a barely catechized, semi-pagan state. The development of moralities of conscience, and the eclipse of the virtues and of St. Thomas's theology of them, was thus partly an unfortunate side effect of a basically correct policy.

F) Influence of Moralities of Conscience outside the Church

Having set forth the conception of conscience in moralities of conscience, we may easily describe the secular idea of conscience in European culture that grew out of these moralities of conscience. Emancipated from the Church, this idea preserves the notion of conscience as an authority whose endorsement of an action makes it a good thing to do, but drops the notion of submission to a confessor or to external probability, and eventually drops the notion of submission to God. The limited use made by moralities of conscience of goodness founded in natural teleology is rejected as well. The importance of this development

[27] James Franklin, *The Science of Conjecture: Evidence and Probability before Pascal* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 66.

has been underlined by Alasdair Macintyre.[28] Oliver O'Donovan describes the evolution that followed:

> Moralists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries simply gloried in the absolute authority with which conscience, displaying, as they thought, its rational character as well as its divine institution, presided over the vacillations of the will and the ambiguities of judgment. . . . The tribute that had too often to be paid to the categorical authority of subjective moral reason was the paralysis of reason or the frenzy of exaggerated scruple.
>
> The eighteenth-century reaction to this, anticipating the emergence of voluntarism as the dominant force in modern moral philosophy, was to deny the competence of reason to pass moral judgments, and to attribute them instead to 'affection' or 'sentiment'.[29]

The notion of conscience, in this situation, naturally passed into subjectivism and egotism—as it did with Rousseau, a central figure of the Enlightenment.[30] By helping to deceive Rousseau about his own moral character, this notion also made an important contribution to his belief in the natural goodness of humanity, another keystone of the Enlightenment.

II. Subjective Rights vs. Objective Right

A) The Aristotelian Conception of Objective Right

The essential work on the notion of human rights is that of the French scholar of jurisprudence Michel Villey, one of the most important Catholic thinkers of the twentieth century. Knowledge of Villey's thought has suffered from the fact that his taking up

[28] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007). Scientific rejection of Aristotelian physics has been given as a justification for rejecting natural teleology. For criticism of the view that rejection of Aristotle's physics requires rejection of broadly Aristotelian metaphysics, see John Lamont, "Fall and Rise of Aristotelianism in the Philosophy of Science," *Science and Education* 18 (2009): 861-84.

[29] Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 118. O'Donovan himself advocates a view similar to St. Thomas's: "the authority attributed to reason is more properly understood to belong to reality" (ibid., 120).

[30] On Rousseau and conscience, see the remarks of Servais Pinckaers in "Suivre sa conscience," in Servais Pinckaers, *L'Évangile et la morale* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1990).

the cause of St. Thomas's understanding of rights got fully underway in the 1960s, a time when the notion of *ressourcement* was being buried in ecclesiastical circles, and when the Catholic intellectual world was generally following this ecclesiastical trend. As a result his work remains largely untranslated into English,[31] and is not widely known outside the French-speaking world.[32] Although there are modifications and additions that can be made to his position, its essential structure is correct, and is indeed susceptible of expansion in ways that illuminate the situation of the Church today and of the world she finds herself in.

It has become commonplace to observe that the notion of human rights is unknown in many non-European cultures. Villey's work both reveals the limitations of this observation and indicates the truth that lies behind it by drawing a distinction it does not draw, namely, that between objective right and subjective rights.[33] It is subjective rights that are the product of a peculiarly European development, that have come to dominate legal and political thought and practice about rights, and that have been faced with a few dissenting voices who have attacked that dominance. Because the idea of a right to religious liberty developed after this dominance was established, the notion of subjective right is crucial to the question of religious liberty.

The basic difference between objective right and subjective right is that an objective right is a relation, obtaining between specified individuals and/or groups and/or things; a subjective

[31] A few of Villey's works are accessible in English; see "Epitome of Classical Natural Law," *Griffith Law Review* 9 (2000):74-97; "Epitome of Classical Natural Law (part II)," *Griffith Law Review* 10 (2001): 153-78; "Law in Things," in *Controversies about Law's Ontology*, ed. Paul Amselek and Neil McCormick (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 2-12.

[32] The power of his scholarship and thought has compelled some response to his views from Francophone opponents of his ideas. See, e.g., Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, *Philosophie politique 3: Des droits de l'homme à l'idée républicaine* (Paris: Quadrige/PUF, 1984), 47ff. Ferry is the grandson of the anticlerical and imperialist minister of the Third Republic Jules Ferry, and was as Minister of Education from 2002 to 2004 charged with implementing the policy of banning the wearing of religious symbols in French state schools. I defend Villey against such criticisms in "In Defence of Villey on Objective Right," forthcoming.

[33] Villey uses the plural for subjective rights and the singular for objective right, a useful device that will be adopted in this article.

right is a monadic property of an individual, a property that serves as a basis for determining just relations into which the individual can enter. A description of the development of these two conceptions of rights will cast light on their relative merits, as well as their content.

The concept of objective right was elaborated briefly, but fairly completely as to its essentials, by Aristotle in book 5 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In developing his views on this topic, Aristotle built on reflection on politics in Greek philosophy generally, a reflection that held a central place in Greek philosophical thought, and on his own considerable involvement and research in political questions. His thought is the culmination of ancient Greek political thought, which makes it a central part of the culmination of ancient Greek thought as a whole. The first step in its elaboration is the distinction that Aristotle draws between general and particular justice. General justice is simply the virtue of an individual in so far as that virtue has any bearing on the common good. Because being virtuous in one's behaviour towards others is the most difficult form of virtue, possession of general justice is simply possession of complete virtue (*Nic. Ethic.* 5.2.1130b18). General justice is the object of the law, which has as its function the promotion of the common good, and thus of virtue as a whole (*Nic. Ethic.* 5.1.1129b15-20).

Aristotle asserts that there is a further kind of justice, the pursuit of which will fall under the pursuit of general justice, but which is not the same as general justice. This is particular justice. Its object is not virtue as a whole, but *to dikaion,* "that which is just." This neuter expression, *to dikaion,* is distinguished from the masculine *ho dikaios,* which refers to the just man, and from *dikaiosyne,* which refers to the virtue of justice. *To dikaion* is not a person or an action, but an external object, a relation; it consists in a distribution of goods or burdens, or a rectification of injuries.[34] The just distribution is a distribution that is equal, but not one that is equal in the sense of every individual receiving the

[34] Cf. Sarah Broadie, "Philosophical Introduction," in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* trans. Christopher Rowe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 36.

same thing. It is determined by a proportional equality. This entails, for distribution, that the ratio between the good contributed and received by one person will correspond to the ratios of goods contributed and received by others (*Nic. Ethic.* 5.3.1131a30-b24). For rectification, it entails that the imbalance between injured and injurer created by an injury is restored by a balancing removal of good from the injurer and conferring of good on the injured. This notion of proportion (*analogia*) is what is common to the various forms of just relation, whether found in distribution, in compensation, or in exchange. What the virtue of particular justice demands is that such relations be brought into being.

These relations are not in Aristotle's view things that are or can be the object of philosophical discovery—merely of philosophical clarification. The proportions that determine them simply make precise our prephilosophical notion of what is just and fair. This notion is something that all people in practice assume and appeal to—at least where their own interests are concerned—and it must govern the settlement of disputes if societies are to function properly.

The bringing into being of such relations through the doing of a just act is clearly distinguished by Aristotle from the relation that is actualized (*Nic. Ethic.* 5.7.1135a8-11). This distinction is explicated by Aristotle's explanation of the difference between a just thing and a just act: a just act occurs when a just thing is brought into being voluntarily (*Nic. Ethic.* 5.8.1135a17-1136a9). This explanation should not be understood in terms of the later distinction between an action with a materially but not formally good object, and an action with a formally good object. This later distinction applies solely to *actions,* not to actions and the relations they bring into being. The sort of goodness that characterizes an action with a materially but not a formally good object cannot be described as the kind of goodness that a formally good action aims to bring about, but the goodness of a just thing is the goodness that a just action aims to bring about.

To dikaion can be either natural or legal. Despite the existence of natural justice, however, justice in the strict sense exists only between members of the same political community (*Nic. Ethic.* 5.6.1134a25-34); between members of different political communities only a certain likeness of justice can exist (*Nic. Ethic.* 5.6.1134a28-30). There is natural justice in a political community because the political community exists by nature, and is in fact prior to the family and the individual (*Politics* 1.2.1253a2, 19), something that is proven by the fact that the individual cannot exist independently of a political community (*Politics* 1.2.1253a25). There is not however a single just structure that such a community should take. Aristotle provides a survey of the possible forms in his *Politics*. Although he believes that there is a best possible form of society considered in itself—best in that it has the greatest capacity to realise the goods that the city exists for—he thinks that the form that is the best for a given set of circumstances varies with the circumstances. The nature of *to dikaion* is dependent on the particular form that community takes. It is not like fire, which burns in the same way in Greece and in Persia. The fact that *to dikaion* emerges from a natural structure embeds it in the order of the cosmos as a whole.

Fred Miller has made a strenuous attempt to argue that for Aristotle the central meaning of *to dikaion* is one of the forms of 'right' delimited by W. H. Hohfeld, namely, the form in which X has a right in the sense of having a claim to A against Y.[35] It is obvious that *to dikaion,* understood as a relation, forms the basis for a just claim. But it is quite impossible that *to dikaion,* considered as the object of the particular justice that is being discussed in chapters 2 to 8 of book 5 of the *Nicomachaean Ethics*, should be such a claim. *To dikaion* is a relation between several terms, as Aristotle explains at length, whereas a just claim is not the relation itself, but a given individual's standing in that relation . Miller himself does not stick to the Hohfeldian notion

[35] See Fred D. Miller, Jr., *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 106; idem, "Aristotle and the Origins of Natural Rights," *The Review of Metaphysics* 49 (1996): 882. Miller's claim is criticized in Malcolm Schofield, "Sharing in the Constitution," *The Review of Metaphysics* 49 (1996): 831-58.

in his exposition of Aristotle, remarking that in the context of disputation (*amphisbetesis*) "just things are the things which one party claims justly against another party";[36] clearly a thing, and the claim that one has to that thing, are distinct.

Aristotle's conception of objective right, Villey claims, became central to Roman law, where it constituted the chief meaning of the term *ius*.[37] It did not however become integrated into patristic theology, which took little note of Aristotle, and which experienced its first great flourishing at a time when the Roman law was moribund. The Scripture-centered thought of the Fathers produced, in the Latin world, an Augustinian view of law that saw it as deriving ultimately from the Scriptures—a view whose appeal to theologians derived partly from the support it gave to clerical supremacy.[38]

B) Saint Thomas on Objective Right and Natural Law

Saint Thomas, after encountering Aristotle's conception of objective right, rejected this Augustinian position, and gave a place in Christian thought to Aristotle's understanding of justice—a task that he only undertook fully in the *Summa Theologiae*. In addition to Aristotle, he was influenced by Roman law, with which he was familiar, and to whose revival he contributed.[39] Both his acceptance of the value of a legal system of pagan origin, and his assertion that the juridical precepts of the Old Covenant were abrogated by Christ without being replaced by new ones (*STh* I-II, q. 104, a. 3), struck at the root of the Augustinian system. They

[36] Miller, *Nature, Justice, and Rights,* 882.

[37] Villey's work on the whole question of objective and subjective rights began with his arguing that subjective rights did not exist in Roman law. Natale Rampazzo gives an overview of scholarly reaction to Villey's claim about Aristotle's conception of objective right being central to Roman law in "Critique de la lecture villeyenne du droit romain: Le droit subjectif," in *Michel Villey: Le juste partage,* ed. Chantal Delsol and Stéphane Bauzon (Paris: Dalloz, 2007). He concludes that the reaction is generally favorable.

[38] See Michel Villey, *La formation de la pensée juridique moderne* (Paris: Quadrige/PUF, 2003), 133-38.

[39] See Michel Villey, "St. Thomas et l'immobilisme," in Michel Villey, *Seize essais de philosophie du droit* (Paris: Dalloz, 1969), 97-100; and Jean-Marie Aubert, *Le droit romain dans l'oeuvre de Saint Thomas* (Paris: Vrin, 1955).

constituted a rehabilitation of nature and natural reason as the deciding factors in the determining and identification of justice.

Saint Thomas, unlike Aristotle, inherited an account of morality characterized in terms of the divine law. This enabled him to make a clearer and more elaborate distinction between morality and law than is to be found in Aristotle—a distinction in which his fidelity to the Aristotelian conception of particular justice emerges sharply. Saint Thomas discusses law, *lex,* in the *Prima Secundae.* There he situates the natural law in the context of a discussion of the essence of law, and of the eternal law, which is the divine wisdom moving all things to their due end. The principles of the natural law are the principles that are grasped by synderesis (*STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 1, ad 2). They bear upon the actions of an individual who exercises practical reason, and govern the goodness of individual actions and of the persons who perform those actions. They are the principles of morality.

Saint Thomas discusses justice and its object—*ius*—in a completely different part of the *Summa,* the *Secunda Secundae.* It is in the discussion of *ius* in the *Secunda Secundae,* not in the discussion of *lex* in the *Prima Secundae,* that St. Thomas considers those topics that are the concern of legal systems, topics such as theft, murder, justice in exchange, and justice in the distribution of goods. Following Roman law, he uses *ius* to express the content of Aristotle's expression *to dikaion.* He defines *ius* as a relation that involves a certain kind of equality, as for example the giving of a just reward for a service rendered (*STh* II-II, q. 57, a. 1). *Ius* is a principle of moral conduct, in that it is the object of the virtue of justice, but it differs from the objects of other virtues in that it is an external object: "as the object of justice is an equality in external things, so the object of injustice is an inequality" ("sicut obiectum iustitiae est aliquid aequale in rebus exterioris, ita etiam obiectum iniustitiae est aliquid inaequale" [*STh* II-II, q. 59, a. 2]).[40] The character of *ius* as an external object is argued for in question 58, article 10 of the *Secunda Secundae.*

[40] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae,* vol. III (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1956), 403.

This relation of equality in external things is the proper matter of the virtue of justice (*STh* II-II, q. 58, aa. 1, 10).

The objects of the other virtues are described in relation to the agent, but since *ius,* the object of justice, is an external object, it is defined independently of the intentions of the agent in bringing it about (*STh* II-II, q. 57, a. 1). To get the moral attribute which is the virtue of justice, we must add to the notion of bringing about just relations in external objects the intention of bringing them about *because* they are just, and the constant disposition to bring about such just relations because they are just. This is expressed in the definition that St. Thomas offers for the virtue of justice: "justice is the constant and perpetual will to render to each person his due" ("iustitia est constans et perpetua voluntas ius suum unicuique tribuens" [*STh* II-II, q. 58, a. 1])[41]—a definition taken from the *Digest* of Justinian (lib. 1, tit. 1, leg. 10). The connection between *ius* and moral obligation for St. Thomas can be illustrated by an analogy. A good parent will provide for the health of his child; this is a moral obligation. But this moral obligation does not as such determine what a child's health consists in, or what will promote it. The nature of health is an external reality that provides the object for virtue, but is not derivable from moral principles alone (cf. *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 3).

The character of *ius* as an external object provides the answer to a question that on examination is deeply puzzling: Why should there be four cardinal virtues? Prudence gives knowledge of what it is good to do; fortitude prevents the agent from being deterred by pain from doing what is good; temperance prevents the agent from being allured by pleasure away from what is good. These three virtues, it seems, ought to suffice to produce good action, since the action of the three of them together provide knowledge of what is good and leave the agent with no motivation, and thus no capacity, to do anything except what is good. A fourth cardinal virtue ought not to be needed. The point of postulating justice as a fourth virtue is to acknowledge the existence of a good whose nature cannot be determined from the first principles of practical

[41] Ibid., 388.

reason alone, because it depends not just on the end of the individual agent but also on the end of the society that the agent belongs to. *That* the end of society is a good to be pursued by the individual is of course given by these first principles; but these principles do not specify *what* this good is in the way they do for the other goods.

Saint Thomas connects *ius* to law, *lex,* in several ways. The relation of *ius* to the eternal law stems from the fact that God is the creator, and that he has brought into being a creation whose end is for the sake of his glory, and whose parts all have ends that concur for the good of the whole creation. The moral law, which governs the individual, stems from the end, the *telos,* of the individual. Objective right, *ius,* is given not by the nature of individuals as such, but by the nature of the human societies in which individuals find themselves. Human societies are natural entities in their own right, not simply products of the wills of their members, and as such possess an end that stems from their nature. This end is related to the ends of the individuals who compose the societies, since man is the most social of all animals,[42] and is also connected to the end of the universe as a whole, and the ends of the other parts of the universe to which it is related.[43] The eternal law is thus expressed by *ius,* because *ius* is the good of the *things* that are human societies—things that are created by God with the purpose of making their distinct contribution to the glory of his creation. Although these things are distinct from the individuals that make up societies, the social nature of these individuals means that the good of these things is an aspect of the good of their individual members.

C) Objective Right and Human Law

Ius falls in its entirety under the divine law, but *ius* and human law are not coextensive. Human law necessarily falls short of *ius.*

[42] See, e.g., St. Thomas, I *Polit.,* lect. 1 (36-37) (St. Thomas Aquinas, *In libros Politicorum expositio,* ed. R. Spiazzi [Rome: Marietti, 1951], 11).

[43] On the metaphysical picture underlying objective right, see Michel Villey, "Historique de la nature des choses," *Archives de philosophie du droit* 10 (1965): 267-83.

It is not possible for human laws to be so framed as to cover all cases, because of the limitations of human wisdom. Even if it were possible, it would be inadvisable, because the resulting laws would be too unwieldy (*STh* I-II, q. 96, a. 6, ad 3). Laws are suitably framed when they command what is for the common good in the majority of cases; in exceptional cases, where the common good is incompatible with the law, the law should not be followed. In such exceptional cases departing from the law should not be considered as breaking it, since such departure is acting in accordance with the will of the lawmaker, as Aristotle asserted (*Nic. Ethic.* 5.10.1137b11-35; see also *STh* II-II, q. 120).

It follows from this conclusion that the office of the judge is not simply to apply the human law. The law is one factor that the judge is to take into account in determining what is just, but it is not the only one. He must consider both positive *ius,* which is created by being contained in human written law, and natural *ius,* which may be enshrined in human law, but is not created by it (*STh* II-II, q. 60, a. 6), together with other factors such as custom (*STh* I-II, q. 97, a. 3)—both because of the possible need to depart from the letter of the law, and because of the fact that human law in itself cannot provide a decision-making procedure for settling even those nonexceptional cases where it need not be departed from. These other factors are what provide the additional material that enables the judge to come to a decision. The object of *iudicium,* the judge's act, is not to command, as is the case with law (*STh* I-II, q. 90, a. 1, ad 3), but to declare what the right relation is. The imperative and compulsive actions of a legal system follow from this act, but are not identical with it. The role of the judge is another indication of the way in which *ius* is distinct from morality in St. Thomas's view. The moral virtue of justice belongs to everyone, but the office of declaring what is just pertains to the judge (ibid., ad 3). This declaration is not a moral judgment, because it bears upon the exterior object, the relation that is *ius* ("justice concerns certain exterior operations" ["iustitia est circa quasdam operationes exteriores"])[44] independently of a

[44] Madrid ed.,417; *STh* II-II, q. 61, a. 3.

moral evaluation of the people who enter in to that relation. Villey illustrates this with an example;

> It may be unjust, *on my part,* to profit from the clause of article 1341 of the Civil Code, and to refuse to pay my debt on the grounds of my creditor's not having a written title to it. But it is just *for the judge* to refuse to use the force of law to enforce this debt, because the judge has to take into account not only my interest (very unworthy, in these circumstances, of being protected), but also the interest of third parties; and the interest of third parties requires a uniform method of proof.[45]

Villey acknowledges[46] that St. Thomas uses the words *ius* and *lex* interchangeably on some occasions (e.g., *STh* I-II, q. 91, a. 3; I-II, q. 94, aa. 4-5; I-II, q. 95, a. 4), but he points out that these are cases where he is referring to recognized authorities who use these terms interchangeably—St. Isidore of Seville, Gratian, or Cicero. This is in line with St. Thomas's approach of respecting as far as possible not only the thought but the language of such authorities, and of not making use of uniform terminology himself. Saint Thomas uses terms carefully, but he contents himself with making their meaning clear in the particular contexts in which he uses them, without trying always to use them in the same way. It is clear from the definition of *ius* that he gives in the context of his discussion of the virtue of justice that the meaning of *ius,* in this context, differs from that of *lex.*

Villey points out that although St. Thomas distinguishes between *ius* and morality insofar as morality, unlike *ius,* has for its proper object the good of individuals, he does not hold that the two are independent. In addition to the fact that acts of virtues other than justice, such as temperance or fortitude, can be commanded by justice on account of the common good—a command that demands exercise of the virtue of general justice—St. Thomas insists on a regulatory function for morality with regard to law. Any law that contradicts the Decalogue, for

[45] Michel Villey, "Abrégé du droit naturel classique," in *Leçons d'histoire de la philosophie du droit* (Paris: Dalloz, 1962), 126.

[46] Michel Villey, "Bible et philosophie gréco-romaine: De saint Thomas au droit moderne," *Archives de philosophie du droit* 18 (1973): 31-32.

example, such as a law commanding idolatry, is an act of violence rather than a law, and must not be observed (*STh* I-II, q. 96, a. 4). This seems initially puzzling. How is it, given this position, that St. Thomas can insist not only that every just law has exceptions, but also that there can be no universally just laws, due to the changeability of human nature and the consequent variations among human societies? "A rule ought to be enduring in so far as possible. But in changeable things there cannot be anything that is wholly lasting, and therefore human laws cannot be entirely unchanging" ("Mensura debet esse permanens quantum est possible. Sed in rebus mutabilibus non potest esse aliquid omnino immutabiliter permanens. Et ideo lex humana non potest esse omnino immutabilis" [*STh* I-II, q. 97, a. 2, ad 2]) But if, as St. Thomas holds,[47] there are actions that can never rightly be done, why can there not be laws that are unchangeable and universally applicable because they forbid the doing of such acts?

The solution of this puzzle is that when he talks about laws as mutable, he has in mind their function of contributing to the determination of *ius*. This function cannot be performed by universal rules, because the external relations that are *iura* inevitably vary according to circumstances. As Villey remarks, in response to criticism of his agreeing with St. Thomas on the mutability of law:

> *Ius,* in the strict sense, is the proportion of "exterior" goods and obligations divided between the citizens of a given political group. . . . It is in fact on the exact content of the share of each person in these goods and obligations, and on the foundation of the division between them, that legal cases are brought, and that the system of justice works to establish. . . . Is it not evident that the divisions of goods, offices, or obligations in a social group changes according to

[47] See e.g., *De Malo,* q. 15, a. 1, ad 5. There have been unconvincing attempts to show that St. Thomas does not hold this. For criticism of these attempts, see Patrick Lee, "The Permanence of the Ten Commandments: St. Thomas and His Modern Commentators," *Theological Studies* 42 (1981); John Finnis, *Moral Absolutes: Tradition, Revision, and the Truth* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989); Servais Pinckaers, *Ce qu'on ne peut jamais faire: la question des actes intrinsequement mauvais: Histoire et discussion* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1986).

changes in modes of life, economic conditions, political structures? Is this a problem? Are we really dealing with a difference of opinion on this point?[48]

The Decalogue does indeed give universal principles that tell us that certain things are *not* just. But this does not contribute to the positive task of determining *iura,* what *is* just; it simply tells us that any ordinance that violates the Decalogue is not a law.

D) Eclipse of Objective Right

Saint Thomas's understanding of *ius* (henceforth "objective right," to mark the distinction with subjective rights) did not meet with general acceptance, running counter as it did to a very strong Augustinian tradition. His notion of objective right eventually passed from being controversial to being almost totally eclipsed, as a result of two developments: (1) the return to an identification of justice and individual morality, and (2) the development of subjective rights rather than objective right as the theoretical basis for justice. ("Individual morality" here refers to the moral principles that follow from the goods of a human being considered as an individual—the goods whose essences are grasped in synderesis, and that do not as such involve reference to the nature of human society. The virtue of temperance, and the incompatibility of drunkenness with temperance, are examples of such principles of individual morality.) Villey sees these developments as forming part of the foundation for the modern world—and also as being disastrous mistakes.

The identification of justice and individual morality was a return to the medieval view prior to St. Thomas, a view which can be found in theologians and in Decretists such as Rufinus and Huguccio. All of these treat justice as falling under the natural

[48] Georges Kalinowski and Michel Villey, "La mobilité du droit naturel chez Aristote et Thomas d'Aquin," *Archives de philosophie du droit* 29 (1984): 196 (my translation). Villey usually talks of *ius* in terms of a division of goods, but he is aware that it involves a division of punishments as well; he discusses punishment in "Des délits et peines dans la philosophie du droit naturel classique," *Archives de philosophie du droit* 28 (1983): 181-203. He points out that the *ius* of a parricide, in Roman law, was to be sewn up in a sack with a dog, a cock, a viper, and an ape, and thrown into the sea.

law, and the natural law as having the function of directing personal morality.[49] A first step in this return is the work of Scotus, who defends the traditional Augustinian claims that earthly sovereignty and private property are a result of the Fall rather than of human nature as such, and bases their postlapsarian authority on divine positive law.[50] The return is completed in the work of the baroque Scholastics, whose eclectic selection from the positions of their predecessors ended up being dominated by nominalist ideas.

One element of this work is the change in meaning of the term "ius," in the sense of "id quod iustum est," in baroque commentaries on the *Secunda Secundae*. "Id quod iustum est" is misrepresented by commentators such as Vitoria and de Soto as meaning a just act, rather than the object that a just act aims to bring about. With the disappearance of objective right as the measure for the justice of the just act, another measure is needed, and this is provided by conformity to the commands of the law.[51] This change makes possible another element in the work of subsuming justice under morality. Justice is defined by the law, and as a result justice as well as law are discussed, in the commentaries on the *Summa* that become the standard theological instruments of baroque Scholasticism, not under the heading of the discussion of *ius* and *iustitia* in the *Secunda Secundae,* but under the heading of the discussion of *lex* in the *Prima Secundae*. The baroque Scholastics recognized that basing human law on the Scriptures, as the earlier Augustinians attempted to do, is not feasible. They therefore attempted to base it ultimately on the first principles of practical reason that are given as the source of the natural law by St. Thomas in the *Prima Secundae*. Since these principles are understood by St. Thomas as

[49] Michel Villey, "Torah-Dikaion I," in *Critique de la pensée juridique moderne: Douze autres essais* (Paris: Dalloz, 1976), 33-34. Villey refers the reader to the useful texts on the natural law from Gratian to St. Thomas collected by Dom Odon Lottin in *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siecles,* vol. 2 (Louvain: Abbaye du Mont César, 1948), but warns against Dom Lottin's commentary.

[50] See Villey, *La formation de la pensée juridique moderne,* 209-12.

[51] Villey, "Bible et philosophie gréco-romaine," 43, 46-48.

the principles for morality, this gives a full philosophical expression to the subsumption of justice and law under morality.

Villey identifies a clericalist motivation for this change.[52] Since law emerges from morality, and theologians are the experts on morality, it follows that theologians are the experts on law. In Roman law, lay judges were the experts on *ius*. This change was decisive for subsequent modern accounts of natural law, which can be classified according to which of the basic inclinations mentioned by St. Thomas in the *Prima Secundae* they give priority to—for example, self-preservation in Hobbes and Spinoza, or social life in Grotius and Pufendorf.[53] Lay jurisprudence, which had become the predominant influence on law in the seventeenth century, also moved towards a basing of law and justice on moral principles. An important factor in this change was the revulsion against Aristotle that characterized this epoch, and the preference for Platonic or Hellenistic philosophy. Both of these philosophical influences favored the subordination of law to morality, with Cicero's influence being particularly significant in this regard.[54]

The second development that led to the replacement of objective right, the emergence of subjective rights, is often denied by scholars—simply because they are unable to understand rights as being anything other than subjective rights, and they cannot believe that there was a period when no conception of rights existed at all. Miller's interpretation of Aristotle on *to dikaion,* criticized above, is an example of this outlook. This obtuseness among intelligent researchers is evidence of the fundamental place that subjective rights hold in the contemporary mind. The difference between objective right and subjective rights is not in itself difficult to grasp. Subjective rights are not relations, like objective right, but monadic properties of individuals. As originally formulated, they consisted in a power possessed by an individual to act freely in some sphere. This power flows from the human nature of the individual possessing the right, and gives to

[52] Ibid., 42.

[53] Ibid., 42-43, 50.

[54] See Villey, *La formation de la pensée juridique moderne,* p. 3, c. 1, "La renaissance des philosophies hellénistiques."

that individual an entitlement to act within that sphere, an entitlement upon which no one can justly infringe. Subjective rights are called natural rights because they are thought to be conferred solely by the possession of human nature. Although they are natural, they have consequences for legal systems. They can be expressed in human law just as they are, without needing significant interpretation, and human legal systems have an obligation in justice to respect them. Although legislation should recognize subjective rights, it does not create them. They do not, like objective right, emerge from the structure of society as a whole considered as a natural entity. Indeed, the strongest theories of subjective rights hold that these rights are the basis for political life. Like the electron shells of ions, which make it possible for atoms to be connected into molecules and determine how those molecules are structured, subjective rights are the binding factors that join individuals together into political communities, and that determine the just structure for political communities. This is the claim of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* of 1789, asserting, as it does, that "the purpose of every political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man" (article 2). This description of subjective right is not an idiosyncratic notion of Villey's. It is the conception of rights that is found in the principal seventeenth-century theorists of rights, such as Hobbes and Locke, and that our culture has inherited from them.

Villey holds that some general notion of subjective rights is probably as old as egoism itself. An egotistic outlook makes it natural to conceive of justice in one's relations to others in terms of the free exercise of one's will.

> It is natural to conceive of everything in terms of one's self, to press into the service of one's self everything that pertains to the common good, and accommodate it to the needs of one's egoism. And thus it is probable that the notion of subjective right has had some existence in all times.[55]

[55] Michel Villey, "Droit subjectif I," in Villey, *Seize essais de philosophie du droit,* 140.

An embryonic conception of subjective rights can also be found in ancient philosophies that take the individual as their sole starting point.[56] The use of subjective rights as the basis for a full-fledged political philosophy, however, was chiefly the fruit of two developments: the elaboration of an explicit definition of subjective rights by William of Ockham, and the elaboration by Thomas Hobbes of a theory of human society to replace the Aristotelian one.

E) Genesis of a Philosophical Account of Subjective Rights

The debate over Franciscan poverty was the occasion, and to some extent the inspiration, of Ockham's theory of subjective right.[57] To obey their founder's injunction that they not possess any property, and at the same time to provide for their practical needs, the Franciscans had arranged with the Holy See that the pope should own all Franciscan priories and other things used by the order, while conceding to the Franciscans the right of using these things. This arrangement was codified by Nicholas III, a friend of the order, in the bull *Exiit qui seminat,* which accepted the *proprietas* of these things while conceding to the Franciscans only the *simplex usus facti* of them—a use which was not a right, a *ius utendi,* and thus could not be a form of property. The arrangement fell apart as a result of John XXII's disputes with the Spiritual Franciscans over their claim that the way of life of Christ and the apostles involved the ownership of no property at all. In his bull *Quia vir reprobus* of 1329, he argued that the use of things consumed in their use (such as food) was either just or unjust, and that just use of such things constituted ownership of them. From this it follows that both Christ and the apostles, and the Franciscans, owned property. Turning from his previous pur-

[56] Michel Villey, "Droit subjectif II," in Villey, *Seize essais de philosophie du droit,* 183-85.

[57] A good discussion of this debate is Virpi Mäkinen, *Property Rights in the Late Medieval Discussion on Franciscan Poverty,* Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales—Bibliotheca 3 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001).

suits in philosophy and logic, Ockham wrote his *Opus nonaginta dierum* to attack this bull.

The debate prior to Ockham's intervention had thus already considered one of the components of the notion of subjective right, the idea of a power to use a thing as one chooses. Villey, and following him Annabel Brett, have identified Ockham as offering a full-fledged conception of subjective rights in the *Opus nonaginta dierum,* a conception expressed in his definition of *ius utendi*: "A right to use [*ius utendi*] is a licit power to make use of some external thing, a power of which one should not be unwillingly deprived without rational cause unless one has committed some crime, and the deprival of which can be contested at law" ("ius utendi est potestas licita utendi re aliqua extrinseca, qua quis sine culpa sua et absque causa rationabili privari non debet invitus; et si privatus fuerit, privantem poterit in iudicio conveniri").[58] *Ius utendi,* according to Ockham, is the property that Christ and his followers renounced. Brett asserts:

> The *ius utendi* is, then, as Villey rightly stressed in his early articles, a subjective power of action. It is not a relation of control over things, as was *ius* for the earlier Franciscans. Moreover, the category of a licit power directed towards action gives Ockham the genus for his two definitions of *dominium.* Ockham replaces *dominium* with right as the axial analytic category . . . '*dominium* is the principal human power of vindicating a temporal thing in court, and of treating it in every way which is not prohibited by natural law'.[59]

This definition is not yet a definition of natural subjective rights, since, as Villey notes,[60] *ius utendi* is described by Ockham as stemming from positive human law. The crucial step that is made here is not the definition of *ius* as a power rather than a relation—definitions of this sort predated Ockham—but the basing of all legal claims on such powers, and thus the elimination

[58] William of Ockham, *Opus nonaginta dierum,* in *Opera politica,* ed. J. G. Sikes and H. S. Offler (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963), vol. 2, p. 302; quoted in Annabel Brett, *Liberty, Right and Nature: Individual Rights in Later Scholastic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 63; and by Villey in "Droit subjectif I," 166.

[59] Brett, *Liberty, Right and Nature,* 63; the quoted passage is from Sikes and Offler, eds., *Opera politica,* 2:320-21.

[60] Villey, "Droit subjectif I," 167.

of objective right. Villey links Ockham's development of a conception of subjective right with his nominalism.[61] By rejecting the existence of relations and of entities other than individual substances, Ockham's nominalist ontology rules out the existence of objective right and of the natural human societies that found it. This philosophical stance would seem important not so much for the development of the idea of *ius* as a power to act—a concept that might be used to supplement, rather than replace, the concept of objective right—as for the banishing of objective right and its replacement by subjective right.

Villey's identification of Ockham as the father of subjective right is generally thought to have been refuted by the work of Brian Tierney.[62] Tierney attempts to establish that the notion of subjective right can be found in twelfth-century canonists prior to Ockham; furthermore, he argues that Ockham's nominalism is independent of his notion of subjective right.

It is not evident why Tierney's assertions about the existence of a notion of subjective rights in the twelfth century would be important if they were true. The main conclusions that Villey's work seeks to establish are that Aristotle, Roman law, and St. Thomas all postulate objective rather than subjective rights, and that their understanding of objective right is basically correct, while theories of subjective right are false and pernicious. If Tierney's claim about the emergence of subjective right in the twelfth century were true, Villey's case for these conclusions would actually be strengthened from the point of view of followers of St. Thomas. His exclusive adherence to objective right would then appear as a deliberate rejection of well-elaborated views of subjective rights.

However, the evidence that Tierney himself produces shows that this claim is not true. His argument rests on the assumption

[61] See e.g. Villey, *La formation de la pensée juridique moderne,* 223ff.; it is a frequent theme in his work.

[62] An example of this attitude is this statement by Martin Rhonheimer: "Tierney convincingly challenges the view of Michel Villey, for whom the idea of 'rights' (as subjective rights) is specifically modern" (Martin Rhonheimer, "The Political Ethos of Constitutional Democracy and the Place of Natural Law in Public Reason: Rawls' 'Political Liberalism' Revisited," *American Journal of Jurisprudence* 50 [2005]: 5).

that any sort of identification of a *ius* with a *potestas* is a notion of subjective right—as he himself indicates, in a summary description of his alleged refutation of Villey, "subsequent research has shown that the association of 'right' and 'power' was quite common in earlier medieval jurisprudence."[63] But it is obvious that not every association between right and power is a subjective right. Objective right itself, as noted above, provides a basis for some kinds of powers. For example, a debt legally owed to me gives me the power to enforce the payment of this debt at law. Such powers are not however subjective rights, and none of the associations between *ius* and *potestas* that Tierney identifies in the early canonists can be described as subjective rights. This is obviously the case in the definitions of *ius naturale* given by Odo of Dover (c. 1170; "natural *ius* is a certain force divinely inspired in man by which he is led to what is just and right and equitable"),[64] Simon of Bisignano ("natural *ius* is said to be a force of the mind of the superior part of the soul, namely reason which is called *synderesis*"),[65] and the canonist Huguccio ("natural *ius* is called reason, namely a natural force of the soul" ["ius ergo naturale dicitur ratio, scilicet naturalis uis animi ex qua homo discernit inter bonum et malum"]).[66] The definition of Rufinus in about 1160 says:

> Natural *ius* is a certain force instilled in every human creature by nature to do good and avoid the opposite. Natural *ius* consists in three things, commands, prohibitions, and demonstrations. . . . It cannot be detracted from at all as regards the commands and prohibitions . . . but it can as regards the demonstrations, which nature does not command or forbid but shows to be good.[67]

Commands and prohibitions are obviously not subjective rights, and demonstrations in general cannot be subjective rights, since

[63] Brian Tierney, "Religious Rights: An Historical Perspective," in *Religious Rights in Global Perspective,* ed. John Witte and J. D. van der Vyver (London: Martinus Nijhoff, 1996), 27.

[64] Brian Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 63.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid., 64.

[67] Ibid., 62.

Rufinus explicitly states that they can be detracted from. All of these definitions of forms of *ius* cited by Tierney are distinct from subjective rights, and are often concerned with entirely different subject matters.

The legal powers identified by Charles J. Reid in twelfth- and thirteenth-century canon law are closer to subjective rights, but they are not identical with such rights. Reid, like Tierney, conceives of any identification of a *ius* with a *potestas* as a subjective right.[68] None of the powers mentioned by Reid are subjective rights, because all of them either contain some reference to specified individuals or groups, or do not constitute fundamental juridical principles, or both. This is the case with the right of the poor in extreme necessity to take from the rich what is needed for their subsistence,[69] the right of a cathedral canon to vote in the election of a bishop,[70] the faculty to contract marriage,[71] the right of married people to claim sexual intercourse from their spouses,[72] and the right of parents to be honored by their children on the basis of the fourth commandment.[73] All of these rights presuppose the existence of individuals or groups aside from the holder of the right (the rich, a person it is possible to marry, a spouse, a diocese, children), and bear on those specified individuals or groups rather than on anyone at all; they are thus not monadic properties of individuals. The multiplication of legal powers in the early Middle Ages described by Reid is in fact something that Villey draws attention to, and identifies as an influence on the development of subjective rights.[74] However, these powers are not themselves subjective rights.

[68] See Charles J. Reid, "The Canonistic Contribution to the Western Rights Tradition," *Boston College Law Review* 33 (1991): 37-92; "Thirteenth-Century Canon Law and Rights: The Word *ius* and Its Range of Subjective Meanings," *Studia Canonica* 30 (1996): 295-342.

[69] Reid, "The Canonistic Contribution to the Western Rights Tradition," 66.

[70] Ibid., 67; Reid, "Thirteenth-Century Canon Law and Rights," 321.

[71] Reid, "The Canonistic Contribution to the Western Rights Tradition," 73.

[72] Ibid., 80.

[73] Ibid., 57.

[74] Villey, "Droit subjectif I," 156-58. Villey remarks here that "the shift in meaning of the word *ius* towards a notion of power characterizes the language of practice in the Middle Ages" (ibid., 157).

It may be that the importance of the claim that subjective rights predate Ockham lies for Tierney in the resulting separation of subjective rights from nominalism. If these rights were postulated prior to the development of nominalism, that would show that they are independent of nominalist ontology. Tierney has argued that there is no connection between Ockham's nominalism and his views on rights. However, his arguments entirely miss the point of Villey's position. The element of Ockham's nominalism that Tierney discusses is his position on the problem of universals.[75] Villey, in referring to Ockham's nominalism, is not simply alluding to Ockham's position on the problem of universals, but to Ockham's ontology as a whole. The aspect of this ontology that Villey singles out as essential to his postulation of subjective rights and rejection of objective right is Ockham's rejection of the existence of relations and of subsisting entities aside from individual substances.[76] If there are no relations, there can be no objective right. If human societies are not natural entities that are irreducible to a mere collection of individuals, there is no basis for objective right.[77]

The importance of Ockham's nominalism does not lie simply in the need for coherence between one's metaphysical account of the world and one's philosophical account of law and rights. As

[75] Some scholars have connected Ockham's political philosophy with his views on universals, a fact that may have misled Tierney in his approach to Villey; they are criticized in Charles Zuckerman, "The Relationship of Theories of Universals to Theories of Church Government in the Middle Ages: A Critique of Previous Views," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36 (1975): 579-94. A. S. McGrade, in "Ockham on the Birth of Individual Rights," in *Authority and Power,* ed. Brian Tierney and Peter Linehan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), has defended the claim that Ockham's views on universals had some impact on his conception of rights. This debate, while interesting, is not relevant to Villey's argument.

[76] Paul Vincent Spade remarks, "Ockham removes all need for entities in seven of the traditional Aristotelian ten categories; all that remain are entities in the categories of substance and quality, and a few entities in the category of relation, which Ockham thinks are required for theological reasons pertaining to the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Eucharist, even though our natural cognitive powers would see no reason for them at all" (*The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [Fall 2006 edition], s.v. "William of Ockham" [available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2006/entries/ockham/>]).

[77] See, e.g., Villey's review of Richard Tuck's *Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), in "Travaux récents sur les droits de l'homme, I," *Archives de philosophe du droit* 26 (1981): 411-18.

Villey points out, objective right is a real feature of the world, which inevitably obtrudes itself into daily life and legal decisions. Accounts of natural subjective rights, together with positive legislation, are in practice insufficient for juridical purposes.[78] The real activity of judges, when investigated, turns out to involve acknowledgment of the existence of objective right. An account of justice and law with no place for objective right therefore needs an understanding of the world that can motivate people to deny the existence of objective right, and to reject or reinterpret the judicial activity that depends on the existence of objective right. Ockham's nominalist ontology performs this essential function for a theory of subjective rights.

F) Full Development of Subjective Rights

Villey's account of the origin of philosophical accounts of subjective rights thus stands up to examination. Although he identifies Ockham as the originator of subjective rights, he holds that the full-fledged subjective rights position took time to develop. An important step in that development was the baroque Scholastic account of *ius* as a power rather than a relation,[79] but the final steps were taken by Hobbes. These steps were the definition of subjective rights as natural rights and the elaboration of a conception of the nature of individuals and human society that would replace the Aristotelian conception that underlies objective right. Hobbes offers this definition of right:

> The right of nature, which writers commonly call *jus naturale,* is the liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own nature; that is to say, of his own life; and consequently, of doing any thing, which in his own judgment, and reason, he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto. . . . Right, consisteth in liberty to do, or to forbear; whereas law,

[78] See, e.g., Michel Villey, *Réflexions sur la philosophie et le droit: Les carnets de Michel Villey,* ed. Marie-Anne Frison-Roche and Christophe Jamin (Paris: PUF, 1995), 305.

[79] For *ius* as a power in Vitoria and Suarez, see Villey, *La formation de la pensée juridique moderne,* 344-45, 356-57.

determineth, and bindeth to one of them: so that law, and right, differ as much as obligation, and liberty; which in one and the same matter are inconsistent.[80]

Inspired by the scientific practice of the day,[81] Hobbes attempted to describe the properties of human societies as functions of the properties of the individuals that compose them. This is the rationale for the hypothesis (or perhaps merely the thought experiment) of the state of nature, a state where the attributes of individuals who are joined by no social bonds can be considered. These attributes then serve as the basis for the construction of all social bonds, much as the electron shells of atoms serve as the basis for the construction of all molecules. This conception of the nature of society is fundamentally opposed to that of Aristotle and St. Thomas, and rules out the possibility of objective right. The only attributes of individuals in a state of nature are those that flow from the bare human nature found in each one of them, since every historical circumstance or personal relation has been thought away. Political structures are derived from these attributes from the drive to self-preservation, together with the law of nature that requires individuals to keep their promises. This gives rise to a situation in which the rights possessed in the state of nature are ceded by contract to the ruler, in order to achieve the goal of self-preservation for individuals. Since these rights are absolute spheres of freedom in which to act, they confer absolute power on the ruler when transferred to him. The ruler becomes, for Hobbes, a "mortal God" upon which his subjects can make no claim.

This absolutism, favored by Hobbes partly as a result of his experiences of the English Civil War, did not go down well in England. The flexibility of the notion of subjective right was demonstrated by Locke's use of it to limit the powers of the ruler, through the simple expedient of postulating more subjective rights in the state of nature than Hobbes's solitary right to self-

[80] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. I, c. 14, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, vol. 3, ed. Sir William Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 1839; repr. Darmstadt: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1966), 116-17.

[81] Villey, *La formation de la pensée juridique moderne*, 574-75.

preservation. This expedient, together with the postulation of a more comprehensive law of nature that binds men in the state of nature, transformed the state of nature from a misery to be escaped into the foundation upon which society is built. The principal additional natural right postulated by Locke is that of property (*Two Treatises on Government,* b. 2, c. 5). The natural law commands us to respect the natural rights of others. Because they are natural, these rights are absolute, and cannot be infringed on by the state against the will of their possessors. The powers of the state are those natural rights that have supposedly been ceded to it by the free consent of its citizens.

> The great and chief end, therefore, of men's uniting into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property. . . . in the state of nature, to omit the liberty he has of innocent delights, a man has two powers. The first is to do whatsoever he thinks fit for the preservation of himself and others within the permission of the law of nature. . . . the other power a man has in the state of nature, is the power to punish the crimes committed against that law. Both these he gives up when he joins in a . . . particular politic society. . . . the first power . . . he gives up to be regulated by laws made by the society. . . . the power of punishing he wholly gives up.[82]

The obligation to keep one's promises is also a part of the natural law, thus giving a moral basis to the power of the state. The result of this social contract is a night-watchman state, with no authority over religious belief (which is taken to be a purely private matter), no authority to punish immoral behavior as such, and no authority to suppress the free expression of opinion, except in so far as any of these things violate the rights of others or the public peace (these positions are all developed by Locke in *A Letter concerning Toleration*). Its function is to protect individual rights against internal and external aggressors—a function that emphatically cannot include any kind of redistribution of property, which would be an infringement on natural rights. Locke's political philosophy is the theoretical rationale, and a

[82] John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government,* book 2, *Essay on Civil Government,* c. 9, in *The Works of John Locke,* vol. 5 (London: Thomas Tegg, 1823; repr. Germany: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1963), 412-14.

historical cause, for the "Anglo-American" conception of the religiously neutral state, which is often favorably contrasted by Catholic thinkers with the more determinedly secular understanding of the state that emerged from the French Revolution.

Villey's account of the development and eventual supremacy of the concept of subjective rights is not limited to the ideas of philosophers. It also contains descriptions of the important contribution of jurists. The baroque Scholastics, especially Suarez, fell to some extent into both these categories (and had an underestimated influence on the development of legal thought), but in the seventeenth century the work of men whose scholarly activity was concerned primarily with the law began to play an important role in this process. The chief figure in this development was Grotius. Villey points out that the innovation usually credited to him, that of separating law from religious belief, was not in fact novel. It is a basic feature of the thought of St. Thomas on *ius,* grounded as it is on the pagan Aristotle; and Grotius's formula of the natural law obtaining even if it is assumed that God does not exist ("etiamsi daremus . . . non esse Deum") is in fact found in substance in a number of Scholastics.[83] Nor was Grotius's definition of rights as subjective rights a novelty. Villey identifies Grotius's originality as consisting in his attempt to base the law on principles of morality. Grotius's ambition was to found the law on a rational basis that was as independent of empirical facts as the work of mathematicians.[84] He sought to achieve this by merging law with morality—"law is a rule of moral actions obliging one to do what is right" ("ius est . . . regula actuum moralium obligans ad id quod rectum est")[85]—and basing law on the first principles of morality inscribed in the human conscience. These principles are founded on the inclination to live in human society, and are taken from Stoic morality as passed on by Cicero. They are the

[83] Villey, *La formation de la pensée juridique moderne,* 539; he instances Suarez, *De legibus,* bk. 2, ch. 6, para. 17; Vasquez, *Commentari ac disputationes in Primam Secundae S. Thomae* (Lyons, 1631), disp. 150, c. 3, n. 23; Gabriel Biel, *Super Sentent.* II, d. 3, a. 2.

[84] Villey, *La formation de la pensée juridique moderne,* 541.

[85] Ibid., 542.

duties to respect the property of others, to keep one's word, and to repair the damage one has caused by one's own fault, and the justice of punishment being inflicted for any violation of these duties.[86] From these, Grotius claims to derive the whole content of the law.[87]

In basing law and subjective rights on one of the basic inclinations that St. Thomas identifies as the first principles of practical reason, Grotius exemplifies what is now thought of as natural-law theory. Samuel Pufendorf and Christian Wolff were to follow along the same lines, as were many of the jurists of eighteenth-century France. Grotius's approach of basing legal obligation on principles that ignored empirical facts adapted to the law a method that is not adequate even for morality itself, as we have seen in our discussion of moralities of conscience. As a result, the alleged deductions in his system, like the deductions in casuistry, are full of holes.[88] This lack of logic was not a hindrance to the success of Grotius's thought, because the main appeal of that thought lay in its convenience for early modern capitalism and the class that benefited from that capitalism. The myth of a natural right to property based on original possession gave complete security to the property of the well off. Basing contracts on an absolute duty to keep one's promises—a notion in contradiction to the Roman law of property—meant that oppressive

[86] Ibid., 543, 547. Villey points out that Grotius, following Cicero, puts these Stoic principles to a use for which they were not originally intended, since they were meant by the Stoics purely as a guide to individual conduct, not as a basis for law.

[87] It is worth mentioning that by unifying law and morality, the baroque Scholastics and the seventeenth century jurists injured morality as well as law. As we have seen, the human law and the rulings of human judges can only bear upon exterior realities, which are not defined in terms of the intentions or moral responsibilities of the agents involved in these realities. If the law becomes thought of in terms of morality, morality as a result tends to be understood on the model of the law. Moral principles come to be thought of as bearing on actions described from the exterior; as Pinckaers notes of moralities of conscience, "the distinction between exterior act and interior act is blurred" (Pinckaers, *L'Évangile et la morale,* 277). Pinckaers also discusses the damage done by the notion of subjective rights to a grasp of the virtue of justice (ibid., 49-50).

[88] Villey, *La formation de la pensée juridique moderne,* 551-2, points out the flaws in Grotius's reasoning, and explicitly makes the comparison with casuistry; see also Michel Villey,"Morale et droit (sur un texte de Grotius)," in Villey, *Seize essais de philosophie du droit,* 107ff.

contracts exacted by the economic power of one of the contractees were necessarily binding in morality and law. The whole search for distributive justice in the law, in this approach, is conjured away. In dealings between nations, Grotius's system comes down on the side of the powerful, and especially on the side of European colonialists against indigenous peoples. As Villey remarks,

> [Grotius's] system of subjective rights is perfectly suited to ensuring the security of established property, the reliability of fiscal transactions, the tranquillity necessary for economic development, and the restriction of violence; but at the price of justice. He responded to the need for order that political and economic circumstances had given rise to. He was the product of a pragmatic cast of mind, that, in order to promote the temporal goals pursued by the society of his time, proved itself capable of an inspired exploitation of a ruling ideology.[89]

Villey makes the same observation about Locke, and notes that Marx had already pointed out that subjective rights, as expressed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man, had been crafted to serve the political and economic interests of the bourgeoisie—an assertion with which Villey agrees.[90]

The irksome and unjust aspects of this ideology helped to produce the final significant evolution of the notion of subjective rights. As originally conceived, subjective rights were spheres of immunity from coercion, as appears in the definition given by Hobbes above. When the notion of subjective rights had monopolized the domain of justice, however, aggrieved parties who suffered from the injustices of the capitalist system found no other way of demanding better treatment than the language of such rights. This gave birth to the notion of subjective claim-rights: rights to some good, or to the necessary conditions for the achievement of some good, that attached to invidivuals in virtue of their human nature, and that entitled them to claim these goods from others. The goods in question are typically the basic goods identified by the first principles of practical reason, or by the dignity of the human person. The problems with subjective claim-

[89] Villey, *La formation de la pensée juridique moderne,* p. 557.

[90] Michel Villey, *Le droit et les droits de l'homme* (Paris: PUF, 1983), 152.

rights are obvious. One person's claim to a good is liable to interfere with another person's claim, and the concept of subjective rights provides no means of determining whose claim is to prevail; the notion that one's own claim should prevail over others just *is* an expression of the idea of a subjective claim-right. As for the dignity of the human person, worthy notion as it is, Villey's comment is apt: the attempt to settle juridical disagreements between persons by appeal to the dignity of the human person is like trying to calculate the age of the captain from the dimensions of the boat.

Villey's disparaging comment about the usefulness of the notion of human dignity is liable to raise hackles among Catholics, who are accustomed to frequent appeals to human dignity in ecclesiastical rhetoric. However, a look at the origins of this rhetoric indicates the justice of Villey's stand. Its principal source is the personalism of Emmanuel Mounier, a figure who had an immense influence on progressive Catholic thought.[91] The popularity of Mounier's views in the 1940s and 1950s was one basis for later ecclesiastical rhetoric about a growth in understanding of the dignity of the person in contemporary society. Mounier however scorned any idea of giving philosophical or metaphysical precision to the notion of the dignity of the human person, an anti-intellectual stand that was helpful in evading awkward questions about his sympathies with fascism and Nazism before the Second World War, his qualified enthusiasm for Vichy and contempt for the French Resistance, and his zealous support for Stalin after the war.[92] If philosophical

[91] Mounier's influence was not limited to clerical circles. To give one example, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, a self-described follower of Mounier, launched his public career by founding a journal, *Cité libre,* which was intended to be a Canadian version of Mounier's journal *Esprit;* Canadian Catholics will be able to judge how much Trudeau's thought and actions did to promote human dignity in Canadian society.

[92] For Mounier's life, thought, and influence, see John Hellman, *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left 1930-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981). Hellman's *The Knight-monks of Vichy France: Uriage, 1940-1945,* 2d ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997) is helpful on Mounier's connections with figures of the *nouvelle théologie* such as Chenu, Congar and de Lubac. Mounier's prewar interest in fascism and Nazism is described in Zeev Sternhell, *Ni droite ni gauche: l'idéologie fasciste en France,* rev. ed. (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 1987). Debates over Sternhell's overall thesis do not

precision is supplied for the notion of the dignity of the person, however, it becomes apparent that this dignity is Villey's main theme. It is precisely the order of justice that he defends that specifies what the natural dignity of the human person consists in; and it is the order of charity described by St. Thomas (*STh* II-II, qq. 23-27) that specifies the dignity conferred on the human person by grace.

G) Subjective Rights as a Harmful Myth

The failure of modern natural-law theories is apparent in one of their more recent versions, that of Mounier's mentor Jacques Maritain. Maritain takes the nature of the individual human as the foundation for natural law, following the standard modern natural-law approach.[93] However, warned by the example of his predecessors, he does not attempt logically to deduce the principles of the natural law, or natural rights, from this nature. He denies that the natural law can be known by reason,[94] and asserts that it is grasped by the nonconceptual inclinations of the person, which are the song produced in the subject by the

undermine his documentation of Mounier's views. Mounier mocked Georges Bernanos for broadcasting on the BBC in favor of the Resistance (see Michel Winock, *Histoire politique de la revue 'Esprit'* [Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1975], 209), and denounced the D-day landings as a "myth of liberation" (Mounier, *Oeuvres* [Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1961-63], 4:766; see Seth D. Armus, "The Eternal Enemy: Emmanuel Mounier's *Esprit* and French Anti-Americanism," *French Historical Studies* 24 [Spring 2001]: 271-304). After the war, Mounier defended the Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia and the show trial of the left-wing democratic Bulgarian politician Nikola Petkov, "one of the most dreadful of eastern Europe's show trials" (R. J. Crampton, *Bulgaria* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997], 322). Petkov was shot. Mounier attacked François Mauriac for showing a concern for "individual justice" in the Petkov case (see Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992], 86-97); a line of argument parallel to that of Charles Maurras in the Dreyfus case, although Maurras did not accompany his position with extensive reflections on the dignity of the human person. Mounier's eventual rejection of Christianity in favor of Nietzsche did not much affect his influence in Catholic circles.

[93] Jacques Maritain, *L'homme et l'état,* in *Jacques et Raïssa Maritain: Oeuvres completes,* vol. 9 (Paris: Éditions Saint-Paul, 1990), 578-79.

[94] Ibid., 585.

"vibrations" of his interior tendencies.[95] In postulating a nonconceptual grasp of reality, Maritain, a disciple of John of St. Thomas, follows M.-D. Chenu in assuming that concepts are signs of reality, and that these signs can be circumvented by a superior, nonconceptual intuition.[96]

For the natural law to be recognized in a society, its members must agree about the directions of their inner vibrations. This agreement is brought about by the operation of a general law of history, which asserts that human societies progress over time. Maritain identified this law in 1942. He addressed any possible doubts about the existence of such progress by pointing out that the general law in fact predicts two developments, in which human societies progress in some ways while simultaneously worsening in others.[97] The improvements necessary for his theory are brought about by the positive side of the law, while the disasters that provoke skepticism about progress result from the negative side.

The nonconceptual nature of knowledge of the natural law does not prevent Maritain from describing this law, and the rights to which it gives rise. From the basic inclinations known by vibrations (which turn out to be the basic goods described by St. Thomas) arise rights to the possession of the goods sought by these inclinations. Such rights exist not only to the goods sought by fundamental inclinations, such as life, but also to more specific ways of realizing these inclinations, such as unemployment insurance.[98] Maritain is aware that these rights will need to be reconciled with one another, and to achieve this reconciliation he introduces the idea of the common good.[99] This notion is not properly explained, and it does not seem to correspond to the understanding of the common good that St. Thomas uses to found

[95] "L'intellect, pour former un jugement, écoute et consulte l'espèce de chant produit dans le sujet par la vibration de ses tendences intérieures" (ibid., 586).

[96] On this, see Lamont, "Determining the Authority and Level of Church Teaching," 387-90.

[97] Jacques Maritain, *Les droits de l'homme et la loi naturelle,* in *Jacques et Raïssa Maritain: Oeuvres completes,* vol. 7 (Paris: Éditions Saint-Paul, 1988), 638.

[98] Maritain, *L'homme et l'état,* 604.

[99] Ibid., 597.

objective right; Maritain does not grasp St. Thomas's view, simply remarking that in antiquity and the Middle Ages the natural law was focused on obligations rather than rights.[100] In the absence of criteria for determining their scope, the rights postulated by Maritain are in effect no more than a list of desirable objectives to be pursued. Maritain distinguishes between rights that can be limited by the demands of the common good, and those that are inalienable. He does not offer criteria for distinguishing between the two, and the examples of inalienable rights that he gives—those of life and the pursuit of happiness—do not have any evident characteristics that identify them as being inalienable, except for their having been so described in the American Declaration of Independence (no doubt a reflection of Maritain's sojourn in America).

One need not labor the point that this account of natural law and natural rights does not stand up to examination. In addition to its influence on Vatican II's *Dignitatis humanae,* its interest lies in its illustrating the full flowering of the tendency, already noted by Villey in the baroque Scholastics, to substitute a concern with arriving at the right answer for a concern with answering rightly—with the content of the right answer having been provided by the goals, interests, and presuppositions of the time.[101]

The above survey of objective and subjective rights puts us in a position to consider Villey's case for the abandonment of subjective rights, and for the acceptance of objective right. The historical element of this survey provides an answer to the objection that Villey's position is a form of archaism. Villey's idea is that by accepting objective right and rejecting subjective rights we should accept the views of the thirteenth century rather than the views of the fourteenth century. At this distance of time, there is no longer much to choose between these alternatives when it

[100] Ibid., 589.

[101] In "Sur la politique de Jacques Maritain," *Archives de philosophie du droit* 19 (1974): 444, Villey comments on the negative influence of baroque Scholasticism on Maritain, and notes that "following the example of most contemporary philosophers and theologians, he was distinguished by an almost total absence of knowledge of economics and law."

comes to archaism. In the fifteenth century it would have been different; but in the twenty-first, we can be content to examine these alternatives on their merits, without having to worry about which is more contemporary.

Villey's case against subjective rights is that they are nonexistent, and that the belief that they exist is damaging. His argument for their nonexistence overlaps with that expressed by Alasdair MacIntyre;

> By 'rights' . . . I mean those rights which are alleged to belong to human beings as such and which are cited as a reason for holding that people ought not to be interfered with in their pursuit of life, liberty and happiness. They are the rights which were spoken of in the eighteenth century as natural rights or as the rights of man. . . . There are no such rights, and belief in them is one with belief in witches or unicorns. The best reason for asserting so bluntly that there are no such rights is indeed of precisely the same type as the best reason which we possess for asserting that there are no witches . . . every attempt to give good reasons for believing that there *are* such rights has failed.[102]

The history of the development of subjective rights that is given by Villey substantiates MacIntyre's claim that no good reason for believing in their existence has been offered. To this can be added reasons for believing in their nonexistence: the contradictions between different accounts of subjective rights, the illogical features of every proposed account of subjective rights, the mythological character of the state of nature that is essential for the historically foundational theories of subjective rights, and the fact that such rights were unknown to very many cultures, despite their supposedly flowing from the essence of human nature and being the basis for just social relations.

The evils caused by belief in subjective rights are multifarious. Their postulation as the basis of justice and law renders invisible the actual justice of objective right. Attempts to make the law conform to the structure of subjective rights have a damaging effect, and the nonexistence of such rights permits accounts of them to be turned to all kinds of dubious ends. Their claims to be

[102] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2d ed. (London: Duckworth, 1985), 68-69. I do not know whether or to what extent MacIntyre was influenced by Villey.

complete and universal rules of justice rule out consideration of the particular circumstances of culture and history that are in fact essential to the determination of justice in the particular case. As a result, they are powerful tools for cultural and political imperialism. We have seen how theories of subjective right were used to protect the interests of the rich and defend the injustices of early capitalism. In the hands of Hobbes, such a theory was used to justify absolutism; if the power of the ruler is conceived of as a subjective right, it admits of no limitations, since the essence of such a right is to confer an entirely free sphere of action. (This advocacy of complete surrender of subjective rights to the ruler both arose from and fostered the development of absolutism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.) In the area of familial relations and family law, the model of subjective rights had deleterious consequences that were similar to its consequences in politics. Forms of authority within the family were conceived of as analogous to subjective property rights over things, imposing a tyranny that produced a reaction against the notion of the family as a natural unit. The proposed remedy for that tyranny, which was to consider relations within the family as contractual agreements between autonomous individuals—on the model of the social contract by which subjective rights are given up to political authorities—meant denying that there is such a thing as the family at all.[103] Subjective rights eliminated the Aristotelian connection between good human societies and the good of the universe as a whole, removing any grounds for obligations towards nonhuman animals or the rest of creation in general. On St. Thomas's view, the claim that there is no justice between humans and animals does not remove any sort of obligations towards animals. After all, there is no justice between citizens of different states, on his theory, but that does not eliminate all moral obligations towards noncitizens. If justice is understood in terms of subjective rights, however, the denial of any justice between humans and animals leaves animals with no

[103] On subjective rights and the family see Michel Villey, "Droit familial et philosophies du droit naturel," *Revista chilena de derecho* 7 (1980): 621-32.

moral standing. Indulging in the rhetoric of subjective rights produces a delusory self-righteousness, because it makes people feel that they are doing something about the crying injustices in the world, without demanding actual sacrifices from them. Promises of subjective rights—such as awarding rights to education or employment in bills of rights—are used as an opiate, as empty promises that are a substitute for actually benefitting people.[104] The claim version of subjective rights can give grounds for demanding the satisfaction of any kind of selfish interest. Subjective rights are, in short, a solvent for all the essential bonds of human society.

The case against subjective rights as set out above is conclusive, and we can therefore endorse Villey's claim that they should be rejected. His presentation of objective right as the alternative to accept in their place will meet philosophical opposition from consequentialists, whose position is the only substantial alternative to both objective and subjective rights. The philosophical case against consequentialism is familiar, and cannot be rehearsed here. From our discussion of objective and subjective rights we can however extract objections to consequentialism that supplement this philosophical case. One relevant consideration is that much of the appeal of consequentialism stems from the disadvantages of subjective rights together with the oblivion into which objective right has fallen. This oblivion has meant that consequentialism has appeared as the only alternative to subjective rights and their disadvantages. Rediscovery of objective right and its long tradition thus takes much of the wind out of the sails of consequentialism. Another consideration is the stubborn persistence, noted by Villey, of objective right in juridical and moral practice—a persistence that is difficult to explain except by the actual existence of objective right. These considerations tip the balance in favor of objective right—and together with the endorsement of objective right by St. Thomas, they imply that from a Catholic standpoint objective right should certainly be accepted.

[104] See Villey, *Le droit et les droits de l'homme,* 156-57.

H) Human Rights and Catholic Teaching

This last remark about the Catholic standpoint will raise a question. Has not the Church, at least since *Mater et magistra,* explicitly endorsed and insisted on respect for human rights? And was not this endorsement of human rights meant to be an endorsement of the Enlightenment conception of natural rights, which—as we have seen—were subjective rights? Is not Villey's position thus incompatible with Catholic teaching?

Villey certainly knew about and disapproved of the Church's misleading endorsement of the notion of human rights (he ironically dedicated his last main attack on subjective rights, *Le droit et les droits de l'homme,* to John Paul II, as being reflections provoked by the pontiff's teaching on the rights of man). He did not trouble to defend himself against the accusation of dissent, no doubt because he realized that the inference from the Church's defending human rights to her defending subjective rights could only be warranted if Church teachings explicitly identified human rights with subjective rights—which they do not. He also knew that defending the position of St. Thomas, as he did, is permissible for any Catholic thinker, unless the view defended has been explicitly condemned by the Church.

A Catholic cannot however simply refuse to accept that Church teaching on human rights imposes an obligation to believe in subjective rights, but give no account of what this teaching does oblige us to believe. Some positive account of this teaching must be given in a Catholic account of human rights. The resources for such a positive account can be found in St. Thomas. One resource is his claim, underlined by Villey, that the Decalogue sets limits on what laws can be just (*STh* II-II, q. 57, a. 2, ad 2). We can translate this simply into rights language by saying that a law that allows some people to treat others in a way that is contrary to the natural law, or that requires people to act in a way that is contrary to the natural law, is a violation of their natural rights. The commandment of the Decalogue that asserts "thou shalt not kill" is precisely the grounds upon which John Paul II, invoking his

apostolic authority, teaches a right to life that forbids the deliberate killing of the innocent (*Evangelium vitae* 57). Absolute moral norms thus provide a basis for exceptionless natural rights. Another resource is the assertion by St. Thomas that there are rules of natural equity that bind as a general rule, but that are subject to exceptions. The example he gives is returning a deposit to a depositor, something that is required by natural equity but that ought not to be done if the deposit is a sword that the depositor will use to commit murder. Such rules of natural equity form the basis for rights that are natural, although not exceptionless. A further resource is what might be called "Maritainian" rights—that is, statements of goods that a society ought to pursue, such as health and education. Much of the Church's teaching that is couched in terms of human rights is simply enunciations of general rules of equity and desirable goods to be pursued, applied to particular situations where these rules and goods are being neglected. These three categories of rights together cover the area of Catholic teachings in human rights. Villey is right to say that the terminology of human rights is a misleading way of framing these teachings, but that does not mean that the teachings themselves are not important and true. Villey indeed acknowledges this. He does not criticize the substance of Church teachings on rights and justice. He only objects to their expression in the language of human rights, and to the theological accounts that have been built upon these teachings—accounts that wrongly attempt to derive a blueprint for a just society from them, in the fashion of the blueprint for a just society found in modern natural-law theories.[105]

[105] See Villey's discussion in 'Une enquête sur la nature des doctrines sociales chrétiennes', *Archives de philosophie du droit* 9 (1964). Villey's objection is confirmed by an examination of the thought of Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio, the 19th century Jesuit and co-founder of *Civiltà Cattolica* who coined the term 'social justice'. Taparelli taught the future Leo XIII and was a principal influence on *Rerum Novarum*, and was quoted by Pius XI in *Divini illius magistri* 50, which described his *Saggio Teoretico di Diretto Naturale* as 'a work never sufficiently praised and recommended to university students'. His thought was largely a version of baroque scholastic natural law theory, with eclectic borrowings from Locke and other non-Catholic thinkers. John C. Rao's enthusiasm for Taparelli as having provided an alternative to Enlightenment thought is thus misplaced. The failure of Catholic social thought to be

We can conclude this discussion of objective and subjective rights by briefly indicating the light it casts on the flaws of the conflicting positions in the debate over *Dignitatis humanae* at the Second Vatican Council. The progressives believed that religious liberty was a natural subjective right flowing from the nature of the individual human. The conservatives believed that it could not be a right of any kind, because it would be a right to do what was morally wrong, namely, to practice a false religion. They believed such a right to be impossible, because they accepted the identity of justice and morality, an identity that rules out not only a natural subjective right to the practice of religion, but any kind of just claim—any objective right—to any form of practice of any false religion.

III. The Counter-Reformation System and the Enlightenment Religion

The above discussion of moralities of conscience and subjective rights has been an exercise in *ressourcement,* arguing that nominalists and their baroque Scholastic heirs adopted gravely mistaken views, and that these views should be rejected in favor of the superior positions of St. Thomas. In an earlier article I pointed out the flaws in the baroque Scholastic conceptions of faith and theology.[106] These two arguments yield more than philosophical and theological conclusions. In describing the baroque Scholastic views that have been argued against, the main outlines of a system have been delineated: a system that can be called the Counter-Reformation system. The intellectual foundations of this system are liberty of indifference, moralities of conscience, faith conceived of as obedience, and authority understood as the exercise of subjective rights. The system itself is the embodiment of these foundations in the intellectual, spiritual, psychological, and institutional life of Catholics and the Church. This embodiment involved holiness conceived of as the

widely accepted and practiced – a failure Rao finds mysterious – is in fact due to a large extent to the weaknesses that result from its being framed in modern natural law terms.

[106] See also Lamont, "Determining the Authority and Level of Church Teaching."

prerogative of clergy and religious; clerical, and ultimately papal, authority conceived of in parental or even despotic terms, rather than as analogous to a form of political leadership over citizens; and faith conceived of, and inculcated, primarily as obedience to orders rather than as attainment of truth. It is termed the Counter-Reformation system, because it was during the Counter-Reformation that it came to shape the life of the Church and decisively influence her strategies for dealing with the world. It does not correspond to the Counter-Reformation itself, which had many features that were independent of and even at odds with it. The Counter-Reformation system was however a chief aspect of the Counter-Reformation, that persisted after the energy and achievements of the Counter-Reformation itself were largely exhausted. It was the source of the evils in the Church that have been discussed in this article and the previous one: clericalism, authoritarianism, anti-intellectualism, aversion to philosophical thinking, and spiritual immaturity and lack of ambition on the part of the laity.

Understanding the Counter-Reformation system is one of two tasks that are required to answer the question asked above, the question of why the Church has been steadily in retreat since the Enlightenment. The other task can be carried out by developing some insights of Villey's. The above defence of Villey's views on objective and subjective rights is concerned with the work of his academic career. This work, the life work of a great scholar,[107] emerges vindicated from its defence, but it is not the only important contribution made by Villey to the question of subjective rights. In addition to this work, there is also an insight that Villey the Christian and Catholic drew from it. This is the insight that natural subjective rights are an idol; and that they are connected to another idolatry, that of the self.[108]

[107] On Villey's learning, see Stéphane Rials, 'Présentation', in Villey, *La formation de la pensée juridique moderne,* 13-16.

[108] For Villey on the rights of man as idols, see e.g. Villey, *Réflexions sur la philosophie et le droit,* 243, 257; on the self as an idol, see ibid., 159. Villey's view on idols is discussed in Stéphane Rials, *Villey et les idoles: Essai* (Paris: PUF/Quadrige, 2000).

This development of these insights of Villey's points out that conscience (as understood by moralities of conscience), liberty of indifference, and subjective rights assign to human beings properties that belong to God alone, which is idolatry. Moralities of conscience ascribe a real, and in practice a decisive, moral authority to conscience as such. But moral authority belongs to God alone. Attributing it even partially to the human conscience is thus a form of idolatry. The same is true of liberty of indifference. To possess liberty of indifference is to possess the power to determine one's actions in a way that results solely from one's own will—from one's own self. In reality this power belongs only to God, whose actions are determined by his own goodness. In addition, according to the notion of liberty of indifference the fact of any action occurring at all, independently of what choice that action involves, is at least to some extent caused only by the agent. This means that the agent (as Robert George has approvingly (!) noted)[109] is to that extent an uncaused cause. But to be an uncaused cause to any extent at all is an attribute that belongs only to the divine nature. Subjective rights add to the notion of being an uncaused cause an entitlement to do whatever one wants, simply because one chooses it. This extends the idolatrous aspect of liberty of indifference. It means that one not only *can* act as God does, but one can *rightly* act only for the sake of one's self.

Put together, these three anthropological notions constitute in a strict philosophical and theological sense a deification of the self. They are the unholy trinity of what can be called the Enlightenment religion. This religion, whose fundamental tenet is this conception of the deified self, has provided the ultimate motivation and the strength of the Enlightenment, and has explained its success in converting people. This success does not

[109] Robert George remarks that "whether or not one recognizes Biblical authority or believes in a personal God, it is true that human beings possess a power traditionally ascribed to divinity—namely, the power to be an uncaused causing" ("Natural Law and Human Rights: A Conversation with Robert P. George," in *Does Human Rights Need God?* [sic], ed. Elizabeth M. Bucar and Barbra Barnett [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005], 138). Unsurprisingly, this statement occurs in the course of a defense of subjective rights.

rest upon the utopian promises of progress that the various Enlightenment movements have made—which is why the failure of these promises, and the appalling miseries that attempts to implement them have brought, have scarcely disillusioned people with the Enlightenment in the least. Instead, its success rests on the fact that the Enlightenment offers a religious goal, in the form of an ultimate authority and good to be sought; that making the self that goal has a powerful appeal to human nature in its fallen state; and that the depth of sin involved in choosing this goal produces an extreme form of bondage and spiritual blindness, which is very hard to break.

This goal has presented itself in different guises—as communism, Nazism, or consumerism—but the fundamental concept and its appeal remains the same. It is the driving force behind the vulgar and base consumerism and sexual depravity that characterizes modern society. Previous non-Christian societies would have found these practices shameful and embarrassing. This natural human reaction is overridden, and even made use of, by the Enlightenment religion. This religion gives these forms of decadence a deeper meaning, the meaning of adoration of the deified self. The natural guilt and shame they provoke are transmuted into a proclamation of this self, which by rejecting the moral law is declaring its total supremacy. The deep and sincere belief in the human right to have an abortion gets its strength from being the ultimate expression of the Enlightenment religion. Its supporters understand that abortion is the murder of an innocent child, although they may not publicly proclaim this fact or even consciously admit it to themselves. It is precisely its status as murder of the most innocent that makes abortion the triumph of the deified self as ultimate end. (One may speculate that the emergence of the Enlightenment religion was the end stage of a pattern of decline that civilizations tend to follow; being focused first on God in the Christian epoch, then on the created world in the Renaissance, and finally on the self in the Enlightenment—with some overlap between the stages, obviously.)

This understanding of the Enlightenment religion explains the steady defeat that the Church has experienced at its hands. The anti-intellectualism of the counter-Reformation system left the Church unable to deal with the intellectual attacks of the Enlightenment, and the spiritual weakness fostered by this system made Catholics vulnerable to the spiritual temptations the Enlightenment offered. But the most important reason for this defeat was that the unholy trinity of the Enlightenment religion was taken from Catholic theologians, and the Counter-Reformation system not only did not condemn, but actually taught, this trinity. This fact was completely overlooked by Catholics, who usually saw Protestantism as the original source of Enlightenment thought—failing to realize that the Reformation was instead one of the results of the ideas behind the Enlightenment religion, ideas which had already been developed by nominalists. It is true that at the same time the Church was teaching the Catholic faith that contradicted the Enlightenment religion, and that the teaching of the elements of the Enlightenment religion was done by theologians rather than officially by the Church, but the theological teaching was so pervasive that its nonofficial character did not undo its effects. Thus, in addition to the spiritual and intellectual weakening caused by the drawbacks of the Counter-Reformation system that have been emphasized above, the system, to the extent that it was inculcating belief in liberty of indifference, the authority of conscience, and subjective rights, was helping to train devotees of the Enlightenment. The philosophical elements of the Counter-Reformation system, and the accumulated victories of the Enlightenment over the Church, were in turn key influences on the debates over religious liberty within the Church. The content and outcome of these debates cannot be understood without grasping the nature of these influences, whose effects were not limited to the progressive side in these debates.[110]

[110] I am grateful to Rachael Briggs, Fr. Gerald Gleeson, Geraldine Pace, and an anonymous review for *The Thomist* for helpful comments on this paper.

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GOD, THE UNIVERSITY, AND THE MISSING LINK—WISDOM: REFLECTIONS ON TWO UNTIMELY BOOKS

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Without the Creator the creature would disappear. . . . But when God is forgotten the creature itself grows unintelligible.[1]

POPE BENEDICT XVI, in his famous lecture at the University of Regensburg on 12 September 2006, "Faith, Reason, and the University: Memories and Reflections," makes this programmatic statement about reason and the modern university:

The scientific ethos, moreover, is . . . the will to be obedient to the truth, and, as such, it embodies an attitude which belongs to the essential decisions of the Christian spirit. The intention here is not one of retrenchment or negative criticism, but of broadening our concept of reason and its application. While we rejoice in the new possibilities open to humanity, we also see the dangers arising from these possibilities and we must ask ourselves how we can overcome them. We will succeed in doing so only if reason and faith come together in a new way, if we overcome the self-imposed limitation of reason to the empirically falsifiable, and if we once more disclose its vast horizons. In this sense theology rightly belongs in the university and within the wide-ranging dialogue of sciences, not merely as a historical discipline and one of the human sciences, but precisely as theology, as inquiry into the rationality of faith.[2]

[1] Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes,* no. 36, as cited in Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter *Evangelium vitae,* no. 22.

[2] Available on the Vatican web site (http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html).

Quite obviously, and not unlike his predecessor Pope John Paul II,[3] Pope Benedict has a keen interest in the modern university. In an equally important speech composed for the university "La Sapienza"—once the pope's own university in Rome, today a secular Roman university—a speech that was, however, never to be delivered, because the invitation to the Holy Father was withdrawn at the last moment, the pope points even more explicitly to a danger facing reason and consequently also the university in the Western world:

> The danger for the Western world—to speak only of this—is that today, precisely because of the greatness of his knowledge and power, man will fail to face up to the question of the truth. This would mean at the same time that reason would ultimately bow to the pressure of interests and the attraction of utility, constrained to recognize this as the ultimate criterion. To put it from the point of view of the structure of the university: there is a danger that philosophy, no longer considering itself capable of its true task, will degenerate into positivism; and that theology, with its message addressed to reason, will be limited to the private sphere of a more or less numerous group. Yet if reason, out of concern for its alleged purity, becomes deaf to the great message that comes to it from Christian faith and wisdom, then it withers like a tree whose roots can no longer reach the waters that give it life. It loses the courage for truth and thus becomes not greater but smaller.[4]

In his Regensburg lecture, Pope Benedict makes a case for theology belonging to the very heart of what a university is about; in his lecture for "La Sapenzia" he makes a similar case for philosophy. Only if theology and philosophy occupy an indispensable central role in the structure of the university will the

[3] See *The Whole Truth about Man: John Paul II to University Faculties and Students,* ed. James V. Schall, S.J. (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1981).

[4] Available on the Vatican web site: (http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/january/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080117_la-sapienza_en.html). It is not just popes who come to rather drastic judgments of this kind. The president of Viadrina European University in Frankfurt (Oder), Prof. Dr. Gesine Schwan, a political scientist and highly respected public figure of German cultural and political life (she has been twice candidate for the office of president of the German Federal Republic) anticipated many of Pope Benedict XVI's concerns and formulated even more stringent criticisms of late modern science: "Das zerstörte Tabu. Ohne ein religiöses Fundament und ohne die Sehnsucht nach Wahrheit verrät die Wissenschaft ihre eigenen Ideale und verkommt zum Erfüllungsgehilfen der Wissenschaft," *Süddeutsche Zeitung,* 4 January 2003.

university as an institution maintain the courage for truth, realize reason's inherent orientation toward transcendence, and thus be able to resist "the pressures of interest and the attraction of utility," in short, the familiar instrumentalization of the modern university for tangible ends in the material order. The modern research university prepares for its own disintegration by embracing a reductive notion of truth, by degrading philosophy from its original status as integrative metascience (viz., metaphysics) to the status of one academic discipline among many—and more marginal than most—and by, at best, preserving theology in the semi-exiled reservation of a professional school of Christian ministry, a divinity school, or, at worst, simply banning it from its walls.

Pope Benedict XVI's assessment of the modern research university is echoed by one of the most highly respected and widely read philosophers presently teaching in the United States:

> To whom . . . in such a university falls the task of integrating the various disciplines, of considering the bearing of each on the others, and of asking how each contributes to the overall understanding of the nature and order of things? The answer is "No one," but even this answer is misleading. For there is no sense in the contemporary American university that there is such a task, that something that matters is being left undone. And so the very notion of the nature and order of things, of a single universe, different aspects of which are objects of enquiry for the various disciplines, but in such a way that each aspect needs to be related to every other, this notion no longer informs the enterprise of the contemporary American university. It has become an irrelevant concept. It makes little difference in this respect whether a university is professedly secular or professedly Catholic.[5]

This statement is taken from the first of two books to be discussed in this essay, Alasdair MacIntyre's *God, Philosophy, Universities*. MacIntyre is one of two Catholic philosophers who have recently undertaken a most central but also most unfashionable task, namely, to rethink the unity of all academic disciplines by way of the integrative role of philosophy. MacIntyre pursues this task by unfolding a selective narrative account of the complex history of

[5] Alasdair MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 16.

Catholic philosophy in relationship to the emergence of the university. Benedict Ashley, O.P., in *The Way toward Wisdom: An Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Introduction to Metaphysics*,[6] pursues this task in dialogue with the sciences, especially the natural sciences, by way of an Aristotelian Thomist reconstruction of metaphysics as meta-science.

MacIntyre and Ashley share the concern for the integrative role of philosophy in the university: the first argues for it by way of a narrative account, the latter by displaying concretely how this integrative role of philosophy as meta-science actually works. Moreover, MacIntyre and Ashley share a fundamental normative presupposition, namely, that the enterprise of the university should be essentially informed by "the very notion of the nature and order of things, of a single universe, different aspects of which are objects of enquiry for the various disciplines, but in such a way that each aspect needs to be related to every other."[7] The pursuit of such a substantive interdiscipinarity, such a "connected view or grasp of things," as John Henry Newman puts it in *The Idea of a University*,[8] is nothing but the pursuit of wisdom, and such a pursuit entails an ever-widening horizon of reason, indeed, the inherent openness of reason to transcendence. It is by way of *teaching* such a "connected view or grasp of things"—or "*teaching* universal knowledge"[9]—that the whole of reality in its essential interconnectedness is attended to. For it is first and foremost the coherence of the curriculum of a particular science and the interrelationship between the university curricula that reflects best the "nature and order of things." This is the reason why for MacIntyre, as well as for Ashley, the extension of knowledge by way of teaching (as integral to education in a comprehensive sense) is the first and foremost task of the

[6] Bendict M. Ashley, O.P., *The Way toward Wisdom: An Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Introduction to Metaphysics* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

[7] MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities,* 16; cf. Ashley, *The Way toward Wisdom,* 20.

[8] John Henry Cardinal Newman, *The Idea of a University* (The New Edition of the Works of John Henry Newman), ed. Charles Frederick Harrold (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1947), xxv.

[9] Ibid., xxvii.

university. By attending primarily to this task, the university realizes and maintains best the unity and coherence between all academic disciplines.

The advancement of knowledge by way of research is, by contrast, not absolutely essential to the normative understanding of the university defended by MacIntyre and Ashley. Highly advanced research can just as well be undertaken by globally networked academies, think tanks, and laboratories sponsored by corporations and governments. Such research institutes and laboratories are not essentially directed toward the extension of knowledge by way of teaching and hence are also not in any need whatsoever of students. Consequently, a university that focuses primarily on research and only secondarily upon teaching—in short, the modern research university—will eventually become a victim of the systemic forces unleashed by making research, and hence knowledge production, its dominant purpose and end.[10] Both MacIntyre and Ashley hold that an increasing transmutation of universities into such conglomerates of advanced and ever-more-specialized knowledge production will necessarily increase those centrifugal, purely research-oriented forces that will lead to

[10] In the following I understand modern research universities to be institutions geared primarily to producing knowledge by way of highly specialized research (primarily in the natural and medical sciences) that is meant to serve interests that almost exclusively arise from the practical and technical demands of the modern world. Newman rightly anticipated what eventually would become the modern research university by way of Francis Bacon's method: "I cannot deny he has abundantly achieved what he proposed. His is simply a Method whereby bodily discomforts and temporal wants are to be most effectually removed from the greatest number; and already, before it has shown any signs of exhaustion, the gifts of nature, in their most artificial shapes and luxurious profusion and diversity, from all quarters of the earth, are, it is undeniable, by its means brought even to our doors, and we rejoice in them" (ibid., 106). Immanuel Kant's intensely ironic and passive-aggressive opuscule, *Der Streit der Fakultäten,* anticipates the present *de facto* hierarchy of university sciences in *late* modernity—a secular modernity that has now lost its optimistic élan and instead has become tired and cynical. In the agonistic world of irresistibly corruptible, interminably quarreling, and tirelessly consuming bodies, hence a world in which the greatest dangers are disease, litigation, and the inability to consume, the hierarchy of university sciences stands in service of the avoidance of these evils: at the top is the medical school supported by all the auxiliary bio-sciences, followed by the law school and the business school supported by their respective auxiliary sciences—first and foremost computer science and mathematics, but also any useful remnants of the liberal arts. However, since it has been discovered that religious practices might contribute to health and longevity, the gods are making a comeback—of sorts!

the all-too-familiar fragmentation of the university as a whole and of the field-specific curricula in particular. Consequently, for both authors the very nature and vitality of the university depend on the role philosophy as a meta-science plays in ensuring a "connected view or grasp of things." For a university cannot be "a place of teaching universal knowledge"[11] and hence of pursuing wisdom if it lacks interdisciplinary integrity and fails to reflect reason's openness to transcendence.

There is, however, a subtle difference between MacIntyre and Ashley in that the latter, possibly because of his extensive dialogue with the natural sciences, is more open than MacIntyre seems to be to regarding the university *also* as a legitimate place for the advancement of knowledge by way of research. While profoundly dedicated to a program of education in a Thomistic sense,[12] Ashley appears also to allow space in the university for a modern extension of Aristotle's comprehensive program of research. Possibly because of the central role Newman's understanding of the university plays for him, MacIntyre has a deeper and more exclusive commitment to the university as a place of the extension of knowledge by way of *teaching*. I shall revisit this not-altogether-unimportant difference later, but at this point I shall turn to the ways MacIntyre and Ashley make their respective cases.

I. *God, Philosophy, Universities*[13]

God, Philosophy, Universities grew out of an undergraduate course of the same title that MacIntyre taught for many years at the University of Notre Dame. The book is remarkable in at least three respects. First, it is—as far as I can see—the only book in which MacIntyre, by way of explicit philosophical discourse,

[11] Newman, *The Idea of a University*, xxvii.

[12] See Benedict M. Ashley, O.P., *The Arts of Learning and Communication: A Handbook of the Liberal Arts* (Chicago: Priory Press, 1957); Benedict M. Ashley, O.P., and Pierre Conway, O.P., *The Liberal Arts in St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Thomist Press, 1959).

[13] Parenthetical page numbers in this section refer to this book.

attends to God. Second, it is the book in which MacIntyre offers his, so far, most ambitious and comprehensive philosophical narrative about philosophy. Stretching across a spectrum of one-and-a-half millennia on 180 compact and elegantly written pages, from Augustine to the late Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et ratio,* the narrative pursues an intricate pattern made of three distinct but tightly interwoven strands: the philosophical contemplation of God, the tradition of Catholic philosophy, and the development of universities. Third, among MacIntyre's rich corpus, and especially in comparison with *After Virtue* and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry,* this book is his most disquieting, if not despairing, *pace* the invocation of hope in the book's very last line. The book's profoundly disquieting character does not pertain to the theistic discourse about God (though some theologians might wish for an explicit Trinitarian identification of and discourse about God). Nor does it pertain to the tradition of Catholic philosophy per se (though MacIntyre prescribes to its contemporary practitioners a disquietingly ambitious and comprehensive agenda). Rather, *God, Philosophy, Universities* is most disquieting in its evident disdain for the present modern research university. More than twenty-five years ago, in one of those rare but important conversations that go to the very core of things, a German university professor of theology, who eventually became my *Doktorvater*, made the following remark to me: "It is only the students who still believe in the university as a corporate reality with an overarching, coherent telos. The professors have long ago ceased to do so." As a motivated student with not untypically high ideals, I was markedly disturbed by what struck me then as a rather alarming statement. Ten years into teaching at a leading, Berlin-type, American research university, I now know all too well what my *Doktorvater* then observed about his and my Berlin-type, German research university. In MacIntyre's words the observation sounds thus:

> Research universities in the early twenty-first century are wonderfully successful business corporations subsidized by tax exemptions and exhibiting all the acquisitive ambitions of such corporations.

> What disappears from view in such universities, and what significantly differentiates them from many of their predecessors, is twofold: first, any large sense of and concern for enquiry into the relationships between the disciplines and, second, any conception of the disciplines as each contributing to a single shared enterprise, one whose principal aim is neither to benefit the economy nor to advance the careers of its students, but rather to achieve for teachers and students alike a certain kind of shared understanding. Universities have become, perhaps irremediably, fragmented and partitioned institutions, better renamed "multiversities," as Clark Kerr suggested almost fifty years ago. (174)

Is MacIntyre chasing the memories of a long bygone past or is he musing over the contours of a utopia that never existed and never will exist? Should he, having himself been a professor at numerous distinguished modern research universities, better acknowledge the unavoidable or, even better, praise and defend the achievements of these "multiversities"? While it might arguably be inadvisable for persons sitting in a glass house to throw stones, it is very advisable, if not mandatory, for professors teaching in these kinds of institutions to raise overarching normative questions (of precisely the kind MacIntyre does) in order to critique the modern university. For who should raise such questions with greater legitimacy (and even a necessity internal to his or her very academic discipline) than a philosopher—or for that matter, a theologian?[14] The question of the relationship between all disciplines, and of the overall shared end of the university, must be raised inside the university if there is to be even the smallest indication of a genuine life of the intellect and hence of the capacity for a critical self-examination and self-reflexivity left in such an institution.

Such questions, moreover, are asked best in a proper scientific way, and this means in the context of a meta-science that deals with the nature, the mutual relationships, and the overall ordering of all academic disciplines, and hence with the nature and scope of the university as such. Were such a meta-science to occupy a

[14] For two recent instructive theological engagements of these matters, see Gavin D'Costa, *Theology in the Public Square: Church, Academy, and Nation* (Malden, Mass.; Blackwell, 2005); and Stanley Hauerwas, *The State of the University: Academic Knowledges and the Knowledge of God* (Malden, Mass., and Oxford: Blackwell, 2007).

central role in a university it could indeed achieve the kind of intrinsic coherence that not even the most advanced and sophisticated extrinsic managerial strategies and administrative tactics could ever hope to achieve.[15] What is so disquieting about MacIntyre's book is that even a cursory consideration of its narrative by any member of an average contemporary "multiversity" makes it plain how utterly removed these fundamental concerns are from the day-to-day business of such institutions, and hence in turn how utterly removed these activities are from what pertains to the essence of a university properly conceived. Might the application of the term "university" to such institutions have become just a craftily camouflaged case of equivocation?

A summary of the book's narrative is both easy and difficult to compose. MacIntyre has written this book with an educated Catholic lay audience in mind: persons of largely Catholic convictions, broadly educated in a variety of current matters, but not particularly informed by the Catholic philosophical tradition and hence unequipped to situate and assess in a constructive and meaningful way. By way of a broadly accessible, and hence necessarily selective narrative, MacIntyre intends to offer a map that will allow educated Catholics to negotiate a better path through the complexities and ambiguities of late modern thought and life by evaluating the underlying philosophical theses and claims and effectively distinguishing between the truth of some philosophical theses and the falsity of others. As in his earlier works, MacIntyre is interested in reclaiming the central role of philosophy for a wider, nonspecialized public. He thus conceives philosophy as the systematic development of questions that plain persons might raise, especially but not exclusively in light of their broadly theistic or concretely Catholic beliefs. The narrative MacIntyre unfolds, with an exemplary erudition, is indeed largely accessible to a nonspecialized readership. The prose is attractive and transparent; the narrative flows with an admirable ease and coherence, yet with subtle nuance.

[15] Might the ludicrously inflated role of sports as a rallying, unifying, and motivating factor on American college and university campuses be directly proportional to the loss of the proper formal coherence of the modern research university?

According to MacIntyre, broadly theistic and specifically Catholic beliefs have historically given rise to three pre-eminent philosophical questions: first, the question of the compatibility between the existence of God and the scope of evil—natural, social, and moral—in a universe of finite beings; second, the question of the compatibility between divine transcendent causality and genuine secondary causality (i.e., between divine omnipotence and human freedom); and third, the question of true knowledge of and hence meaningful discourse about God. Catholic philosophy has had to consider these issues again and again. And because the engagement of these profound and difficult questions has occurred in socially, culturally, and institutionally embodied forms, the university has to be part of the narrative of Catholic philosophy.

Not altogether unpredictably, the narrative commences with Augustine. The eminent imperial rhetor and later even more eminent bishop of Hippo turns out to be also the first Catholic philosopher—offering consistent, frequent, and extensive philosophical argumentation in defense of the Catholic faith. The lucid treatment of Augustine's ontology forms part of a patristic prologue that includes Boethius and the Pseudo-Dionysius and that ends in Anselm of Canterbury, who is presented as the first fully refined Catholic philosopher in the Augustinian tradition—a monastic thinker, however, in an eleventh century Christian French kingdom devoid of any university. Before the university, or, at least, the *studium generale* enters the stage for Catholic philosophy, another prologue has to be told: the pivotal role for Catholic philosophy of Muslim philosophy, especially the first encounter of Catholic philosophers with most of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* by way of its Muslim commentators. The encounter between the Augustinian tradition (having adopted and successfully adapted large neo-Platonic strands of thought with select Aristotelian moments by way of Boethius) and a massive *Corpus Aristotelicum* (interpreted by highly sophisticated Muslim philosophers) created the critical mass that gave rise to the genesis of a Catholic philosophical tradition in the proper sense.

MacIntyre himself regards the convergence of three dynamic events as the birth hour of Catholic philosophy in its full sense: a large set of intellectually challenging new texts, a pool of profound thinkers, and the emergence of new institutions of higher learning—a *studium generale* at Paris, Oxford, Bologna, and Naples. The hero of this part of MacIntyre's narrative is Thomas Aquinas (his most crucial forerunner, Albert the Great, and his role in founding the Dominican *studium* at Cologne—the seed of its later university—is regrettably absent). For it is with Aquinas that a separate, proper philosophical discourse is assumed, not parallel with and indifferent to Catholic convictions, but as a mode of inquiry informing these convictions while being informed by them. The marked decline MacIntyre observes in the decades after Aquinas's death must not be understood, he stresses, as a willful departure by these thinkers from the position of the *doctor communis,* but rather as a proliferation of philosophical difficulties and rival philosophical conceptualities that could no longer be successfully resolved in one coherent and comprehensive philosophical discourse. The result of this failure was the formation of particular schools and traditions of Catholic philosophical enquiry (Thomism, Scotism, Ockhamism, Augustinianism), schools that allegedly marked themselves off from each other by way of increasingly arcane and protracted lines of argumentation.

With the rise of and in light of the challenges of Renaissance humanism, modern natural science, and early modern skepticism, the Catholic philosophical tradition underwent a series of transformations. The discovery and political subjugation of the Americas presented profound intellectual challenges to key representatives of the Catholic philosophical tradition in Spain in the sixteenth century. However, this tradition was not able to achieve a coherent and compelling position on these novel and conceptually challenging, as well as politically pressing matters. Rather, the formation of particular schools of thought with complex speculative positions continued (Suarezianism forming a new school). The fact that these highly developed positions were

in what seemed to the sharpest minds of the time to be an irresolvable and hence interminable conceptual conflict with each other gave rise to a Catholic version of skepticism. Descartes, Pascal, and Arnauld reacted to this in varying complex ways. Thus, having reached the threshold of modernity, the narrative continues to unfold according to the following basic pattern: after an ever-increasing Baroque Scholastic self-isolation, Catholic philosophy eventually distinguishes itself by its complete absence. "Where philosophy flourished, Catholic faith was absent. Where the Catholic faith was sustained, philosophy failed to flourish" (133).

When does Catholic philosophy proper re-emerge in the modern context? Parallel to the emergence of Catholic philosophy in the patristic era with Augustine and its medieval flourishing with Aquinas, MacIntyre identifies a forerunner and a subsequent hero in the modern era: the forerunner is Antonio Rosmini-Serbati, and the hero is John Henry Newman. Rosmini-Serbati, having intellectually confronted Kant and German idealism, was the first seriously to attempt to address modern philosophical problems as a Catholic thinker; and only Newman, having intellectually confronted British empiricism, was able to define the tasks confronting Catholic philosophy in modernity. However, Rosmini's engagement was not altogether successful, and even Newman did not fully identify, let alone muster, the resources necessary to address these daunting tasks. Only with Pope Leo XIII's coordinated effort—encapsulated in his famous 1879 encyclical letter *Aeterni Patris* and in the launching of the Leonine edition of the works of Thomas Aquinas—does the situation change. In one crucial regard, namely, the way Christian faith actually enables true rational enquiry, MacIntyre makes the link between Newman and *Aeterni Patris* explicit:

> Part of the gift of Christian faith is to enable us to identify accurately where the line between faith and reason is to be drawn, something that cannot be done from the standpoint of reason, but only from that of faith. Reason therefore needs Christian faith, if it is to do its own work well. Reason without Christian

faith is always reason informed by some other faith, characteristically an unacknowledged faith, one that renders its adherents liable to error. (152f.)

Next to new ventures in personalism (Marcel et al.) and phenomenology (Hildebrand, Scheler, Stein, Marion), and quite a bit later in post-Wittgensteinian analytic philosophy (Anscombe, Geach, Dummett), MacIntyre identifies inside the ecclesiastically encouraged and endorsed neo-Scholastic form of Catholic philosophy various strands of neo-Thomism. The strand with the most lasting success and impact is the one that led to an increasingly sophisticated recovery of the full breadth and depth of Aquinas's thought in its own medieval context. MacIntyre also discusses Transcendental Thomism and Aristotelian Thomism briefly. He keeps at a distance, subtly but firmly, all strands of Thomism that understand themselves as instantiations of a shared *philosophia perennis*. This is not because he would disagree with such an effort in principle, but rather because he seems to regard the performance of modern Thomist metaphysics as not quite true to the highest standards of the Catholic philosophical enterprise, standards presumably set by Augustine and Aquinas. In other words, he seems to be most rigorous in his expectations where the performance comes close to, but still falls somewhat short of, these highest standards.

Where is the journey of Catholic philosophy going? MacIntyre turns to the twentieth-century Catholic philosopher who became pope in 1978. He understands Pope John Paul II, in his 1998 encyclical letter *Fides et ratio*, as doing nothing short of reconceiving the Catholic philosophical tradition according to the highest possible standards: "It is within the Catholic philosophical enterprise, when it is true to its own highest standards, that philosophy is carried on as it needs to be carried on" (165). MacIntyre reads *Fides et ratio* as a most urgent invitation to Catholic philosophers to refocus on the deepest human concerns and what it is to be human, and thereby to carry on philosophy as it needs to be carried on. Such an account of what it is to be a human being will explain why human beings are capable of relevant self-knowledge. In other words, the integrative function

of philosophy in the Catholic tradition will best be recovered by way of a comprehensively anthropological focus. For

> such an account will have to integrate what we can learn about the nature and constitution of human beings from physicists, chemists, and biologists, historians, economists, and sociologists, with the kind of understanding of human beings that only theology can afford. (177)

According to MacIntyre such an account would presuppose the theology of Augustine and would otherwise be largely Thomist (in questions of truth and of God as the first and final cause of all reality), but would draw upon seminal non-Catholic thinkers such as Kierkegaard, Husserl, and Wittgenstein, while making the best of insights of key Catholic thinkers as different as Anselm, Scotus, Suarez, Pascal, Stein, and Anscombe. MacIntyre's adumbration of such an account culminates in the following programmatic remarks:

> If such an account were to accomplish its philosophical purposes, it would have to confront and overcome more than one kind of difficulty. It would have to enable Catholic philosophers to engage with the contentions of the whole range of contemporary major philosophical positions incompatible with and antagonistic to the Catholic faith, including the whole range of versions of naturalism, reductive and nonreductive, the Heideggerian and post-Heideggerian romantic rejections of the ontology presupposed by the Catholic faith, pragmatist reconceptions and postmodern rejections of truth, and that so often taken for granted thin desiccated Neokantianism that is so fashionable in contemporary philosophy. (178)

I think he is exactly right. Needless to say, this program would be greatly helped by a contemporary recovery of the Thomist philosophical tradition according to Aquinas's own highest standards (as, arguably, adumbrated in *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*), a program that would require the sustained cooperation of numerous Catholic thinkers in various fields of enquiry across a prolonged period of time. Moreover, such a program would require a well-functioning Catholic university roughly along the lines Newman conceived of in his *Idea of a University*, a university in which philosophy occupies a central, integrative position,

essentially open toward theology (natural theology as well as *sacra doctrina*) on the one hand and, on the other hand, equally open to the human and natural sciences. The reality of contemporary Catholic universities, let alone secular universities, in America (and Europe, I venture to claim) is, however, strikingly hostile to such possibilities. For

what in fact we find is that the most prestigious Catholic universities often mimic the structures and goals of the most prestigious secular universities and do so with little sense of something having gone seriously amiss. To the extent that this is so, the institutional prospects for the future history of the Catholic philosophical tradition are not encouraging, quite apart from the daunting character of its intellectual needs and ambitions. (179)[16]

[16] In his important article "The End of Education: The Fragmentation of the American University," MacIntyre speaks his mind with less constraint: "What should be the distinctive calling of the American Catholic university or college here and now? It should be to challenge its secular counterparts by recovering both for them and for itself a less fragmented conception of what an education beyond high school should be, by identifying what has gone badly wrong with even the best of secular universities. From a Catholic point of view the contemporary secular university is not at fault because it is not Catholic. It is at fault insofar as it is not a university. Yet the major Catholic universities seem unlikely to accept this calling, if only because their administrative leaders are for the most part hell-bent on imitating their prestigious secular counterparts, which already imitate one another. So we find Notre Dame glancing nervously at Duke, only to catch Duke in the act of glancing nervously at Princeton. What is it that makes this attitude so corrupting? What has gone wrong with the secular university?" (*Commonweal* [20 October 2006], 10). I think MacIntyre is exactly right. However, some might want to ask themselves why he only cared to mention, among Catholic universities, the University of Notre Dame. Are the others completely beyond repair? Or is so much at stake with the University of Notre Dame, because, being the flagship of all Catholic universities in America, it matters greatly for the outcome of the battle whether she goes under or survives the internal and external attacks of what Ashley has identified as the ideology of "Secular Humanism." One also might wonder to what degree MacIntyre's scathing analysis of the present situation of the American Catholic university represents an indirect assessment of the undesirable but foreseeable consequences of the 1967 "Land O' Lakes Statement" by which Catholic college leaders declared independence from the Catholic Church. More than forty years after this statement was issued it might be the time to take stock. A stimulant for such a re-assessment can be found in "Discourse IX: Duties of the Church toward Knowledge" of Newman's *The Idea of the University:* "If the Catholic Faith is true, a University cannot exist externally to the Catholic pale, for it cannot teach Universal Knowledge if it does not teach Catholic theology. This is certain; but still, though it had ever so many theological Chairs, that would not suffice to make it a Catholic University; for theology would be included in its teaching only as a branch of knowledge, only as one out of many constituent portions, however important a one, of what I have called Philosophy. Hence a direct and active jurisdiction of the Church over it and in it is necessary lest it should

Again the question of the university emerges forcefully. But before I return to this topic, I shall address, first, the overall narrative; second, strands one and two, God and Catholic philosophy, combined. Finally, I shall return to the third strand, the university.

A) MacIntyre's Narrative

In the preface to his book, MacIntyre anticipates that the selection underlying his narrative will be a likely point of contention with many a reader of the book. And indeed, admirers of late medieval philosophy in general and of the thought of Scotus and Ockham in particular will be quick to observe that MacIntyre's narrative depends too much on Gilson's classic, but by now broadly challenged, account of the rise, progress, and decline of medieval Catholic philosophy from Augustine to the Renaissance. Admirers of Catholic thought in the early modern period, especially the Thomist tradition, might be quick to observe that the narrative in its modern period depends too much on an ever so subtle self-congratulatory attitude underlying virtually all of modern philosophy interpreting itself as a decisive break with previous traditions of philosophizing, arriving at insights to which Catholic philosophy has little or nothing to say in response. Such admirers of Catholic thought in the modern period would most likely want to question the following strong claim: "Where philosophy flourished, Catholic faith was absent. Where Catholic faith was sustained, philosophy failed to flourish" (133). They would also most likely regret that MacIntyre did not explicitly consider the possibility that if indeed his judgment were true it might simply be because modern post-Cartesian philosophers such as Hume, Rousseau, Diderot, and Robespierre regarded themselves as quasi-theologians intent on displacing theology first and foremost as *sacra doctrina* and eventually also as natural theology, integral to metaphysics (see 134). Wherever Catholic faith and its theological and philosophical reflection was

become the rival of the Church with the community at large in those theological matters which to the Church are exclusively committed—acting as the representative of the intellect, as the Church is the representative of the religious principle" (190).

sustained, there indeed was no need for nor interest in a philosophical discourse indifferent or inimical to the truth of revelation, and intent on setting up (a)theistic agendas, let alone in the advancement of philosophical claims that were per se untenable in the considered judgment of the best of Catholic philosophers.

Moreover, some might want to point to not a few noteworthy instantiations of a Catholic engagement with and reception of Enlightenment philosophy, as soon as Catholic intellectual life had somewhat recovered from its persecution and repression in the French Revolution and its Central European aftermath. One thinks of the Dillinger circle, the Landshuter circle, and the Tübingen School. There are later names of intellectual significance and influence as well, such as, in Germany, Franz von Baader, Friedrich Schlegel, Joseph Görres, Anton Günther, Carl Werner, Hermann Schell, and Franz Brentano, or, on the French side, Louis de Bonald, Joseph de Maistre, François-René de Chateaubriand, and Félicité-Robert de Lamennais, et al.

Finally, since the French Revolution has already been mentioned, some might wonder why MacIntyre did not pay more attention to the oppressive and destructive effects of the French Revolution on the state of Catholic philosophy and the subsequent secularization and state confiscation of Church property, the suppression of monasteries and Catholic institutions of education, and the fundamental reconfiguration of what once were Catholic universities. In short, they might wonder whether Catholic philosophy was absent from a range of new intellectual developments, possibly not because it had nothing to say in response to them, but rather because the institutional basis for its flourishing had been willfully destroyed by state violence. If one consults the first of the three eight-hundred-page volumes of *Christliche Philosophie im katholischen Denken des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts,*[17] a much more nuanced picture emerges, a picture that indicates quite an intense and substantive engagement of modern secular thought antedating Antonio Rosmini-Serbati's and

[17] *Christliche Philosophie im katholischen Denken des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts,* ed. Emerich Coreth, S.J., Walter M. Neidl, and Georg Pfligersdorfer (Graz: Styra, 1987-90).

John Henry Newman's respective engagements—not to mention Pope Leo XIII's 1879 encyclical *Aeterni Patris*—by a generation, if not more.

Others might wonder about the significance of MacIntyre's complete silence about the impact of the reception of Vatican II on the curriculum of Catholic philosophy, as well as, and even more importantly, on the curriculum of Catholic theology in most Catholic universities and seminaries. In light of MacIntyre's narrative it is hard if not simply impossible to regard the impact of this reception as anything other than an overzealous and underreflected, wholesale dismissal of increasingly sophisticated preconciliar efforts to recover Catholic philosophy, with a devastating result on Catholic philosophical formation in colleges and universities and a consequent weakening of the conceptual backbone and intellectual strength of Catholic theology.

Still others might wonder what ever happened to that fourth strand without which the narrative of Catholic philosophy in its relevant social and institutional embeddedness cannot possibly be told—the Church as visible institution and especially the relationship between episcopal authority and universities in Catholic countries. They might wonder whether indeed the relationship between Catholic philosophy, the Catholic universities, and the Catholic Church from the emergence of the universities in the Middle Ages to the French Revolution and even afterwards is purely extrinsic and contingent, so that the Church's magisterial role might indeed be negligible for such a narrative.

B) God and Catholic Philosophy

I shall turn now to the first and second elements of MacIntyre's narrative: God and Catholic philosophy. The most important, albeit elusive strand of MacIntyre's narrative is clearly his restrained but persistent philosophical reflection upon God. From his brief and brilliant opening adumbration of a theistic grammar of God to his concluding insistence that human beings can only comprehend themselves in even an approximately

adequate way if they understand themselves as fundamentally directed towards God (an ever-so-careful allusion to the long and hotly debated *desiderium naturale visionis Dei*), his focus is evident. However, in MacIntyre's discourse, God-talk remains very distinctly and precisely that of philosophers—theistic philosophers, that is, of the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim variety—and never crosses over into the explicitly Christian discourse governed by the Trinitarian grammar of Scripture and tradition. MacIntyre states explicitly that Catholic philosophers *qua* Catholic are committed to the revealed truths of the Catholic faith. That is, the God of theistic philosophical enquiry is none other than the One who has revealed himself as the essentially and eternally triune God of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The revealed truths of the Catholic faith, however, are not the subject matter of Catholic philosophy properly conceived, but are rather the subject matter of *sacra doctrina*, the science of revealed truth.

MacIntyre's precision at this point is greatly to be welcomed. It identifies him not only as an astute student of Thomas Aquinas but indeed as a Thomist. Any imprecision about and subsequent confusion between *doctrina fidei Christianae* (*Summa contra Gentiles*) or *sacra doctrina* (*Summa Theologiae*) as the science of divinely revealed truth, on the one hand, and *philosophia humana* (*Summa contra Gentiles*), on the other, will be detrimental for both disciplines. MacIntyre seems to have a clearer sense than many contemporary theologians about the importance of this distinction, an importance not so much for the sake of philosophy, which as metaphysical enquiry has its proper completion in a natural theology, an enquiry into the first cause, but rather for the sake of *sacra doctrina*. The distinction is not simply between two kinds of enquiry, but between two *orders* of discourse. *Sacra doctrina* considers everything in light of an essentially supernatural principle, that is, divine revelation. The theistic discourse that MacIntyre affords is not at all the discourse of *sacra doctrina* proper, but rather a contemporary application of an important distinction Aquinas introduces in the *Summa contra Gentiles* (*ScG* II, cc. 3-4). What he observes about

Aquinas's distinction between theology (*doctrina fidei Christianae*) and philosophy (*philosophia humana*) there holds true for the way he himself maintains the distinction between these two orders of discourse:

> Philosophy begins from finite things as they are and from what belongs to them by nature. It leads us from them through an enquiry into their proper causes to knowledge of God. Theology by contrast begins from God and considers finite beings only in their relationship to God. So, although there are matters of which theology treats and philosophy does not and vice versa, they also have a common subject matter. (74-75)[18]

It is this common subject matter, God, as first cause of all finite things, that opens the space for a theistic discourse proper to the philosophical order.

One reason Aquinas and Newman occupy such an eminent role in MacIntyre's account—not unlike the two foci of an ellipse—is that both serve as strategic signposts for how MacIntyre wants to understand the proper distinction, as well as the relationship, between nature and grace, reason and faith, and consequently between (Catholic) philosophy and theology (*sacra doctrina*). Most importantly, and most offensively for postmodern instincts, neither Aquinas nor Newman evacuates nature and reason, and hence philosophy has an essentially unproblematic access to

[18] What MacIntyre describes here in a possibly too epigrammatic manner must be spelled out along the lines provided by Aquinas in *ScG* II, c. 3. Ralph McInerny offers a more detailed and precise rendition of Aquinas's distinction, a distinction that applies to MacIntyre's, as well as to Ashley's, *modus operandi* of a theistic discourse proper to the philosophical order: "1. The theologian treats God for himself and all other things with reference to God; the philosopher treats nature and man for themselves and of God only as their cause. Call this a matter of the object, the material object of the two. 2. The theologian treats the properties of things that refer them to God, the philosopher treats the properties of things in themselves and as they are. Call this a difference of formal object, but of the formal object *quod*; still the formal object *quo,* the *ratio sub qua,* the matter of principles, is also involved. Thus if the theologian and the philosopher should study the same things, they do so in the light of different principles; the philosopher, through their proper causes, the theologian with recourse to the first cause. 3. In terms of method, the philosopher first studies nature and man, and then through knowledge of them comes to knowledge of the first cause. But theology begins with God, who is both its first object and its light, and then goes on to creatures that emanate from God and are related to him" (*Praeambula fidei: Thomism and the God of the Philosophers* [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006], 103).

reality. Aquinas puts it in characteristically brief terms: "The philosopher considers such things as belong to them by nature" (*ScG* II, c. 4).[19] The nature of a thing is that by which its essential operation is characterized. All those characteristics together as they are accessible to human natural powers form "nature" in a comprehensive sense, the sense to which Newman appeals in one important passage in *The Idea of a University:*

> By nature is meant, I suppose, that vast system of things, taken as a whole, of which we are cognizant by means of our natural powers. By the supernatural world is meant that still more marvellous and awful universe, of which the Creator Himself is the fulness [sic], and which becomes known to us, not through our natural faculties, but by superadded and direct communication from Him. These two great circles of knowledge . . . intersect; first as far as supernatural knowledge includes truths and facts of the natural world, and secondly, as far as truths and facts of the natural world are on the other hand data for inferences about the supernatural. Still, allowing this interference to the full, it will be found, on the whole, that the two worlds and the two kinds of knowledge respectively are separated off from each other; and that, therefore, as being separate, they cannot on the whole contradict each other.[20]

MacIntyre's tangible reticence to trespass onto a discourse of an essentially supernatural order displays an awareness lost to many post-Vatican II Catholic theologians in Catholic colleges and universities in America, and to Catholic university faculties in Europe for whom theology—emancipated from magisterial tutelage—has ceased to be understood as *sacra doctrina*. Theology has become intelligible only as a form of practical "training" for a specific profession. The individual disciplines entailed in this "training" constitute "fields of enquiry" of essentially the same order as all the other academic pursuits of the modern research university. Catholic theology in this naturalized state has become as unspectacular as irrelevant, indeed largely superfluous. The

[19] "Philosophus . . . considerat illa quae eis secundum naturam propriam conveniunt [please give translation" (translation in St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles. Book 2: Creation,* trans. with introduction and notes by James F. Anderson [Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975], 3).

[20] Newman, *The Idea of a University,* 310 (from the lecture "Christianity and Physical Science: A Lecture in the School of Medicine").

setting is one in which philologists, linguists, historians, archaeologists, psychologists, and philosophers can do equally superb if not better research on the same "material" of which this kind of naturalized theology treats. This comes with the predictable consequence that typically theologians in the modern research university want to be nothing but excellent philologists, linguists, historians, archaeologists, and philosophers. In such a desolate situation, MacIntyre's discursive performance is a remarkable witness to a proper awareness of these categorically different orders of discourse.

C) Meta-science and the Nature and Task of the University

What connects the narrative's first strand with its second (viz., the tradition of Catholic philosophy) and eventually with its third (viz., the nature and task of a university), is Aquinas's fundamental operative assumption—following Aristotle—that there is a philosophical enquiry that integrates and orders all other scientific enquiries: metaphysics in the broad sense of the term or, in Benedict Ashley's apt terminology, "meta-science," the acme of which meta-science is nothing but an enquiry into the first cause of all being. MacIntyre seems to be in agreement with Aquinas on this fundamental operative assumption, and it is significant that John Henry Newman in *The Idea of a University* entertains a similar operative assumption—only that he does not do it along Thomist lines and that he calls it more broadly "philosophy."[21]

Aquinas and Newman constitute the normative points of reference around which MacIntyre's narrative is ordered. Both assume the inner coherence of each science and the overall coherence between all sciences. This intra- and inter-disciplinary coherence is for them constitutive of what makes a university a

[21] "And further, the comprehension of the bearings of one science on another, and the use of each to each, and the location and limitation and adjustment and due appreciation of them all, one with the another, this belongs, I conceive, to a sort of science distinct from all of them, and in some sense a science of sciences, which is my own conception of what is meant by Philosophy, in the true sense of the word, and of a philosophical habit of mind, and which in these Discourses I shall call by that name" (Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 46).

university. To remove this double coherence is to lose the university. Hence the disintegration of the curriculum and the internal disintegration of academic fields go hand in hand.

The normative thrust of the argument underlying MacIntyre's narrative entails an ambitious agenda for Catholic philosophy. Arguably, Benedict Ashley's *The Way toward Wisdom* can be received most fruitfully as an equally ambitious implementation of MacIntyre's agenda *avant la lettre.*

II. *The Way toward Wisdom*[22]

There are at least three good reasons why Ashley's *The Way toward Wisdom: An Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Introduction to Metaphysics,* though published three years previously, offers itself as a fit sequel to MacIntyre's *God, Philosophy, Universities.*

First, the school of modern Thomism that conversed most intensely with the modern natural sciences, that attended most extensively to Aquinas's commentaries on Aristotle's works, and that reflected more than any other strand of modern Thomism on the proper ordering of all the sciences for a genuine liberal arts education, finds no mention in MacIntyre's brief sketch of the various strands of neo-Thomism that developed after Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris.* Next to the Canadian Charles de Koninck,[23] the American Ralph McInerny,[24] and the Dutch Leo Elders,[25] who all stand in a certain proximity to this strand, it is the River Forest School of Aristotelian Thomism (William H. Kane, O.P., James A. Weisheipl, O.P., William Wallace, O.P.,

[22] Parenthetical page numbers in this section refer to this book.

[23] See most recently the first two volumes of a projected three-volume edition, *The Writings of Charles de Koninck,* trans. and ed. Ralph McInerny (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008-2009).

[24] See most recently his *Praeambula fidei: Thomism and the God of the Philosophers* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006).

[25] From among his many works, see most recently his essay "St. Thomas Aquinas on Education and Instruction," *Nova et vetera,* English Edition 7 (2009): 107-24, which offers instructive resonances with Ashley's *The Way toward Wisdom.*

Benedict Ashley, O.P., et al.) that has now found its late fruit in Ashley's *magnum opus*.

Second, *The Way toward Wisdom* throws more penetrating and consistent light onto the question of what MacIntyre might mean by "nature" in his selective history of the Catholic philosophical tradition. The overlapping common ground between the understandings of "nature" in Aquinas and Newman is none other than Aristotle. And Ashley offers a most instructive argument for the ongoing relevance of Aristotle's natural philosophy with more comprehensive and far-reaching implications than even MacIntyre entertains in *Dependent Rational Animals*.

Third, *The Way toward Wisdom* offers a most comprehensive and accurate account of how the sciences are to be ordered according to Aquinas. This ordering is far from a matter of purely antiquarian interest for specialists in medieval thought or only relevant for a small band of disciples of Thomas Aquinas. Rather, Ashley makes a compelling, 530-page case showing in detail how Aquinas's ordering of the sciences is the result of a remarkably successful meta-science in operation.

No one serious about meta-science and a vision that integrates the natural sciences and the humanities into a universe of knowledge ordered toward wisdom (universal knowledge in Newman's terms) can afford to ignore Ashley's remarkable achievement. Following Thomas, Ashley displays an encyclopedic knowledge of the natural sciences as well as the humanities—not in the extrinsic alphabetical ordering of an encyclopedia, but ordered, engaged, and evaluated by a way of a meta-scientific enquiry.

In his *Commonweal* article (cited above), MacIntyre points out a pervasive problem haunting most nonspecialized but interdisciplinary conversation inside the modern research university and even more so beyond its borders in the wider public:

> Ours is a culture in which there is the sharpest of contrasts between the rigor and integrity with which issues of detail are discussed within each specialized discipline and the self-indulgent shoddiness of so much of public debate on large

and general issues of great import. . . . One reason for this contrast is the absence of a large educated public, a public with shared standards of argument and inquiry and some shared conception of the central questions that we need to address.[26]

Ashley's work does nothing less than outline the program of a liberal arts education that would help to eliminate this problem from its very roots up. That such a suggestion sounds all too utopian in light of the present state of colleges and universities only displays the lack of vision that plagues the imagination, the lack of understanding of the depth of the crisis of university education that plagues the intellect, and the lack of courage that plagues the will. Ashley, who wrote his *magnum opus* as an octogenarian, displays more intellectual vision, understanding, breadth, and courage than many a younger and, by contemporary academic standards, successful and recognized university scholar.[27]

Ashley intends this book "for the general reader as a sustained critical argument to show why metaphysics is still a valid intellectual endeavor, and what kind of metaphysics can justifiably claim to be true and useful today" (xix). Like MacIntyre, he is also profoundly concerned with "the fragmentation of knowledge that prevails in our modern colleges and universities" (xx) and hence intends this extensive introduction into metaphysics as meta-science primarily for the undergraduate student reader who is in need of a uniform fund of information. What Newman in *The Idea of a University* called "genuine philosophical knowledge" as the end of a true university education, Ashley names "wisdom," and the path to reaching this end he names "interdisciplinarity."

[H]ow is a modern university, or any of our "think tanks," to engage in or promote multicultural dialogue unless it has reflected on the foundations of its

[26] MacIntyre, "The End of Education," 14.

[27] One fascinating aspect of Ashley's book I cannot pursue here is its rather obvious indebtedness to the kind of undergraduate education he received at the University of Chicago in the 1930s when there occurred a university-wide, meta-scientific debate about the hierarchy and coherence of all academic disciplines, a debate shaped by Richard P. McKeon's Aristotle Renaissance and Mortimer J. Adler's Great Ideas project.

own unity as an institution? To do this it must achieve genuine interdisciplinarity. (20)

In order to pursue the goal of genuine interdisciplinarity, the meta-science he unfolds must be essentially dialogical, not in order to achieve conversion or refutation, but in order to achieve *reconciliation*. The mode of this dialogic approach is analytic, "since it aims to formulate basic assumptions held by the dialogue partners so that what is true in both positions may be recognized" (19). It is the aim to achieve a genuine interdisciplinarity that drives Ashley's book and also accounts for the extraordinary scope of its discussion, from the religions and the wisdom of ancient cultures to modern astrophysics, from Aristotelian logic to contemporary mathematics. This book is the fruit of a life-long intellectual effort to achieve a comprehensive understanding of reality, and thus represents a precious gift to the university—a gift, however, I am not sure the contemporary university is capable of receiving:

The very term "uni-versity" means many-looking-toward-one, and is related to the term "universe," the whole of reality. Thus, the name no longer seems appropriate to such a fragmented modern institution whose unity is provided only by a financial administration and perhaps a sports team. The fragmented academy is, of course the result of the energetic exploration of all kinds of knowledge, but how can it meet the fundamental yearning for wisdom on which each culture is based? (20)

In part 1, "Metaphysics: Nonsense or Wisdom?" (93-169), Ashley offers an astute and informative survey of the varieties of metaphysics in Western culture. Most helpful are his lucid characterizations of the varieties of twentieth-century Thomism. The subsequent discussion of part 1 represents a rigorous unfolding of the Aristotelian Thomism of the River Forest School's philosophy of nature. By way of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* and *Physics* (following Aquinas's interpretation of both works), Ashley argues forcefully that (1) natural science is epistemologically first; (2) that the basics of Aristotle's *Physics* are still in harmony with modern science; and (3) that natural science

establishes the ground for first philosophy or metaphysics—not the ground for its possibility, but indeed the ground for its necessity (and here his running disagreement with such Thomists as Clarke, Dewan, Knasas, Wippel, et al. becomes manifest).

In part 2, "The Properties of all Reality" (173-381), Ashley unfolds a comprehensive consideration of all branches of knowledge ordered and guided by the properties of all being, the transcendentals one, true, good (*unum, verum, bonum*), correlated to efficient, formal, and final causality. This approach allows for a concise and always solid consideration of the constitutive aspects of all central academic disciplines, from natural science and mathematics to the practical sciences and history. I know of no other contemporary philosopher who, between the covers of one book, so concisely discusses the unity of physical bodies, atoms, and particles, as well as the unity of contingent spiritual substances (that is, the unity of the embodied human spirit and the unity of the pure spirit, the angel). This part of the book strikes me as a paradigmatic instantiation of Pope Benedict XVI's mandate from his Regensburg Lecture (cited above) to broaden our concept of reason and its application and thereby disclose reason's vast horizons.

In part 3, "The First Cause or Absolute Principle of Reality" (385-430), Ashley's *The Way toward Wisdom* ascends finally to an enquiry into the First Cause, a discussion that can be read as an extended treatment of what MacIntyre condenses in the opening four pages of his book and presupposes for the rest of his discussion. MacIntyre follows the *ordo doctrinae* proper to unfolding a philosophical narrative while Ashley adopts the *ordo inventionis* proper to an immediate metaphysical enquiry. It is important to realize that Ashley follows Aquinas in holding that the First Cause is not included in the proper subject of metaphysics, which is *ens commune*. Rather, the First Cause is but the goal of metaphysics, a goal that this science can never claim to comprehend. Unsurprisingly, Ashley emphasizes the crucial difference between this understanding of metaphysics (arguably the proper *Aristotelian* understanding as adopted by Aquinas) and

the one advanced by Scotus, adopted by Suarez, popularized by Wolff, rejected by Kant, and rightly submitted to the charge of "onto-theology" by Martin Heidegger, a charge echoed by Jean-Luc Marion and held as conventional wisdom by those who announce the postmetaphysical epoch in philosophy and theology. Ashley simply invites a closer and better *philosophical* rereading of Aristotle. At stake in this part is nothing less than the truth of monotheistic belief:

> In trying to achieve some understanding of the nature of the First Cause, the first question must be whether the world of human experience is really distinct from a First Cause who has freely created it out of nothing, or whether this world of experience is really identified with its First Cause. (385)

Ashley offers an astute discussion and withering critique of materialistic or nature monism, the panentheism of Whitehead, and the spiritual monisms of Neoplatonism and Idealism.

The subsequent chapter, "The One Creating First Cause" (403-30), would make an excellent study for those theologians, especially Protestant, who all too quickly might want to dismiss the deity of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 12 (Lambda) as final causality elevated to the supreme level of "world *nous*" in charge of moving the outermost sphere of an eternal universe and otherwise simply contemplating itself—hence intrinsically unfit for any form of adoption by Christian theology. Ashley makes a convincing case to the contrary by arguing that, in principle, final causality can only be understood in light of efficient causality. Hence:

> [i]t is utterly contrary to Aristotle's whole thought to suppose that there could be a final cause that does not require a proportionate efficient cause. Final causality . . . is the predetermination of an efficient cause and could not exist without such a proportionate efficient cause. Since the total series of moved movers cannot move itself, how could the First Cause be the final cause of the motion of all things unless, by implication at least, it was the first *efficient cause* of their motion? (404)

Consequently, the discussion of the final cause in *Metaphysics* 12 (Lambda) must be read in light of the antecedent proof of the

existence of the Unmoved Mover in *Physics* 7 and 8. The final cause of the universe is first and foremost the efficient first cause of the world. And as Aquinas maintains, the efficient causality of the first cause not only pertains to the causality of motion, but the very causality of substance itself.[28]

The subsequent enquiry into the perfection of the First Cause follows closely the first book of Aquinas's *Summa contra Gentiles* and questions 3-25 of the *Prima Pars,* arguing "why and how the First Cause is one and why and how the First Cause is personal" (409). It is in this section that Ashley offers a compelling contemporary Thomistic answer to the three preeminent philosophical questions which, as MacIntyre claims, arose historically from broadly theistic and specifically Catholic beliefs: first, the question of the compatibility between the existence of God and the scope of evil—natural, social, and moral—in a universe of finite beings; second, the question of the compatibility between divine transcendent causality and genuine secondary causality (i.e., between divine omnipotence and human freedom); and third, the question of true knowledge of and hence meaningful discourse about God.

In part 4, "Wisdom, Human and Divine" (433-51), Ashley returns to the book's fundamental concern that strongly echoes Newman's *The Idea of the University* and his concern about liberal education. However, there are two differences to be noted between Newman and Ashley's Aristotelian Thomism, differences that remain unresolved in the way Aquinas and Newman form the two foci of MacIntyre's narrative. First, following Aquinas, Ashley

[28] "Hence there are causes of beings as beings, which are investigated in first philosophy. . . . And from this it is quite evident that the opinion of those who claimed that Aristotle thought that God is not the cause of the substance of the heavens, but only of their motion, is false" ("Unde sunt causae entium secundum quod sunt entia, quae inquiruntur in prima philosophia.. . . . Ex hoc autem apparet manifeste falsitas opinionis illorum, qui posuerunt Aristotelem sensisse, quod Deus non sit causa substantiae caeli, sed solum motus eius"; Aquinas, *In Metaphys.* 6.1[Rome: Marietti, 1950], 1164, regarding Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 6.1026a 11-18; translation in St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics,* trans. Richard J. Blackwell, Richard J. Spaeth, and W. Edmund Thirkel [Notre Dame, Ind.: Dumb Ox Books, 1995], 402).

affirms that the study of nature is basic to all disciplines;[29] second, also following Aquinas, he affirms the fundamental connectedness of the intellectual and the moral virtues, and especially the pre-eminent role of prudence in uniting the virtues (228; 355) such that a proper liberal arts education along Thomistic lines should lead to an integral excellence of mind and character. Newman, on the contrary, stresses a principled disconnection between the intellectual and the moral virtues. For Newman, the existence of "gentlemen" who are intellectually brilliant and socially refined, but who are also scoundrels, is something that in principle even the best liberal arts education cannot avoid.[30] Ashley would most likely agree that even the best liberal arts education along Thomistic lines can never *completely* exclude the possibility of such an undesirable outcome. However, with respect to such cases of gentlemanly scoundrels as Newman has in mind, Ashley would maintain that we must diagnose not only an obvious failure of moral formation but also some consequent deficiency in the comprehensive formation of the intellectual virtues. In short, the disagreement comes down to the question of whether a genuine liberal arts education is supposed to form the intellectual virtue of

[29] "[T]he basis of a liberal higher education for *all* students must be the natural sciences. Only then will the present need of all of us to live in a modern, scientifically oriented culture be adequately met. The division between the 'Two Cultures' of the sciences and the humanities can be overcome only by rooting the humanities in the objective truth of the 'hard' sciences" (439). In order to appreciate this recommendation fully one needs to remember that Ashley maintains the inherent unity of natural philosophy (as paradigmatically executed in Aristotle's *Physics*) and natural science, and their full integration in a liberal arts curriculum that is ultimately directed toward the search of wisdom.

[30] "Knowledge is one thing, virtue is another; good sense is not conscience, refinement is not humility, nor is largeness and justness of view faith. Philosophy, however enlightened, however profound, gives no command over the passions, no influential motives, no vivifying principles. Liberal Education makes not the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman. . . . Quarry the granite rock with razors, or moor the vessel with a thread of silk; then may you hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend against those giants, the passion and the pride of man. . . . Liberal Education, viewed in itself, is simply the cultivation of the intellect, as such, and its object is nothing more or less than intellectual excellence" (Newman, *The Idea of the University,* 106f.).

prudence and whether this virtue is integral to the overall pursuit of wisdom.[31]

Ashley demonstrates persuasively how the pursuit of wisdom along the lines of a recovery and expansion of the Aristotelian-Thomist trajectory of a meta-science is a nontrivial contribution to the proper flourishing of theology (*sacra doctrina*). Much of contemporary "post-metaphysical" theology, especially in the dialogue between theology and science, naively adopts the deliveries of the sciences, adapting its own construals to them without fully employing the critical mediation afforded by meta-scientific reflection. It frequently follows that philosophically erroneous entailments of naturalism, materialism, and programmatically atheistic versions of evolution theory tend to find their way into theology and contribute to deficient understandings of God, what it is to be human, and the world as creation "all the way down." Here theologians can learn fruitful lessons from Ashley's nondefensive, meta-scientific reflection on all branches of knowledge, which gives priority to the natural sciences and at the same time remains a nonreductive exercise of a consistent

[31] The subtle but important difference that seems to me to obtain between Newman's position and that of the Thomist tradition deserves a more extensive and nuanced discussion than I am able to afford in the scope of this essay. I shall mention for a starter, however, that in Aquinas's doctrine of the cardinal virtues prudence holds a principal position insofar as this intellectual virtue constitutes the unifying link between the moral and the intellectual virtues. And while the other intellectual virtues indeed can be without moral virtue, prudence cannot (*STh* I, q. 58, a. 5). Hence, Aquinas can account for the brilliant scoundrel. Prudence does not belong to those intellectual virtues that perfect the speculative intellect for the consideration of truth—and it is on the formation of those that, according to Newman, a university education exclusively concentrates. However, the pursuit of wisdom, which is the proper end of a liberal arts education along Thomistic lines, entails the refinement of habits of thought, as well as of action, for both pertain to the end of the human being. And since prudence is an intellectual virtue, its formation and refinement falls under the competency of a liberal arts education along Thomistic lines. Furthermore, since prudence is the intellectual virtue that perfects reason pertaining to things to be done (*STh* I, q. 57, a. 5), the formation of prudence is integral to a university education that is directed to the pursuit of wisdom as its ultimate end. For it is the case that for this pursuit to reach its end, many actions as means to advance best toward this end will need to be decided upon—and the habituation into such actions presupposes the virtue of prudence. For an instructive introduction into this topic, see Pierre H. Conway, O.P., *Principles of Education: A Thomistic Approach* (Washington, D.C.: The Thomist Press, 1960). Though much harder to find than Newman's *The Idea of the University*, it deserves no less serious a reconsideration.

expansion of the horizons of reason. (This performance would have driven the Kant of the *Critique of Pure Reason* insane, but then again, Ashley makes a persuasive case that Aristotle was right and Kant was wrong—in matters of epistemology, as well as in matters pertaining to the validity of the proof from motion that a first immaterial efficient cause exits.) In short, *The Way toward Wisdom* represents a paradigmatic exemplification of Pope Benedict XVI's call in his Regensburg Lecture to overcome the self-imposed limitation of reason to the empirically falsifiable, and once more to disclose reason's vast horizons.

A book of such vast scope and ambition makes itself vulnerable, of course, to all kinds of shortcomings, weaknesses, and failures of nuance in multiple respects—though, from my own limited perspective, I encountered only a few. Because Ashley approaches the unity and order of all sciences by way of natural philosophy and natural science, the practical sciences, as well as history, in short, the "humanities," do not receive quite as extensive and nuanced a consideration as they deserve. Some Thomist metaphysicians (Clarke, Dewan, Knasas, Wippel, et al.) will want to challenge Ashley on the philosophical necessity of accessing the subject matter of metaphysics by way of natural philosophy and natural science. Additionally, students of Maritain will wonder whether, in light of the very nature of modern physics, the integral unity of natural philosophy and natural science that Ashley defends can still be maintained or whether some greater distinction between natural philosophy and modern physics is necessary—with the entailed acknowledgment that a direct passing from modern physics to meta-science is impossible. While such objections and reservations represent some of the in-house debates among Thomists, other philosophers will raise quite predictably more fundamental objections and disagreements, many of which are anticipated and quite forcefully addressed in Ashley's work.

There is, however, a much simpler and at the same time much deeper problem as a result of which Ashley's accomplishment will go largely unnoticed. It is the problem to which MacIntyre points

to both at the beginning and at the end of *God, Philosophy, Universities*. The single most serious, if not insuperable obstacle to any substantive reception of Ashley's book outside a narrow circle of Aristotelian and Thomist philosophers rests on the fact that most, if not all, contemporary university teachers and scholars have never been introduced to and habituated into any sustained intellectual practice of meta-scientific reflection, let alone the search for wisdom, and consequently do not comprehend that their particular fields of enquiry can only flourish as part of a larger search for wisdom. In short, the predicament of secular universities simply reflects the necessary outcome of abandoning any commitment to reason as a comprehensive operation in search of a shared, integral understanding. But for this to be the predicament also of Catholic universities amounts for MacIntyre to grave error in the intellectual order and to grave fault in the moral order. As mentioned already above, in contrast to MacIntyre, Ashley puts the challenge in slightly more positive terms and directs it especially to theologians and philosophers—not in Catholic universities in particular, but in Christian universities in general:

> Christian universities represent a great international culture that is inevitably a major player in any multicultural dialogue at the sapiential level. Christian culture has played a leading role in the historical development of the university, yet because its theologians and philosophers in the post-Galilean epoch withdrew from active dialogue with developing natural science, it remains isolated. Christians must now accept the laborious and even painful tasks of rethinking the foundations of natural science and of achieving a Metascience grounded in such a revised natural science. It will then be effective in a mediating, ecumenical role between Secular Humanism (which threatens to reduce all cultures to its own ideological perspectives) and the cultures of the world that recognize spiritual reality.
>
> In this task, a Christian university must not only promote dialogue with its monotheist partners—the Jews and the Muslims—but it must also learn to dialogue with the naturalist and spiritualist monism of most other cultures. (443)

As it turns out, the agenda Ashley prescribes for philosophers and theologians in contemporary Christian universities is no less ambitious than the one MacIntyre prescribes to contemporary

Catholic philosophers. However, Ashley's approach and agenda seems more capable to accommodate the modern, Berlin-type research university with its ideal of an integral unity between research and teaching. Ashley's agenda, while admittedly not very likely to be adopted by any present research university, Christian or Catholic, let alone secular, still betrays more hope in the potential redeemability of such universities than MacIntyre's narrative does. For Ashley can acknowledge the modern research university as the great-grandchild of Aristotle's comprehensive program of research, from whence Ashley also sees arising the very potential for its internal reform. In the case of the Aristotelian research program (and its modern adaptation by the River Forest School of Aristotelian Thomism), the advancement of knowledge by way of research always remains integral to a comprehensive program of education for which the teaching of universal knowledge holds primacy. MacIntyre, more deeply committed to Newman's exclusive vision of the university as "a place of *teaching* universal knowledge," will keep high the critical bar on the hopes Ashley entertains for Christian universities. Not only would theology and philosophy have to reoccupy a long-lost central position (and in consequence reinvent themselves) in these Christian universities, but these Christian universities, in order to be in a position of adopting Ashley's agenda, would have to become again *primarily* places of *teaching* universal knowledge on the basis of curricula that would facilitate, indeed mandate, the interface between theology and philosophy with the natural sciences. These schools would only secondarily be places in which research agendas are also maintained for the sake of the expansion of knowledge.

A fundamental question remains: From where would come the faculty who themselves had received the kind of integrated interdisciplinary education that would enable them to appreciate, adopt, and pursue Ashley's agenda? to questions of this kind, MacIntyre, has a rather blunt response:

> We do possess the intellectual resources to bring about the kind of change I propose. What we lack, in Catholic and in secular universities, is the will to

change, and that absence of will is a symptom of a quite unwarranted complacency concerning our present state and our present direction.[32]

Should we entertain any reasonable hope for Christian universities in general and Catholic universities in particular? I should say that any undergraduate curriculum that approximates the normative vision of the university shared by John Henry Newman, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Benedict Ashley—and for that matter, by the late Pope John Paul II and by Pope Benedict XVI, two former university professors—should be applauded. For resigning oneself to increasing curricula fragmentation, to acceleration of centrifugal forces of knowledge production—with its accompanying tendency to instrumentalize and commodify—and to dismissing philosophers like MacIntyre and Ashley as incurable romantics will only cement an already emerging reality: that the label "university" held by these late modern institutions is an illegitimate claim at best and quite simply an equivocation at worst.

MacInyre's and Ashley's books have indeed the touch of untimeliness to them. They are written for generations of university professors and students still to come, generations ready to receive the profundity of MacIntyre's and Ashley's insights and proposals as the gifts they are. For these future generations will eventually become disillusioned with the present celebration of knowledge production without end and will thirst again for a "connected view or grasp of things," in short, for wisdom, let alone, for God.

When this is going to happen, though, will depend largely on when it is that the first part of the conditional clause of Pope Benedict XVI's speech for "La Sapenzia" ceases to obtain:

If our culture seeks only to build itself on the basis of the circle of its own argumentation, on what convinces it at the time, and if—anxious to preserve its

[32] Alasdair MacIntyre, "The End of Education: The Fragmentation of the American University," 14.

secularism—it detaches itself from its life-giving roots, then it will not become more reasonable or purer, but will fall apart and disintegrate.[33]

Are there presently any signs of hope, any instantiations of an institutional awareness of and concern for Pope Benedict XVI's sobering analysis and grave warning? That there are at least some liberal arts institutions that seem both aware of the pope's somber analysis and capable of acknowledging MacIntyre's and Ashley's proposals can perhaps be gathered from the remarks of the late Dr. Thomas E. Dillon (1946-2009), president of Thomas Aquinas College:

Our fundamental endeavor at Thomas Aquinas College is a modest one: to help you make a good beginning on the ascent to wisdom. . . . These four years at the College are a precious opportunity to develop your minds and refine your habits of thought and action. You will be reading and discussing the greatest works ever written; works that have defined eras and shaped civilizations. In a community of friends, and under the guidance of tutors who care deeply about your good, you will seek to make reasoned judgments about the nature of reality. You will be aided in your inquiries by the rich intellectual tradition of the Church as you study Her wisest teachers—wise especially because of their own docility to Christ and His Church. Liberal education concerns not what is servile and transient, but what is intrinsically worthwhile and permanent. By coming to Thomas Aquinas College, by devoting yourselves to four years of a liberal arts education, you are standing with Socrates and opting not for the life of convenience and trivial pleasure, but rather for the life rooted in the love of wisdom and ordered to

[33] While the pope applies this conditional to the European culture, it arguably also obtains—*mutatis mutandis*—for the United States and Canada. In his meeting with the French intellectual, cultural, and political élite on 12 September 2008 at the Collège des Bernardins in Paris, Pope Benedict XVI stressed that what he has to say about the foundations of European culture does indeed pertain today to the basis of *any* genuine culture: "*Quaerere Deum*—to seek God and to let oneself be found by him, that is today no less necessary than in former times. A purely positivistic culture which tried to drive the question concerning God into the subjective realm, as being unscientific, would be the capitulation of reason, the renunciation of its highest possibilities, and hence a disaster for humanity, with very grave consequences. What gave Europe's culture its foundation—the search for God and the readiness to listen to him—remains today the basis of any genuine culture" (available on the vatican web site: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080912_parigi-cultura_en.html).

virtue. Such a life is not easy, for it demands discipline and self-denial, but it is a life of genuine freedom and happiness.[34]

An institution of higher education shaped in its core curriculum by such a vision provides the proximate context for an intelligent and fruitful reception of Ashley's *The Way toward Wisdom* and offers some warrant for the hope MacIntyre expresses at the very end of *God, Philosophy, Universities*. It is to liberal arts institutions shaped by a vision like the one expressed by Dr. Dillon that the modern research university will eventually have to turn in order to find the medicine that will cure it from the ruinous disease that has befallen it.[35] Neither an ivy-covered neo-gothic architecture, nor a top placement in international university rankings, nor the desperate acceleration of research production, nor the foundation of another research institute of bio-engineering will prevent the fatal consequences of the disease unless the medicine be taken from marginal and often belittled and ridiculed Christian, and especially Catholic, liberal arts institutions as Thomas Aquinas College. Considering such medicine to be vital is the first step for resuscitating the heart of the modern university and restoring the pursuit of wisdom.

[34] *Communio* 35 (2008): 672f. In the 2010 edition of the popular college guidebook, the *Princeton Review*: *The Best 371 Colleges* (New York: Random House, 2009), Thomas Aquinas College received a rating of 99 (out of 100) for its academics and is included in the "Top 50" Colleges in the country.

[35] In order to find the proper cure it might often suffice for modern research universities simply to reform themselves along the lines of their founding charters. Here is Duke University's: "The aims of Duke University are to assert a faith in the eternal union of knowledge and religion set forth in the teachings and character of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to advance learning in all lines of truth, to defend scholarship against all false notions and ideals, to develop a Christian love of freedom and truth, to promote a sincere spirit of tolerance, to discourage all partisan and sectarian strife, and to render the largest permanent service to the individual, the state, the nation, and the church. Unto these ends shall the affairs of this university always be administered."

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THE LORD'S PRAYER AND AN ETHICS OF VIRTUE: CONTINUING A HISTORY OF COMMENTARY

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MORAL THEOLOGY HAS SEEN an explosion of interest in virtue over the past several decades. This trend is generally presented as a return to a traditional focus on virtue that has been lost in modernity. The prominence of virtue in classical ethics and patristic and medieval moral theology is obvious. Despite the relatively infrequent appearance of the term "virtue" or lists of virtues in Scripture,[1] one concern among those contributing to the recent resurgence of virtue ethics has been establishing how themes central to an ethics of virtue are indeed at the heart of Scripture.[2] This essay is part of the larger endeavor to demonstrate how the virtues and the concerns prompting the recent turn to an ethics of virtue are indeed prominent in Scripture, and in particular the Sermon on the Mount, which has

[1] There are well-known passages which do indeed use the term, or provide a list of virtues, such as Phil 4:8; 1 Cor 13:13; 1 Thess 5:8; and Wis 8:7.

[2] One theologian who has written on this topic, perhaps more than any other contemporary theologian, is Fr. Servais Pinckaers, O.P. See especially his *Sources of Christian Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), esp. 104-67; "Scripture and the Renewal of Moral Theology," in John Berkman and Craig Steven Titus, eds., *The Pinckaers Reader: Renewing Thomistic Moral Theology* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 46-63; "The Sources of the Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas," pp. 17-29 in Stephen J. Pope, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 17-29, esp. 16-17. Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Veritatis splendor* is a perfect example of approaching moral theology from the starting point of a primary concern of virtue ethics, namely, happiness. See especially the reflection on Mark 10:17-31 in the first part of the encyclical.

been called "the charter of the Christian life" and the written text of the new law in Christ.[3]

Right at the center of the Sermon on the Mount is Jesus' instruction to his disciples on how to pray, the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9-13).[4] This prayer is absolutely foundational in the history of Christian life, in liturgy, commentary, sacramental preparation and catechesis, preaching, etc. Tertullian famously called the prayer a "summary of the whole gospel."[5] Augustine audaciously claimed that "if you go over all the words of holy prayers, you will, I believe, find nothing which cannot be comprised and summed up in the petitions of the Lord's Prayer."[6] Aquinas called it "the most perfect of prayers,"[7] and Bonaventure said that despite its brevity it "contains in itself all prayer and everything to be asked for."[8] The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* calls it the quintessential prayer of the Church, and uses it to structure the fourth pillar on prayer.[9]

Due to its importance, there is an immense tradition of interpretation of the Lord's Prayer. The central claim of this paper is that the Lord's Prayer can be accurately understood as a request

[3] The former description is from Augustine, *De sermone domini in monte* (CCSL 35:1): "*perfectum uitae christianae modum.*" See also the English translation *The Lord's Sermon on the Mount* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1965), 1.1. Augustine's recognition of the importance of the Sermon is evidenced by his being the only one of the Fathers to compose a commentary on it alone (distinct from a commentary on Matthew's Gospel). For the second description see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 108, a. 3; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) 1965-66. See also Servais Pinckaers, O.P., *Sources of Christian Ethics*, 134-35, 142, and 144-45.

[4] For an example from contemporary Biblical scholarship of the centrality of the Lord's Prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, see Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1989), 212.

[5] Tertullian, *De oratione* 1 (*CCSL* 1:258): "in oratione breuiarium totius Euangelii comprehendatur" (translation in Alistair Stewart-Sykes, trans., *Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen on the Lord's Prayer* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladmimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 42.

[6] See Augustine's *Letter 130* (to Proba), 12 (*CSEL* 44:64-66): "et si per omnia precationum sanctarum uerba discurras, quantum existimo, nihil inuenies, quod non ista dominica contineat et concludat oratio."

[7] *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 9. See also CCC 2763.

[8] Bonaventure, *Commentarius in evangelium sancti Lucae* 11.8 (Bonaventure, *Opera omnia.*[Quarrachi: Typographia Collegii Sancti Bonaventurae, 1882-1902], 7:279): "Quamquam sit brevissima, continet in se omnem orationem et omnia postulanda."

[9] CCC 2776.

for the seven foundational virtues of the Christian life, the three theological virtues and the four cardinal virtues.[10] The first half of the paper contextualizes this claim within the Christian tradition by surveying how Christians for millennia have understood the Lord's Prayer, particularly with regard to questions that are central to the constructive contribution of this essay. The first section will make it clear in what ways the findings of the second half are seamless continuations of a long tradition, and in what ways they are more innovative. The second half then offers a constructive interpretation of the Lord's Prayer on the basis of virtue, and more broadly explores how the prayer contributes to certain common questions and concerns of virtue ethics.

Before proceeding one caveat is in order. I am certainly not claiming that one *only* understands the Lord's Prayer truthfully through the lens of virtue employed here. As commentators have consistently stated, the Lord's Prayer invites a plentitude of interpretation. My more modest claim is that given the centrality of the Lord's Prayer (and the Sermon on the Mount) in the Christian life, it is not surprising that there would be important parallels between the prayer and the virtues if it is the case (as virtue ethicists would avow) that virtue offers a lens through which to see and understand the life of Christian discipleship.

I. Four Consistencies (and a Lacuna) in the History of Commentary on the Lord's Prayer

Commentaries on the Lord's Prayer begin less than two centuries after Christ, and now number in hundreds if not thousands.[11] The purpose of this first section of the paper is to

[10] Given the importance of the Sermon in general and the Lord's Prayer in particular, this claim is important for the larger task of demonstrating the scriptural foundations of an ethics of virtue.

[11] Nowhere have I found an attempt to number these commentaries. For evidence of the sheer number of commentaries on the Lord's Prayer, see *Incipits of Latin Works on the Virtues and Vices 1100 A.D. – 1500 A.D.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1979), which lists the opening lines of texts (known in 1979) simply from these four centuries. Though it does include some repetition, it lists over 1200 such incipits. There are well over a hundred works on the Lord's Prayer treated in some level of detail in the research of

identify some important commonalities of these commentaries, which will place the more constructive work of the second section in historical context. Four commonalities will be presented here: a focus on the prayer's petitions, the number of the petitions, the groupings of the petitions, and alignment of the petitions with other groupings relevant to living the Christian life in order to better understand both the prayer and a life of discipleship. I will conclude the section by identifying a surprising omission in the history of interpretation of the Lord's Prayer.

A) Commenting on the Petitions

All commentaries on the Lord's Prayer speak of the different petitions in the prayer. That the prayer is making requests is more evident to English speakers in the later petitions which use the imperative ("Give us . . .," "Forgive us . . ," "Lead us not . . ," and "Deliver us . . ."). But commentators have universally noted that the three clauses dealing with God's name, God's kingdom, and God's will are also petitions, a fact easily missed in English (and in Latin as well as in Romance languages) where the imperative is not used and where the grammatical construction indicating a request is less evident. Nonetheless, the petitionary character of these clauses is evident if one attends carefully to their grammatical construction. The verbal mood of the first three petitions is not indicative, as might be assumed in the absence of the imperative. We are not *stating* that God's name is hallowed, His kingdom comes, and His will is done. We are praying *that* it be the case—hence the use of the subjunctive in languages such as

Kenneth W. Stevenson and Jean Carmignac, both of whose books proved invaluable for this study. See Kenneth W. Stevenson, *The Lord's Prayer: A Text in Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004); and Jean Carmignac, *Recherches sur le «Notre Père»* (Paris: Éditions Letouzey & Ané, 1969). Tertullian's commentary, written approximately 200-206, is widely regarded as the earliest such commentary. See Stevenson, *The Lord's Prayer,* 30. For the Lord's Prayer in North Africa in the early Church, see Michael Joseph Brown's *The Lord's Prayer through North African Eyes* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004).

French, Latin, and even English.[12] All of the verbs in Greek are aorist imperative, revealing that the first three petitions are indeed petitions.[13] The verb forms in the original Aramaic can only be surmised.[14] In sum, the Lord's Prayer consists of petitions, and commentators have universally examined the prayer accordingly.

B) Numbering the Petitions

It is widely recognized that there are seven petitions in the Lord's Prayer. This observation is far from universal.[15] In the earliest Latin commentaries (Tertullian [ca. 200] and Cyprian [ca. 252]),[16] in Greek commentaries in the Eastern traditions (from Origen's commentary [ca. 234][17] onward), and in Protestant discussions of the Lord's Prayer (beginning with John Calvin),[18] the last two petitions are treated together as one, giving a total of

[12] That the English is in the subjunctive is seen in the use of "be" in the first and third petitions. This may be commonly assumed to be an archaic form of the verb form "is," akin to the continued use of "art" and "thou." But it is actually a necessary grammatical formulation, as the subjunctive of the verb "to be." As for Latin, the Vulgate text reads: *Pater noster qui in caelis es sanctificetur nomen tuum veniat regnum tuum fiat voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra panem nostrum supersubstantialem da nobis hodie et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimisimus debitoribus nostris et ne inducas nos in temptationem sed libera nos a malo*. As in English and French, the first three petitions in Latin express the sense of petition through the use of (in this case, jussive) subjunctive, while the last four employ the imperative.

[13] For a helpful treatment of the grammar of the petitions, see Raymond E. Brown, "The Pater Noster as Eschatological Prayer," in Raymond E. Brown, *New Testament Essays* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Bruce Publishing Co., 1965), 217-53.

[14] For an example of such speculation see Ernst Lohmeyer, *The Lord's Prayer* (London: Collins Publishing, 1965), 27-29.

[15] Stevenson's historical overview continually attends to the number of petitions identified by authors of commentaries. See his helpful summary in Stevenson, *The Lord's Prayer,* 222. See also Carmignac, *Recherches sur le «Notre Père»,* 312-19 for a specific discussion of this issue.

[16] For Cyprian's commentary, see *De dominica oratione* (*CCSL* 3A:87-113; translation in Stewart-Sykes, *Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen on the Lord's Prayer,* 65-93). On its dating, see Stevenson, *The Lord's Prayer,* 32.

[17] See Origen, *On Prayer,* in Stewart-Sykes, trans., *Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen on the Lord's Prayer,* 95-214. On the dating see Stevenson, *The Lord's Prayer,* 35.

[18] See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 3.20.35 (*Institutes of the Christian Religion,* trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdman's, 1981], 183-84). Luther maintains there are seven petitions; see Stevenson, *The Lord's Prayer,* 160.

six petitions. But in a long tradition beginning with Augustine, followed by hundreds of medieval commentaries, and continuing today particularly in Catholic circles, seven petitions are recognized in the prayer.[19]

The variance in the number of petitions is more complicated than even this divergence suggests. Authors such as Tertullian and Cyprian saw what are called here the sixth and seventh petitions as distinct, even while treating them as one petition.[20] And Augustine, the apparent origin of the seven-petitions tradition, seems to have equivocated on the number of petitions.[21] Catholics after the Reformation have generally maintained there are seven petitions, though Jean Carmignac claims that more and more twentieth-century Catholics numbered the petitions as six.[22] There is a thorny Greek grammatical question at the root of this variance, concerning the conjunction ἀλλά. Carmignac claims there is little hope of definitive resolution of the number on grammatical grounds. But he reveals his own affirmation of the seven-petition tradition when he claims that given the symbolism of the number seven and how scripturally based the Lord's Prayer is, it would be surprising for the prayer to be divided into only six and not seven petitions.[23] Perhaps this is what led some authors who number six petitions to treat the prayer in seven parts by counting the opening invocation, "Our Father who art in heaven."[24] The point for the purposes of this essay is that there is

[19] For contemporary examples, see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2803-54; Pinckaers, *Sources of Christian Ethics*, 155-58; Servais Pinckaers, O.P., *Au coeur de l'Evangile: Notre Pere* (Saint-Maur: Editions Parole et Silence, 1999), 39-40; Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 128-68.

[20] See Tertullian, *De oratione* 8 (*CCSL* 1:262); Cyprian, *De dominica oratione* 25-27 (*CCSL* 3A:106-7). See Carmignac, *Recherches sur le «Notre Père»*, 312 for how others authors treat the sixth and seventh petitions.

[21] In sermons thought to be written ca. 410-412, Augustine treats the sixth and seventh petitions together. See Augustine, *Sermons* 57.10 (*CCSL* 41Aa:187) and 56.18-19 (*CCSL* 41Aa:170-71), in *Sermons III (51-94)*, trans. Edmund Hill, O.P. (New York: New City Press, 1991), 114 and 105.

[22] Carmignac, *Recherches sur le «Notre Père»*, 314. He also notes one Catholic from 1572, Jansénius, who counts six petitions.

[23] Ibid., 315.

[24] For an example of treating the prayer in seven parts, but with the invocation and seven petitions, see Tertullian *De oratione* 2-8 (*CCSL* 1:258-62).

a long and prominent tradition of numbering seven petitions in the Lord's Prayer. Indeed, the variance over the relationship between the last two petitions may further substantiate the interpretation offered here, for reasons explained below.

C) Grouping the Petitions

Commentators have consistently divided the petitions into subgroups. The oldest and perhaps most common subdivision is found in Tertullian and Augustine, who distinguished the first three petitions from the remaining ones.[25] Both of these Latin Fathers saw the first three petitions as concerning heavenly or eternal things, and the remaining petitions as concerning earthly or temporal things. Both note the division is not hard and fast, as if the two groups had nothing to do with each other. Yet authors such as these, and later ones such as Bonaventure,[26] notice that the first three directly concern God ("Thy name," "Thy kingdom," Thy will"), while the later petitions concern worldly matters (bread, trespasses, temptation, evil).[27] There are other variations on these subgroupings. For instance, Luther understands the first three petitions as spiritual, the fourth as material, and the last three as concerned with deliverance form evil.[28] Interestingly,

[25] See Tertullian, *De oratione* 6 (*CCSL* 1:260-61): "Sed quam eleganter diuina sapientia ordinem orationis instruxit, ut post caelestia, id est post Dei nomen, Dei uoluntatem et Dei regnum, terrenis quoque necessitatibus petitioni locum faceret!" ("But how gracefully did divine wisdom draw up the order of the prayer that, after heavenly petitions on the name of God, the will of God, and the Kingdom of God, it should also provide a place for earthly needs"; Stewart-Sykes, trans., 46 [modified]). Augustine, *Enchiridion* 115 (*CCSL* 46:110): "Proinde apud euangelistam Matthaeum septem petitiones continere dominica videtur oratio, quarum in tribus aeterna poscuntur, in reliquis quattuor temporalia" ("in the evangelist Matthew the Lord's Prayer seems to embrace seven petitions, three of which ask for eternal blessings and the four remaining for temporal").

[26] See Bonaventure, *Expositio super regulam fratrum minorum* 3.3 (Quarrachi ed., 8:407).

[27] This division is also evident in those contemporary commentators who distinguish (in both Matthew's and Luke petitions) between the "you" or "thou" petitions on the one hand, and the "we" petitions on the other. See Brown, "The Pater Noster as Eschatological Prayer," 238. See also Joachim Jeremais, *The Prayers of Jesus* (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, Inc.: 1967), 98-104.

[28] There is precedent for this claim in Anselm of Laon; see Stevenson, *The Lord's Prayer,* 124

although Aquinas consistently affirms Augustine's three-eternal / four-temporal grouping, he never uses it as his own primary principle of grouping the petitions in the various groupings he employs throughout his works. Nonetheless, the point stands that subgroupings are common and a division between the first three and the remaining petitions has extensive historical precedence.[29]

D) Aligning the Petitions with Other Groupings

Following in a tradition inaugurated by Augustine, many commentators on the Lord's Prayer have aligned the different petitions with some other organizing structure. The most famous example is Augustine's alignment of the petitions with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit as well as the beatitudes. Carmignac[30] and Kenneth Stevenson offer examples of commentators who have aligned the petitions with one or even more of the following: the gifts of the Spirit, the beatitudes, the seven deadly sins (to which the petitions would be antidotes), orders of Church ministry, Jesus' seven last words from the cross, stages in spiritual growth, and even the seven days of the week.[31] There are often changes in the orderings of groupings, as when Amalar of Metz in the early ninth century initiates a tradition of inverting Augustine's alignment of petitions and gifts of the Holy Spirit, an ordering continued with authors such as Anselm of Laon and Hugh of Amiens.[32] In sum, there is ample precedent in the tradition for aligning the petitions with other groupings important to life in the Spirit.

[29] For a contemporary example of this, see Leonardo Boff, *The Lord's Prayer: Prayer of Integral Liberation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1983)

[30] See Carmignac, *Recherches sur le «Notre Père»*, 387

[31] For an example of several of these at once, consider not only Augustine on gifts and beatitudes but Hugh of Amiens on gifts, beatitudes, and orders of Church ministry. See Stevenson, *The Lord's Prayer*, 126.

[32] See ibid.,124-36. This inversion (or, more accurately, this undoing of Augustine's inversion of the order of gifts in Isaiah 11) is not adopted by all after Amalar, as seen in the case of Thomas Aquinas who follows Augustine's ordering.

E) A Lacuna: Aligning the Petitions with Virtues

Of particular interest to this study are alignments of the petitions with the seven virtues of the Christian life. In his list of different groupings historically aligned with the petitions, Carmignac mentions virtues, but (unlike in the case of each of the other alignments) offers no substantiating footnote.[33] Stevenson mentions five commentators from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries who draw parallels between the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer and the virtues. The *Allegories on the New Testament* attributed to Hugh of St. Victor (likely composed by his colleague Richard of St. Victor) treats several different virtues in its discussion of the petitions, but offers no specific alignment.[34] The remaining four Scholastics do indeed align the seven petitions with seven virtues. But in each case, the virtues are actually the beatitudes, or rather, the qualities of people described in the first half of each beatitude: poverty of spirit (i.e., humility), meekness, mourning, thirst for justice, mercy, cleanness of heart, and peacefulness. In none of these cases where an author intends to align the seven petitions with the seven virtues are the virtues the three theological and four cardinal virtues.[35]

One text that comes close to aligning the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer with the theological and cardinal virtues is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* which simply mentions faith, hope, and love with regard to the first three petitions but never

[33] Carmignac, *Recherches sur le «Notre Père»,* 387. When he mentions seven virtues he even specifies "the theological and cardinal virtues," which mirrors the interpretation offered in the second section here. But again, he cites no historical example of this.

[34] Stevenson mentions this text (Stevenson, *The Lord's Prayer,* 123). The text, *Allegoriae Novum Testamentum – Liber Secundus,* is found at *PL* 175:763-89. For an example of the more fluid associations of virtues and petitions, see how the opening invocation "Our Father" is aligned with benevolence and reverence (*PL* 175:768).

[35] See Bonaventure, *Expositio orationis dominicae* 5 (Quaracchi ed., 7:653). See William Durandus, *Rationale divinorum officiorum* 4.47.10 (*Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaeualis* 140:504-79, at 508). For dating see Stevenson, *The Lord's Prayer,* 123-38. See Gunther the Cistercian, *De oratione, jejunio, et eleemosyna* (*PL* 212:171-205 at 172), where he does not list the seven all together but notes their connection to the beatitudes. (References to each of the seven are given during successive treatments of each petition.) See Stephen of Auten, *Tractatus de sacramento altaris* (*PL* 172:1303-8, at 1304).

explicitly aligns them with particular petitions or mentions the cardinal virtues.[36] J.-F. Bonnefoy, in *Le saint-esprit et ses dons selon saint Bonaventure*, explicitly aligns the seven petitions with the three theological and four cardinal virtues (along with gifts and capital sins, among others) in a manner reflective of St. Bonaventure's thought.[37] However, as is clear from Bonnefoy's chart, Bonaventure never offers this alignment himself; Bonnefoy presents his own constructive alignment as compatible with Bonaventure's thought.[38] Furthermore, the alignment between petitions and virtues offered by Bonnefoy is different from that offered here.[39]

In conclusion, the number of occasions in the commentary tradition where specific virtues are mentioned in the context of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer is miniscule, especially considering the breadth of that tradition of commentary. On the basis of this research I cautiously conclude that that there is no prominent example in the tradition of aligning the seven petitions with seven virtues in the manner outlined here.

This is rather surprising. It is not only surprising due to the massive amount of commentary on the Lord's Prayer and various ways authors have aligned the petitions with other groupings. It is also particularly surprising that Thomas Aquinas does not adopt such an alignment, given that Thomas organizes his entire treatise on specific moral theology according to the seven virtues. Indeed, within that work Thomas consistently aligns virtues with the gifts

[36] See *CCC* 2806. In fact, in *CCC* 2803 and 2805 different bases of alignment are suggested.

[37] I am grateful to Gregory LaNave for pointing this text out to me. Bonnefoy refers to two more texts, which seem by their titles to do something of the sort that Bonnefoy does: Le P. Louis-Th., *Les opérations du Saint-Esprit dans les âmes* (1896), and Mgr. Amédée Cure, *L'oraison dominicale: Ses rapports avec les sept dons du Saint-Esprit, les sept pêchés capitaux, les vertus théologales et cardinales et les béatitudes*, 4 vols. (1895-1906). I have been unable to obtain either text.

[38] In fact, Bonnefoy seems to do with Bonaventure something of the sort that has been attempted with Aquinas (see below). Namely, Bonnefoy seems to constructively suggest a Bonaventurian alignment of petitions and virtues based on texts where Bonaventure aligns each grouping with a third group.

[39] Bonnefoy's alignment of the virtues and petitions, in order of the petitions, is: temperance, justice, prudence, fortitude, hope, faith, and charity. As will be seen below, this is different from the alignment offered here.

of the Holy Spirit, and with the beatitudes. In that same work he acknowledges and affirms Augustine's alignment of the petitions on the one hand, and the gifts and beatitudes on the other.[40] The transitive property would seem to dictate that Thomas would make the connection between the seven virtues and the petitions. But nowhere in his work does he do this.[41] The same may be said of contemporary Thomists, including Servais Pinckaers, O.P., who wrote extensively on Thomas' alignments and who even wrote a book on the Lord's Prayer.[42]

There is no obvious explanation for why Thomas, and his contemporary disciples such as Fr. Pinckaers, have not aligned the petitions with the virtues. One possibility is that the use of the transitive property to align the virtues and the petitions on the basis of how Thomas himself aligned the gifts with each of these groups simply does not work, for two reasons. First, Thomas assigns two gifts to the virtue of faith, and none to the virtue of temperance, thus preventing a neat alignment. Second, while both of his alignments, between the petitions and gifts/beatitudes on the one hand[43] and between the virtues and gifts/beatitudes on the other, seem to "work" in terms of the content of each of the groups aligned, connecting the petitions and virtues using the

[40] See *STh* I-II, q. 83, a. 9.

[41] The closest he comes to aligning the virtues with the petitions is in his commentary on Matthew, where he mentions the three theological virtues, but all in conjunction with the salutary "Our Father in heaven" rather than with any particular petitions. See *Super Evangelium S. Matthaei lectura* (Turin: Marietti, 1951) (584). Parenthetical numbers in references to this text refer to paragraph numbers in the Marietti edition.

[42] Pinckaers writes extensively on the virtues, gifts, beatitudes, and petitions. But like the Angelic Doctor, he connects the petitions with the gifts and beatitudes, and virtues with the gifts and beatitudes, but never the virtues with the petitions. See *Sources of Christian Ethics*, 155-58. Pinckaers claims that "The order of the petitions follows the structure of the *prima secundae:* the relation between God's ultimate end and all that is ordered thereto. . . . The Lord's Prayer expresses the desire that impels us toward the divine beatitude as our ultimate end. It dominates our entire moral life" (ibid., 158). Here Pinckaers affirms that the Lord's Prayer "dominates our entire moral life" and is thus unsurprisingly reflected in the structure of the *Prima Secundae*. Yet he never aligns sections of the latter with petitions of the former. Furthermore, Pinckaers does not mention the parallel of the seven petitions with the seven virtues used to structure the *Secunda Secundae,* even in his *Au coeur de l'evangile: Notre Père,* cited above.

[43] Here Thomas follows Augustine directly, without the inversion of order that had become common in the twelfth century. See *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 9, ad 3.

transitive property results in an alignment in which the meaning of the virtue aligned with each petition does not appear reflective of the content of that petition.[44] Since presumably Thomas would respect the order of the petitions as given in the Lord's Prayer given their source, an alignment of the petitions to the virtues "though" the gifts, ordered by the petitions, would look like this:

Hallowed be thy name	Fear of the Lord	Hope
Thy Kingdom come	Piety	Justice
Thy will be done	Knowledge	Faith
Give us this day . . .	Fortitude	Fortitude
Forgive us our trespasses . . .	Counsel	Prudence
Lead us not into temptation	Understanding	Faith
Deliver us from evil	Wisdom	Charity[45]

In this schema, the meaning of each virtue is not at all obviously reflective of the meaning of the petition to which it supposedly corresponds. Furthermore, Thomas at times indicates the importance of the order of theological and cardinal virtues, an ordering that is wrecked in the above alignment.[46] Therefore, the above alignment is *not* the alignment I endorse here.

To sum up: There is an extensive history of commentary on the Lord's Prayer. In this tradition the prayer is always regarded according to its petitions, which commonly (though not universally) number seven. The petitions are also commonly subdivided, and there is strong precedent for grouping them into the first three and latter four. Furthermore, alignment of seven petitions with another group of seven is also common, though it

[44] The transitive property states that "if A = B and B = C then A = C." One reason using this property on the petitions, gifts, and virtue may not "work" is that the relationships between each pair are not relationships of equality, but rather ones of correspondence in some ways. So it is quite possible that the ways different pairs correspond will not be reflected in new pairings set up by the transitive property.

[45] It is just such an alignment of two groupings "through" another that Bonnefoy may be doing with Bonaventure's work. He arrives at a different alignment, with the petitions corresponding to temperance, justice, prudence, fortitude, hope, faith, and charity, respectively (220-221).

[46] For the significance of the order of the theological virtues, see *STh* I-II, q. 62,a. 4. For the cardinal virtues, see *STh* I-II, q. 61, aa. 2-4. Discrepancies in Thomas's work as to the order of the cardinal virtues are treated below.

has been done in many different ways. Finally, despite the commonalities in the tradition noted here, there is a surprising lacuna regarding a possible alignment of the seven petitions to the three theological and four cardinal virtues, an omission that is particularly surprising in the Thomistic tradition. These conclusions serve to contextualize the second section, and more constructive contribution, of the essay. With these conclusions in mind it should be clear in what ways the claims below are a natural continuation of a long tradition, and in what ways they are without precedent.

II. Interpreting the Lord's Prayer through the Lens of Virtue

The thesis of this essay is that the Lord's Prayer is fruitfully interpreted by aligning its seven petitions with the seven foundational virtues of the Christian life, namely, the three theological and the four cardinal virtues. This second section proceeds in two parts. First, how can the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer be aligned with these seven virtues in such a way that the alignment helps further illuminate both the virtues and petitions? Second, how does this alignment reveal that the Lord's Prayer both addresses and helps to answer questions about the moral life from the perspective of virtue ethics?

A) The Seven Petitions of the Lord's Prayer

The goal of this section to examine each of the petitions individually, and explore how the particular petition reflects and further illuminates one of the seven main virtues of the Christian tradition. Again, the claim here is neither that each petition offers an exhaustive understanding of one of the virtues, nor that each petition only makes sense in reference to its corresponding virtue. The more modest claim here is that in most cases there is a strikingly clear correspondence between each petition and a virtue, and that we can better understand both the prayer and the

virtues by looking at them in relation to each other.[47] Given the genre of this essay, the task here is briefly to state why each petition is aligned with a specific virtue, and then to offer a couple of examples of how that interpretation reflects claims made by commentators in the tradition (even if these latter do not explicitly align the petitions with virtues). In order to provide some practical limitation on the vast amount of material available in commentaries on the Lord's Prayer, and to reflect the Thomistic approach to the virtues presented here, the commentaries referenced here are limited to those written by Thomas, or those coming from patristic sources to which Thomas explicitly refers in his work.[48] Many other commentaries could be gleaned here, and it is hoped they will be by others.[49]

[47] Thomas himself offers some reflection of how aligning two groups can illuminate them, but should not be taken as a reduction of one to the other, or as a claim that a member of one group is related only to a single member of the group with which it is aligned. See III *Sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 6 (*Scriptum super Sententiis Magistri Petri Lombardi,* vol. 3, ed. Maria Fabianus Moos [Paris: Lethielleux, 1929-47]).

[48] Thomas examines the Lord's Prayer extensively in five texts in his *corpus*. They are given here in chronological order, according to Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas,* vol 1: *The Person and His Work* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 332-58 (there will be closer attention to dating, with years provided, below): III *Sent.,* d. 34, q. 1, a. 6; *Super Matt.,* lect. 18 (583-602); *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 9;*In orationem dominicam videlicet "Pater noster" expositio,* (in *Opuscula Theologica,* vol. 2 [Turin: Marietti, 1954]); *Comp. Theol.* II (*Opera Omnia,* vol. 42). The question of the authenticity of Thomas's commentary on Matthew is treated below. Note that the *Compendium Theologiae* remains unfinished, as Thomas died before completing it. It is structured in three sections, each corresponding to a theological virtue, akin to Augustine's *Enchiridion.* Reminiscent of the latter, Thomas's book 2, on hope, treats that theological virtue through an examination of the Lord's Prayer. Thomas died after finishing only his discussions of the first two petitions. There is no mention in this text of any alignment of the seven petitions with the seven virtues, even though what we have of his commentary seems to warrant such alignment (see below). As for Thomas's patristic sources on the Lord's Prayer, the works explicitly mentioned in the above Thomistic texts and referenced here are: Augustine, *On the Sermon on the Mount;* Augustine, *Enchiridion;* Augustine *Letter 130* (to Proba); Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Lord's Prayer;* Cyprian, *On the Lord' Prayer;* John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew;* Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew.* In his *Catena Aurea* on Matt 6:9-13, the sources Thomas cites that are used here (and not already listed) are: Augustine's *On the Gift of Perseverance;* and Cassian's *Collections.* (Citations to critical editions of Thomas's source texts are given as they are referenced.)

[49] I have found particularly helpful the patristic commentaries of Origen and Tertullian available in English in the Stewart-Sykes translation cited above, as well as contemporary commentaries such as those of Fr. Pinckaers and Pope Benedict XVI (cited above).

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.	Faith
Thy Kingdom come,	Hope
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.	Love
Give us this day our daily bread,	Prudence
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.	Justice
Lead us not into temptation,	Temperance
But deliver us from evil.	Fortitude

1. Faith

After the opening invocation "Our Father who art in heaven," the first petition reads "hallowed by thy name." God's name reveals who God is,[50] or as Thomas says, a reference to "God in Himself."[51] What is being asked for here? Commentators consistently claim it is not *that* God's name be holy, since this is clearly already the case. It is that what is holy in itself be recognized as such *by us*.[52] This first petition is asking that who

[50] The fact that God's name is a representation of who God is is a point not emphasized by Thomas (with the exception of his words in the following note), nor by his sources which are used here. But it is a point made consistently in the tradition of commentary. For an extensive treatment of this point, see Origen *On Prayer,* 24. He offers several Old Testament examples of where God's "name" stands for the reality of who God is. Tertullian offers several Johannine examples of this point in *On Prayer* 3, to which could be added the end of Paul's Christological hymn at Phil 2:10. For a contemporary example of this point see Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth,* 142-44.

[51] See *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 9: "Deum in seipso." The next word in this passage is *diligimus*. Thomas treats this petition as an example of *loving* God in Himself, which is different from the point made here about the priority of faith. Yet Thomas is well aware of the ways faith is a prerequisite of love. See *STh* I-II, q. 62, a. 4; also Michael Sherwin, O.P., *By Knowledge and by Love* (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), esp. 152-63. Thomas also insists that one's final end is best possessed primarily through an act of the speculative intellect, which faith is in its essence (*STh* I-II, q. 3, a. 5; *STh* II-II, q. 4, a. 2, ad 3). Indeed, in his *In orationem dominicam expositio* he mentions the virtue of faith in his treatment of the invocation "God dwells in the saints by faith."

[52] *Super Matth.* 587: "Sanctificetur, idest quod in se sanctum est manifestetur in nobis" ("Let [your name] be hallowed, that is, let what is holy in itself be known to be holy by us"). See also *In orationem dominicam expositio,* a. 1 where the claim is made twice. This point is

God is, as represented by God's name, be "hallowed," or reverenced by us. This is exactly what the virtue of faith enables us to do: to know who God is in a manner inaccessible without God's gift of grace.[53] Far from being simple knowledge of who God is, the virtue of faith is a reverential knowledge, involving not only an intellectual grasp of what is true about God (though it is primarily this) but also a loving desire of that "object" as good.[54] The knowledge of the virtue faith is thus a "hallowing," as opposed to the knowledge of the demons who "believe and yet shudder" (James 2:19).[55] Furthermore, as the first word of the Lord's Prayer reminds us, the virtue of faith is not simply an individual endeavor but is rather a communal, an ecclesial, endeavor.[56] The first petition is thus aptly understood as a prayer for the virtue of faith, or an increase in faith, in us.

ubiquitous in the history of commentary, and recognized by Thomas as such. In his *Commentary on Matthew* he attributes it to both Cyprian and John Chrysostom. See John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew* 19.7 (translation in Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Preaching of Chrysostom* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967], 139-40); Cyprian, *On the Lord's Prayer* 12 (*CCSL* 3A:96-97). Augustine, in *De dono perseverentiae* 4 (*PL* 45:996-97; cited in Aquinas, *Catena aurea*) makes the same claim. See also two works referenced by Thomas concerning the Lord's Prayer, though not on this particular point: Augustine, *De sermone in monte* 2.5.19 (*CCSL* 35:109): "This [first petition] is not asked as if the name of God is not holy, but so that it may be held as holy by men."); and Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Lord's Prayer* 2 (Hilda Graef, trans., *St. Gregory of Nyssa: "The Lord's Prayer" and "The Beatitudes,"* Ancient Christian Writers 18 (Westminister, Md.: The Newman Press, 1954), 49.

[53] In the unfinished *Compendium Theologiae,* the entire treatment of the first petition concerns knowledge of God, which is very imperfectly attained through reason and which God has revealed through salvation history, most perfectly through Christ. Yet the word "faith" never appears in the chapter (8) on the first petition, even though it seems most relevant to Thomas's point. This is perhaps due to the overall structure of the work, since the treatment of the Lord's Prayer falls within the second section, which is on hope, rather than the first section, which is on faith.

[54] See *STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 1; II-II, q. 4, aa. 1-4. For God as the "object" of the theological virtues, including faith, see *STh* I-II, q. 62,aa. 1 and 2.

[55] See *STh* II-II, q. 5, a. 2 for Thomas's treatment of this passage in the context of the theological virtue of faith.

[56] Thomas makes this point in *Comp. Theol.* 2.5. There he cites Cyprian, *On the Lord's Prayer* 8 (*CCSL* 3A:93-94), and John Chrysostom as making the same point. His citation of Chrysostom is actually to the *Opus Imperfectum* (14) of Pseudo-Chrysostom, though the same point is made in John Chrysostom's *Homilies on Matthew* 19.6.

2. Hope

The second petition reads, "thy kingdom come." The kingdom of heaven, according to Thomas, describes that state of affairs where all happens according to God's will.[57] It is a state of perfect justice,[58] or as Chrysostom notes, the redemption for which all creation groans (Rom 8:22-23).[59] In the second petition one prays that this come to pass.

What does this have to do with hope? As with the previous petition, commentators consistently observe that the petitioner is not simply praying *that* God reign (since this is clearly already the case), or even that the fullness of God's reign arrive. This reign is not simply a state of affairs in which people ("hopefully") one day find themselves. It is a state of affairs in which people participate.[60] Thomas calls the kingdom of heaven "the happiness of the saints."[61] Thus the prayer is that God's kingdom come *in us*.[62] The person with the virtue of hope, equipped with the knowledge of faith, longs to possess that ultimate happiness that is God's kingdom. This person yearns to participate in the kingdom primarily by one day entering into it, but also by longing

[57] See *In orationem dominicam expositio*, petitio 2: "The best rule is where nothing occurs against the will of the ruler."

[58] Ibid.: "indeed that reign is greatly desired for three reasons, and first according to the complete justice that is found in it."

[59] See John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew* 19.7.

[60] See *In orationem dominicam expositio*, p. 2: "When therefore we pray 'Thy kingdom come," we pray that we may participate in the Kingdom of Heaven and glory of Paradise." See also *Super Matt.*, lect. 18, where, in the transition from the second to third petition, Thomas claims "'Thy kingdom come,' that is, let it reign in us .... But one is not able to come into the Kingdom of heaven unless he be made heavenly."

[61] See *Comp. Theol.* 2.9: "Sic igitur et beatitudo sanctorum regnum caelorum dicitur." This chapter of Thomas's *Compendium* is an oft-overlooked jewel on ultimate happiness, and a perfect companion to *STh* I-II, qq. 1-5. See also Augustine, *De sermone in monte* 2.6.20 (*CCSL* 35:110): "Then the happy life will be wholly complete in the saints in eternity."

[62] See Cyprian, *On the Lord's Prayer* 13 (*CCSL* 3A:97): "Just as we desire that his name be hallowed among us, we ask that the Kingdom of God be made known to us." See also Augustine, *De sermone in monte* 2.6.20, where he claims that "come" must refer to the kingdom being "recognized by men" (*CCSL* 35:110).

for it virtuously in this life, before it is fully possessed.[63] That virtuous longing for God as one's ultimate happiness—and the only possible way we achieve that happiness—is hope.[64] Thomas comes closest to naming it as hope when he claims that the second petition is a willing to enjoy God's glory.[65]

3. Love

The final petition of the group of three that represents the theological virtues is "thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." What is God's will? Commentators consistently claim that the petition is referring to God's will that all are saved, often citing 1 Timothy 2:4.[66] Once again, this is not something that simply happens to us, but something in which we participate. As Cyprian says quite clearly, "'Let your will be done in heaven and on earth.'" We say this not so that God might do what he wishes, but that we should be able to do what God wishes. For who stands in the way of God to prevent him from performing his will?" Therefore the real question is, How is God's will fulfilled in us? Here Augustine is very clear. "Thus 'they will be done' is rightly understood as 'let obedience be given to your precepts. . . .' For

[63] Thomas claims that the final good of ultimate happiness can be possessed, albeit imperfectly, even in this life through hope. See *STh* I-II, q. 5, a. 3, ad 1 (where he cites Rom 8:24, "by hope we are saved"); and I-II, q. 11, a. 4, ad 1 and 2.

[64] For more from Thomas on hope, and in particular its twofold object, see *STh* II-II, q. 17 (esp. a. 4). See also *STh* II-II, q. 19, a. 1; and Thomas's *Quaestio Disputata De Spe* 1.

[65] See *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 9. Thomas's language here strongly evokes his thought on hope. Reminiscent of his distinction between charity and hope (*STh* I-II, q. 62, a. 4; II-II, q. 17, a. 6), he claims in *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 9 that the second petition pertains not to love of God simply, but to the love by which we love ourselves in God ("secundum vero pertinet ad dilectionem qua diligimus nos in Deo").

The treatment of the second petition in the *Compendium Theologiae,* which is precisely where Thomas's death ended his work on the treatise, is particularly apt for a discussion of hope as it is a depiction of the ultimate happiness for which people long. However, Thomas never calls attention to a special affinity between the second petition and the virtue of hope in either the *Summa Theologiae* or the *Compendium Theologiae.*

[66] See *In orationem dominicam expositio,* p. 3: "the Lord wills that man has eternal life." Thomas cites John 6:10 rather than 1 Tim 2:4. Cassian, whose work on the Lord's Prayer Thomas cites in his *Catena aurea*, cites 1 Tim 2:4 in the context of the third petition and claims that God wills that all are saved. See Cassian, *Collationes* 9.20 (*CSEL* 13:268-269). See also Gregory of Nyssa, *The Lord's Prayer,* 59.

the will of God is being done when His precepts are being obeyed."[67] From here it is but a small step to see how the third petition represents the virtue of charity. Particularly in the Johannine tradition, charity is identified with keeping God's commandments.

> Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. (John 14:21)

> If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love. (John 15:10; cf. 1 John 3:24)

> In this way we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:2-3)

In this petition we are asking God to infuse us with charity so that we may live the commandments, which Christ himself repeatedly summarizes as *agape* or *caritas* (Matt 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28). Loving God and our neighbor in God is precisely what the infused theological virtue of charity enables us to do.[68]

It is most fitting that this is the final petition of those representing the theological virtues. It accords with Thomas's general understanding of the order of those virtues. But more germane to charity is the phrase "on earth as it is in heaven." This phrase may seem to be simply a climactic conclusion to the previous lines, but it is actually most properly a reference to love, and therefore appropriately placed in the third petition.[69] As important as faith and hope are in this life, they "pass away" in

[67] Augustine, *De sermone in monte* 2.6.21 (*CCSL* 35:111). See also *In orationem dominicam expositio,* p. 3: "The will of God for us is that we observe his commands" and "Thus when we say 'Thy will be done,' we pray that God's commandments be fulfilled."

[68] Gregory of Nyssa actually mentions charity in conjunction with this petition. In discussing how the will of God dispels all in man that is contrary to that will, he claims "the supreme good of charity will expel a whole catalogue of opposing evils from the soul" and "the whole host of such evils is wiped out by a charitable disposition" (Gregory of Nyssa, *The Lord's Prayer,* 59).

[69] See Stevenson, *The Lord's Prayer,* 223 where he claims that despite noteworthy exceptions (such as Origen, Meister Eckhart, and the *Catechism* of the Council of Trent) the "overwhelming" consensus in the commentary tradition is that this phrase refers solely to the third petition.

the next life as we see God "face to face" and experience full union with him. Then there is no need for faith or hope; but love remains.[70] Love is the very meaning of existence "on earth as it is in heaven." Hence despite the enormous importance of all three theological virtues, "the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor 13:13).

4. Prudence

One of the dangers of aligning two groups together and grafting them on to each other as related and mutually illuminating is that the effort is always in danger of being "forced," driven more by the desire to align two groups (in this case of seven) neatly than by the actual relation of their content. Thus far, the alignment I have presented here is not forced. Connecting the fourth petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," with prudence presents a greater challenge. Yet a look at the tradition of interpretation of this verse reveals that seeing a connection with prudence is not so foreign an imposition after all.

First we must ask what is meant by bread, a prominent issue in the commentary tradition.[71] Does "bread" refer to literal, material bread, or does it have a spiritual meaning?[72] Thomas is representative of the broad current of the tradition in affirming both meanings.[73] Citing Augustine's *Letter 130* (to Proba), he claims that in a material sense "bread" refers not only to actual bread but also to all necessary sustenance for bodily life.[74] The most obvious spiritual meaning is a reference to the Eucharist, an interpretation Thomas recognizes and even holds as paradigmatic

[70] See *STh* I-II, q. 67, aa. 3-4 and 6.

[71] There are of course others, most notably the meaning of what St. Jerome translated in the Vulgate as *supersubstantialem*. That question is not addressed here. For a helpful overview, see Carmignac, *Recherches sur le «Notre Père»*, 121-43 for an (inconclusive) survey of the tradition as to the meaning of the Greek word *epiousios*.

[72] See Carmignac, *Recherches sur le «Notre Père»*, 143-91 for an historical overview of this question.

[73] See *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 9: For another example of this claim in the tradition, see Cyprian, *On the Lord's Prayer* 18 (*CCSL* 3A:101), where he claims, "'Give us this day our daily bread.' This may be understood both spiritually and literally." See also Augustine, *De sermone in monte* 2.7.25-27.

[74] *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 9. See also Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Lord's Prayer*, 70

for all spiritual interpretations of "bread."[75] Yet it also has other spiritual meanings. In his *Homilies on the Lord's Prayer,* Thomas claims that bread also refers to the Word of God, citing Matthew 4:4, "man does not live by bread alone, but by the Word of God." In his *Commentary on Matthew,* Thomas claims that the word can be taken to mean "the bread of wisdom."[76] Is it unreasonable to understand this as *practical* wisdom, or prudence? Not at all, according to Thomas and Augustine, for two reasons. First, both saints affirm that bread in this sense refers to observing God's commandments, or precepts. Thomas claims that "the one who eats the bread of wisdom is the one who seeks guidance toward salvation, who observes the divine precepts."[77] Augustine, after acknowledging that bread can mean material bread or the Eucharist, reveals his preference for interpreting bread in this third sense, as "meditating on and living the divine precepts."[78] Second, both affirm that "this day" (*hodie*) is a reference to this life.[79] Thomas repeatedly uses the phrase "in this life" in this section of his *Commentary on Matthew,*[80] and Augustine does the same, even starkly claiming that "this food is now called daily since it is finished during this temporal life, during its passing, waning days."[81]

[75] See *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 9; *In orationem dominicam expositio,* p. 4. Thomas is far from alone in understanding "bread" as the Eucharist. For instance, see also Cyprian, *On the Lord's Prayer* 18 (*CCSL* 3A:101-2); Augustine, *De sermone in monte* 2.7.25-27 (*CCSL* 35:113-16). John 6 is consistently cited in these passages.

[76] *Super Matt.,* lect. 18 (594): "Item aliter potest exponi de pane sapientiae."

[77] Ibid.: "Ille enim comedit panem sapientiae, qui inquirit documenta salutis, qui facit divina praecepta."

[78] Augustine, *De sermone in monte* 2.7.27 (*CCSL* 35:115): "Restat igitur ut cotidianum panem accipiamus spiritalem, praecepta scilicet diuina, quae cotidie oportet meditari et operari. Nam de ipsis dominus dicit: Operamini escam quae non corrumpitur." The reference to both meditating and observing is evocative of prudence, which is not simply a knowledge of how to act well but rather a putting of such knowledge into action. For helpful overviews of prudence see Josef Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966); Daniel Westberg, *Right Practical Reason* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

[79] I am grateful to Daniel Westberg for helping me to see this point more clearly.

[80] *Super Matt.,* lect. 18 (592) for repeated phrase "in hac vita."

[81] See Augustine, *De sermone in monte* 2.7.27 (*CCSL* 35:115-16): "Cotidianus autem iste cibus nunc dicitur, quam diu ista uita temporalis per dies decedentes succedentesque peragitur." Augustine also uses the phrase "in hac temporali uita" in this section.

It is now clearer how this fourth petition can be understand as a prayer for prudence. Prudence is the virtue that enables one to see things truly so as to act well in worldly matters. Commentators like Augustine and Aquinas have understood "bread" to refer to the wisdom needed to act well in daily life.[82] In this petition one thus asks for that quality, or virtue, by which one possesses precisely such practical wisdom. Finally, the prevalence of references to John 6 in these commentaries reminds us that this practical wisdom is found most perfectly through Christ, the Word made flesh and Bread of Life, who identifies himself as the way, the truth, and the life.

5. Justice

"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us" is simultaneously an enormously important, and yet perhaps the least commented upon, petition in the Lord's Prayer. As evidence of the latter, it is covered in thirteen pages in Carmignac's magisterial survey of writing on the Lord's Prayer, less than any other petition.[83] As evidence of the former, it is the only petition that Christ in effect "repeats" at the conclusion of the prayer (Matt 6:14-15). Here is a perfect example of how the quantity of discussion of a matter need not reflect its importance. The more fitting explanation for the briefer treatments in the tradition is that the meaning of the petition is straightforward. It is also quite obviously about justice.

Justice is the virtue that inclines one to right relations with others, to give others their due.[84] The forgiveness sought in the fifth petition is the re-establishment of right relations after some disruption. Therefore, in this petition we are praying that the order of justice (*ius*) be restored, that right relationship be re-established between us and God, and between us and other

[82] Indeed, even when Thomas is examining "bread" in a material sense, he refers to it as aiding a person to act well and as instrumental in service to virtue. See III *Sent.*, d. 34, q. 1, a. 6.

[83] See Carmignac, *Recherches sur le «Notre Père»*, 222-35.

[84] For more on the nature of justice for Thomas see *STh* II-II, q. 58.

people.[85] Thomas discusses the petition in the context of remission of sin, certainly a matter of justice.[86] Augustine makes the connection to justice even clearer when, in his commentary on this petition, he points his reader back to his examination of the nature of punishment in the context of the fifth antithesis (Matt 5:38-42).[87] Of course, as in the case of the theological virtues above, we are not simply praying that something happen *to us,* but also that we participate in that re-establishing of right relations. It is the possession of the virtue of justice that enables exactly that.

6. Temperance

The last two petitions are treated similarly in the tradition of commentary, whether the commentator sees them as one (two-part) petition or as two distinct petitions. When examining the sixth petition, "Lead us not into temptation," Thomas and those whose work he draws upon are concerned primarily with one point. They emphasize that the petition cannot be taken to mean that we never be tempted—not primarily because this would be unrealistic, but mainly because it is clear from the Scriptures that God allows us to be tempted.[88] As Thomas says, "To be tempted is human, but to consent to it is diabolical."[89] The strategy

[85] There is a consistent question in the tradition as to the strength of the conjunction "as." Stevenson (*The Lord's Prayer,* 15) notes the different approaches to this question among Gregory of Nyssa, Thomas Aquinas, and John Calvin. Related to this is the common appeal by commentators to the story of the "unforgiving servant" from Matt 18:21-35. For examples of this see Cyprian, *On the Lord's Prayer* 23 (*CCSL* 3A:104-5) and John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew* 19.9.

[86] See *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 9; and *Super Matt.,* lect. 18 (596).

[87] See Augustine, *De sermone in monte* 2.8.29 (*CCSL* 35:118-19), where he refers the reader back to 1.19.56-1.20.68.

[88] See *In orationem dominicam expositio,* p. 6 for Thomas's treatment of the ways God does try us (in accordance with Deut 13:3), and yet does not tempt us (in accordance with Jas 1:13). Though he does use the term "prove" or "try" (*probat*) for the former, he also uses "tempt" ("Sic tentavit Deus Abraham"), and so the question is not resolved simply by appeal to the use of different terminology.

[89] See *In orationem dominicam expositio,* p. 6: "Nam tentari humanum est, sed consentire diabolicum est."

generally employed to make this point is to note that the prayer says "lead us not into temptation," rather than "let us not be tempted." Thomas claims, "we do not ask not to be tempted, but not to be conquered by temptation, which is to be led into temptation."[90] He does not use the language of "consent to temptation" here as he does in his work on the Lord's Prayer, but the basic sense is the same. Thomas cites Augustine to specify more precisely the different ways we may be "led into" temptation (rather than simply tempted) when he says that we pray here for three things: not to be without divine help in resisting temptation, not to consent to its deception, and not to give in to its affliction.[91]

What has any of this to do with temperance? Temperance for Thomas is the cardinal virtue whereby our desires are moderated reasonably, specifically with regard to sensual pleasures (of touch), but more generally including all desires.[92] Though the petition refers to all "temptations," the sensual temptations which are proper to temperance particularly come to mind. This connection to sensual pleasures was particularly clear to Augustine who, though he does not use the term "temperance," says, "What else does one say who says, 'Remove from me the desires of the belly, and let not the desire for intercourse lay hold of me' (Sir 23:6), but, 'Lead us not into temptation'?"[93] Still, both temptation and temperance can be taken more generally to refer to

[90] See *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 9. In *Evangelium S. Matthaei Lectura* 601, Thomas cites Cyprian as making such a point: "As Cyprian explains "'and [lead] us not...,' that is, you do not let us be lost in temptation. For temptation is useful, but te one led into temptation is the one who succumbs to temptation." The Marietti text does not offer a citation from Cyprian, and this quote could not be found in either Cyprian's *On the Lord's Prayer*, or Thomas's list of Cyprian quotations on the sixth petition in his *Catena Aurea*.

[91] See III *Sent.*, d. 34, q. 1, a. 6: "'et ne nos inducas, etc.'; in qua, secundum Augustinum petimus ne deserti divino auxilio alicui tentationi vel consentiamus decepti vel cedamus afflicti." There is no reference to a text of Augustine in this text, but this basic quotation is found in Thomas's *Catena aurea* on Matt 6:13, attributed to Augustine's *Letter 130* (*CSEL* 44:64): "*Augustinus ad Probam.* Cum ergo dicimus ne nos inducas in tentationem, nos admonemur hoc petere, ne deserti eius adiutorio, alicui tentationi vel consentiamus decepti vel cedamus afflicti."

[92] See *STh* II-II, q. 141, aa. 2 and 4.

[93] See *Letter 130* (to Proba) 12.22 (*CSEL* 44:64-66).

temptations other than those which are properly sensual. Furthermore, the claim that this petition is a request for temperance fits perfectly into the commentators' concern that the petition means *not* that we be not tempted, but that we not be *led into* temptation. Possessing the virtue of temperance does not mean that one never encounters temptation. Rather, it enables one to encounter and even at times enjoy pleasing entities in a moderate and reasonable manner in accord with one's station in life. The temperate person is indeed not "led into temptation" even when faced with tempting situations.

7. Fortitude

Thomas and his sources consistently make two points about the nature of the evil from which we pray to be delivered in the seventh petition.[94] First, it is evil that is already present.[95] Second, it refers to both punishment and afflictions in general. In his work on the Lord's Prayer, Thomas says that since the previous two petitions concern sin and temptation, he speaks here of other evils, such as adversity and afflictions of this world.[96] How are we to be delivered from such evil? In this same work Thomas claims that God "delivers" us from evil only rarely by preventing evil from happening to us. Far more common are other ways God delivers us, which include consoling us in affliction, bestowing good things on those afflicted, and directing the evils of our trials and temptations toward our own good.[97]

[94] For a discussion of the historical and linguistic issue of whether this petition should read "evil" or "the evil one," see Carmignac, *Recherches sur le «Notre Père»*, 306-12.

[95] This is especially evident in III *Sent.*, d. 34, q. 1, a. 6 where the last three petitions are grouped together as removing impediments to the active life. The seventh petition refers to present evils, while the fifth petition refers to past evils and the sixth petition to future ones. Even though Thomas adopts this grouping of the last three petitions in no other work, he still recognizes that this seventh petition is about present evil. See his *Catena aurea* on Matt 6:13 where he cites Augustine's *De sermone in monte* 2.9.35 (*CCSL* 35:125). In his commentary on Matthew he claims that the petition refers to evil present *and* future: "'Sed libera nos a malo', praesenti vel futuro, poenae, vel culpae" (*Super Matt.*, lect. 18 [602]).

[96] See *In orationem dominicam expositio*, p. 7: "Sed quia de peccato et tentatione dictum est, dicendum est de aliis malis, scilicet adversitatibus et afflictionibus omnibus huius mundi."

[97] See ibid.

Fortitude for Thomas is the cardinal virtue by which we are able to endure or resist obstacles that impede us from living in accordance with reason.[98] The brave person is able to face afflictions and adversities well. Reminiscent of Thomas's claims about how God grants deliverance, this is quite often achieved not by removing the difficulty at hand, but by enduring it.[99] One is brave, and has been delivered from evil, when evils experienced are overcome, or at least one is not overcome by them. Hence in the seventh petition as one prays for deliverance from evil, one is indeed praying for fortitude.

This is the alignment I propose between the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer and the seven foundational virtues of the Christian life. In most contexts it would be appropriate to examine in much greater detail the richness evoked by these petitions and the virtues they suggest. But given the more analytic setting of this essay, and the larger concern to substantiate the scriptural foundations for an ethics of virtue, I turn now in the second part of this section to note how the alignment presented here addresses and helps answer classic questions in virtue approaches to ethics.

B) Reading the Lord's Prayer in the Light of the Virtues: Implications for Virtue and the Christian Life

The task I undertake here is very limited: it is simply to note the ways that the alignment between the virtues and petitions presented above informs certain issues central to virtue ethics. I offer here four observations in line with this task.

1. Ordering of the Petitions and Virtues

The order of the petitions generally corroborates how the virtues have been ordered in the Christian, and especially the

[98] See *STh* II-II, q. 122, aa. 1 and 2.

[99] See *STh* II-II, q. 122, a. 6 on endurance as the chief act of fortitude. For more on this point see also Josef Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 126-33.

Thomistic, tradition. The foundations of the life of Christian virtue are the three theological virtues, which are fittingly placed at the opening of the prayer. Faith has been affirmed as importantly prior among the three, as it is through faith that we know the God in whom we hope and whom we love.[100] But of course love has also been consistently affirmed as both the form of the virtues and the one theological virtue that endures in the next life. And so it is fittingly given a climactic place at the conclusion of the first three petitions, including the decisive "on earth as it is in heaven."[101] The wording of the Lord's Prayer not only reflects primacy of and proper ordering among the theological virtues in the tradition, but also ascribes a climactic place to the virtue of love.[102]

The Christian tradition shows more variation in the ordering of the cardinal virtues.[103] But the Thomistic tradition follows strains of Greek thought in consistently affirming the following order: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. Prudence is fittingly placed first since it is a virtue of the intellect, and directs the moral virtues. Justice is fittingly next, since it is a virtue of the appetite, but the rational appetite or will. Thomas generally lists fortitude next, and then temperance. This is reflected in his ordering of the cardinal virtues in the *Secunda Secundae,* and explained in passages where he describes the irascible appetite (governed by fortitude) as participating more in human reason than the concupiscible appetite (governed by temperance).[104] Yet the differences between the capacities governed by temperance and fortitude are far fewer than those between the sensitive appetite on the one hand (temperance and fortitude) and the intellect (prudence) or the intellectual appetite (justice) on the other. Indeed, at times in his work Thomas switches the order of temperance and fortitude, something he does not do with the other two cardinal virtues either in relation to each other or in

[100] See *STh* I-II, q. 62, a. 4.

[101] For love as form of the virtues, see *STh* II-II, q. 23, a. 8.

[102] For the place of hope in between faith and love, see *STh* II-II, q. 17, aa. 7 and 8.

[103] The crucial scriptural mention of the cardinal virtues is Wisdom 8:7, where the order given is temperance, prudence, justice, and fortitude.

[104] See *STh* I-II, q. 46, a. 5; *De virtutibus cardinalibus,* a. 2.

relation to temperance and fortitude.[105] In sum, the ordering of the virtues presented here as aligned with the petitions of the Lord's Prayer (prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude) largely respects the ordering of the cardinal virtues in the Thomistic tradition. Indeed, the fact that the virtues of temperance and fortitude both govern the passions explains not only why their ordering in relation to each other is variable, but also why they could quite fittingly be treated together under one petition, as represented by the six-petition tradition of commentary since Tertullian.

2. Grouping the Petitions

The Lord's Prayer is consistently divided in the tradition into two groups of petitions: the first three and the remaining four (or three, depending on the author).[106] This division is suggested in the very grammar of the petitions, as noted above. In explaining this difference, Thomas and his sources consistently differentiate the two groups in the manner described by Augustine:

> Accordingly, in the Evangelist Matthew the Lord's Prayer seems to embrace seven petitions, three of which ask for eternal blessings, and the remaining four for temporal; these latter, however being necessary antecedents to the former. For when we say, "Hallowed be thy name: Thy Kingdom come: They will be done in earth, as it is in heaven . . ." we ask for blessings that are to be enjoyed for ever; which are indeed begun in this world, and grow in us as we grow in grace, but in their perfect state, which is to be looked for in another life, shall be a possession for evermore. But when we say, "Give us this day our daily bread: and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver is from evil," who does not see that we ask for blessings that have reference to the wants to this present life?[107]

[105] See examples of this at *Summa Theologiae* I-II 61, 2 & 3 & 4.

[106] Stevenson, *The Lord's Prayer,* 221 notes that despite different groupings offered throughout history, "they all distinguish between the opening petitions (addressed to God) and later petitions (about our needs)." That this is somewhat overstated is revealed just by looking at Thomas Aquinas' differing ways of dividing the petitions, presented below. But cases like his are exceptions that prove the rule.

[107] See Augustine, *Enchiridion* 115 (*CCSL* 46:110-11) (translated in *The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Love,* trans. J. B. Shaw [Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1961], 132-33). Augustine makes basically the same claim in *De sermone in monte* 2.10.36-37: "The accomplishment of the first three petitions, it is true, begins with the present life, the life that

Thomas recognizes and affirms this grouping in the *Summa Theologiae* when he explicitly refers to Augustine's *Enchiridion* and claims in reference to the first three petitions that "these three petitions will be perfectly fulfilled in the life to come; while the other four, according to Augustine, belong to the needs of the present life."[108] Interestingly enough, despite recognizing Augustine's eternal/temporal distinction here and in other texts,[109] Thomas frequently groups the seven petitions otherwise, in fact in varying ways that seem to display a clear trajectory of development.[110] Nevertheless, the point for our purposes is that

is spent in this world. . . . Yet all three are to continue for eternity" [*CCSL* 35:126-27]).

[108] *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 9, ad 1.

[109] See *In orationem dominicam expositio,* p. 4. Thomas again affirms the distinction between the first three petitions from what follows. See also *Super Matt.*, lect. 18 (591) for a similar claim. It is not clear in this text if what Thomas refers to as "necessary in this life" is a reference simply to the fourth petition, or to all four remaining petitions.

[110] In III *Sent.*, d. 34, q. 1, a. 6 (dated by Torrell [*Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 1:332] in the 1250s), Thomas claims that the first two petitions concern the contemplative life, and the final five the active life. The latter group is further divided into two petitions (3 and 4) requesting what assists the active life, and three petitions (5, 6, and 7) seeking the removal of what impedes the active life. Thus there is a clear 2-2-3 grouping. In the *Secunda Secundae* (dated by Torrell [*Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 1:333] in 1271-72), Thomas no longer employs the contemplative/active distinction. But his grouping is still best described in *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 9, as it is in the *Sentences* commentary, as 2-5 and more specifically as 2-2-3. The first two petitions concern humanity's end itself, who is God. The rest concern what is directed to that end. Petitions 3 and 4 direct humanity to that end by their nature, since they concern what is useful to that end. Petitions 5, 6, and 7 direct us to the end accidentally by removing impediments to the good. It is clear how the middle group of two petitions could easily be grouped with the first two rather than the last three. This is exactly what happens in *In orationem dominicam expositio,* a. 7 (dated by Torrell, [*Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 1:358] in 1273). There Thomas employs a 4-3 grouping, or more specifically 1-3-3. The prayer contains all we ought to desire, which for Thomas always means both what we ought to desire and what we ought to avoid. There are four things we desire, the glory of God (1) and things from God as they concern ourselves (2, 3, and 4). Then there are three things to be avoided (petitions 5, 6, and 7), and these are correlated to petitions 2, 3, and 4 as impediments thereto. Thomas claims there is no contrary to the glory of God (1). The unfinished *Compendium Theologiae* contains no grouping of the petitions.

The *Commentary on Matthew* presents an issue of authenticity and perhaps even dating. As for the former, Torrell notes that the 1951 Marietti edition contains inauthentic passages interpolated throughout. He cites the commentary on the Sermon on the Mount as one such example. However, he says "the interpolated passages extend in Matthew from 5:11 to 6:8 and from 6:14 to 6:19 (lects. 13-17 and 19), nos. 444-582 and 603-610 in the Marietti edition" (Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 1:339). The fact that Torrell conspicuously omits from his list of interpolated passages Thomas's commentary on Mt 6:9-13 (the text of the

the petitions themselves, in their grammar and in their content, exhibit a ready division between the first three and next four with the first three concerning eternity (although begun in this life) and the last four concerning the needs of this life. This grouping is evident in the tradition of commentary.

This division perfectly reflects the distinction between the theological and cardinal virtues in Thomas's thought, not simply in the numbers of each (three theological and four cardinal) but also in the content of the two different categories of virtue. For Thomas, the theological virtues have God's very self as their object.[111] They govern activities which concern God directly (believing in God, hoping for God, loving God and one's neighbors in God) which are begun in this life but are brought to perfection in eternity. The four cardinal virtues concern temporal activities accessible to unaided human reason: practical decision-making, relations with others, facing difficulties, and engaging in sensual pleasures.[112] The claim that the petitions concern both eternal (heavenly) and temporal (earthly) matters is directly reflective of Thomas's distinction between the theological and the cardinal virtues. Of course, all commentators want to maintain that there is no dichotomy between these two groups. As Augustine's says, what is requested in the first three is begun in this life, and the temporal necessities of the final four prepare one for eternity.

Lord's Prayer), which consists of nos. 583-602, I take as an affirmation of the authenticity of that part of the commentary. Thus I treat it here as such.

As for dating and the immediately relevant issue of grouping petitions, Torrell dates this commentary "with high probability" (*Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 1:339) in 1269-70. However, Thomas's grouping of petitions in this text (*Super Matt.,* lect. 18 [586]) follows the *In orationem dominicam expositio* treatment exactly. The texts on the groupings of petitions thus show clear development from the *Sentences* through the *Secunda Secundae* as a sort of middle ground, ending in the *Commentary on Matthew* and *In orationem dominicam expositio*. Yet Torrell's dating of the *Commentary on Matthew* does not match this development. I can offer no explanation of this fact.

[111] See *STh* I-II, q. 62, aa. 1 and 2. See also *De virtutibus in communi,* a. 12.

[112] See *STh* I-II, q. 62, a. 2: "The object of the moral and intellectual virtues is something comprehensible to human reason." See *STh* I-II, q. 61, a. 1 where Thomas explains how the four cardinal virtues "cover" the moral and intellectual virtues that engage the human will.

3. The Primacy of Infused Virtue

Despite the neat division between the first three and last four petitions, the Lord's Prayer importantly affirms the unity of the Christian life, a life that is both directed toward (and indeed is even a foretaste of) a supernatural destiny of union with God, and yet firmly embedded in worldly existence in time and space. That this is the case with the first three petitions and their corresponding theological virtues is readily apparent. What is sought in the first three petitions, and is made possible for humanity in the three theological virtues, is only perfectly possible in the next life, but it is begun in this one.[113] Yet the same is true of both the last four petitions and the four cardinal virtues. In a simple sense, as Augustine notes, these four are needed in order to attain eternity. But while the cardinal virtues directly concern temporal activities accessible to unaided human reason, they are only perfectly possible with God's grace. In praying the Lord's Prayer, one simultaneously recognizes that God does help people with their temporal activities, and that such grace is needed in order to perform them perfectly.[114] In the *Commentary on Matthew,* Thomas repeatedly observes that what is sought requires human action (once even specifying *liberum arbitrium*) but also the help of God.[115] Furthermore, Augustine's claim regarding the necessity

[113] Readers of Thomas will immediately protest, with appeal to *STh* I-II, q. 67, aa. 3 and 4, that faith and hope do not remain after this life. This is true. However, though the theological virtues of faith and hope do not endure, the knowledge and possession toward which they incline a person are achieved. This renders the knowledge no longer faith and longing for possession no longer hope, but by reason of completion or achievement rather than removal or failure. And of course charity does remain (*STh* I-II, q. 67, a. 6), a distinction signified in the prayer by "on earth as it is in heaven."

[114] For more on this claim, see *STh* I-II, q. 63, a. 3 on the need for the infused moral (or cardinal) virtues.

[115] Thomas makes this point most succinctly while examining the first petition, and explaining why we say "Hallowed be thy name" in the passive rather than "Let us hallow your name." He claims the latter would imply that we do this only through our own free will, rather than with God's help. *Super Matt.*, lect. 18 (590): "Et nota quod dicitur, Sanctificetur nomen tuum, et non Sanctificemus. Et hoc est, quia ad salutem requiritur persona Dei, et liberum arbitrium. Sed si in prima persona peteretur, iam videretur quod solum ad liberum arbitrium pertineret." For another example of the need for God's grace, see the treatment of the third petition in *Super Matt.*, lect. 18 (589): "Whence we pray that God's will be fulfilled

of these petitions (and by extension their corresponding virtues) for eternal life reveals that their activities are ultimately directed toward supernatural happiness in union with God. Indeed, there is a sense in which the cardinal virtues remain, even in eternal life.[116] These two characteristics—God as efficient cause and final end—are what characterize the infused virtues in the Thomistic tradition.[117] In the Lord's Prayer, not only the first three but also the final four petitions are made possible by God's grace and direct one ultimately toward one's supernatural destiny. Thus the very format of the Lord's Prayer is both an "argument" for the existence of the infused cardinal (or moral) virtues, and indeed the primacy of the infused (rather than acquired) cardinal virtues.[118]

4. Happiness and Its Relationship to Virtue

The Lord's Prayer takes a stand on an age-old question in virtue ethics concerning the ultimate good for humanity. Is the ultimate good, and thus happiness from attaining it, achieved simply by the possession of virtues (as the Stoics claimed), such that the attainment of happiness is not subject to the capriciousness of

through us, and this would be in vain unless it were done by God."

[116] See *STh* I-II, q. 67, a. 1 for how these virtues remain in *patria*, though differently. This question is a staple in medieval discussions of virtue due to Peter Lombard's discussion in the *Sentences* (III *Sent.*, d. 33, c. 1) of Augustine's claim in *De Trinitate* (14.9.12) that the cardinal virtues do indeed remain *in patria*.

[117] For more on Thomistic categorizations of virtue, see William C. Mattison III, "Thomas's Categorizations of Virtue: His Synthesis of His Predecessors' Work and Its Impact on Contemporary Debates," forthcoming.

[118] For more on the common neglect of the infused cardinal (or moral) virtues, see Michael S. Sherwin, O.P., "Infused Virtue and the Effects of Acquired Vice: A Test Case for the Thomistic Theory of Infused Cardinal Virtues," *The Thomist* 73 (2009): 29-52. See also Romanus Cessario, O.P., *The Moral Virtues and Theological Ethics*, 2d ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 165-72; idem, *Introduction to Moral Theology* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 200ff.; Servais Pinckaers, O.P., *The Sources of Christian Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 178-81; Michael Sherwin, O.P, *By Knowledge and by Love* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 170-75; Angela McKay, "Prudence and Acquired Moral Virtue," *The Thomist* 69 (2005): 535-55; Robert Miner, "Non-Aristotelian Prudence in the *Prima Secundae*," *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 401-22.

luck or other factors beyond the wise person's control? Or is genuine happiness something that in important ways happens *to* us, in a manner not achieved by possessing the virtues, or the well-developed capacities of the wise person? Aristotle wrestled with this thorny question,[119] and Augustine famously categorized the multitude of possible answers to it in the opening pages of book 19 of the *City of God.* It is clear from the Lord's Prayer that the answer is both/and.[120] Full happiness does not simply happen to us, given the capacities we possess as creatures in the image and likeness of God. Reminiscent of the Thomistic (and Aristotelian) claim that happiness is an activity, the happiness for which we pray in the Lord's Prayer is something in which we participate.[121] Hence in the Lord's Prayer we pray not simply that certain things happen (to us), but that we become people who are equipped to enjoy true happiness, namely, persons with the theological and cardinal virtues.

While the Lord's Prayer reveals that happiness requires a change in the petitioners (i.e., the possession of the virtues), it is also evident from the prayer that the yearning for happiness from which the supplicants' words are born is not satiated on their own power. The petitioners are asking through God's grace to be granted the virtues. Furthermore, though the words of the petitions do request changes in those who utter the prayer (changes represented by the virtues), those who pray also ask God that certain things happen not only in them but in the world outside of them: that the kingdom come, God's will be done, that their bread is given, their trespasses be forgiven, and that they be delivered from evil. Hence the possession of the virtues alone, even the infused virtues, is not constitutive of the full happiness sought in the Lord's Prayer. This full happiness is the redemption for which all creation groans (Rom 8:22-23). For humanity it is a participation in the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4) requiring, but not

[119] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.8-11.

[120] The extent to which the stand suggested by the Lord's Prayer is in line with the claims of Aristotle or Augustine is beyond the scope of this essay.

[121] See *STh* I-II, q. 3, a. 2; Thomas here cites Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.13.

constituted by, the possession of the theological and cardinal virtues.

III. Conclusion

Given the fact that Christians have depicted the fullness of life in Christ by reflecting both on the petitions of the Lord's Prayer and on the seven virtues, it should not be surprising that one may find an alignment between those groupings. The historical survey of the first section of this essay has delineated how the constructive work of the second section is both historically grounded and yet new. Much work remains to be done in drawing out how specific claims in the Lord's Prayer (and in the Scriptures more generally) ground and inform an ethics of virtue. But more importantly, the rudimentary reflections here on the petitions in light of the virtues are meant to nourish the lives of discipleship of the faithful who utter this prayer and endeavor to live out the virtues, both to know and enjoy the happiness to which all are called and which is constituted by union with the God of Jesus Christ.[122]

[122] I would like to thank Frank Matera and Craig Steven Titus for their helpful suggestions on an earlier draft of this article, and Benjamin Safranski, whose research assistance was invaluable for completing this project.

BOOK REVIEWS

Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study. By MARKUS BOCKMUEHL. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006. Pp. 297. $27.00 (paper). ISBN 978-0-8010-2761-1.

Prophecy and Discernment. By R. W. L. MOBERLY. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xvi + 281. $39.99 (paper). ISBN 978-0-521-85992-9.

The Preexistent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. By SIMON J. GATHERCOLE. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006. Pp. xi + 344. $34.00 (paper). ISBN 978-0-8028-2901-6.

Prophecy and Hermeneutics: Toward a New Introduction to the Prophets. By CHRISTOPHER R. SEITZ. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007. Pp. 264. $23.00 (paper). ISBN 978-0-8010-3258-5.

Reading Scripture with the Church: Toward a Hermeneutic for Theological Interpretation. By A. K. M. ADAM, STEPHEN E. FOWL, KEVIN J. VANHOOZER, and FRANCIS WATSON. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006. Pp. 155. $30.00 (paper). ISBN 978-0-8010-3173-1.

Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith. By FRANCIS WATSON. New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2004. Pp. xv + 584. $66.00 (paper). ISBN 0-567-08232-6.

Markus Bockmuehl's *Seeing the Word* begins with C. H. Dodd's 1936 inaugural lecture at the University of Cambridge, in which Dodd sets forth his understanding of the five steps of critical exegetical methodology, beginning with text criticism and ending with biblical theology. Whereas Dodd exudes confidence in the enduring value of the text-critical, higher-critical, and linguistic research of his predecessors, Bockmuehl shows that contemporary New Testament scholarship lacks a consensual basis upon which to conduct its inquiry. This fragmentation has been accentuated by such factors as the growth of subspecialties, the vast quantity of publications, the dismissal of scholarship done prior to the past three decades, and the growing inability to read foreign languages. Even so, like Dodd, Bockmuehl holds that "most of the major *historical-critical* questions one might wish to ask of the New Testament have now indeed seen a pretty good airing of the available options" (44), in part thanks to the recent work of N. T. Wright and Martin Hengel.

Arguing that questions of theological meaning now are at the forefront, Bockmuehl cautions against approaches that ignore the text's own historical setting/intention. He encourages efforts to unify New Testament research through "forums of shared inquiry . . . where a common concern for truth makes it possible *both* to articulate and to question inherited certainties, to assess one's own and the other's deep-seated ideological commitments without immediate disqualification" (61). This vision of inquiry as a common project, requiring concern for truth and attentiveness to the other, characterizes Bockmuehl's two major recommendations for advancing New Testament study: to include the "effective history" or "historical footprint" (65-66) within the task of understanding the meanings of the New Testament texts, and to attend to the standpoint of the implied reader of the texts. Both proposals open up New Testament scholarship to the Church, and especially to the Church of the apostolic period, but neither proposal excludes non-Christian scholars or represses historical/theological disagreements.

Bockmuehl first takes up the significance of the texts' implied reader. He observes that "the historic significance of the ancient biblical texts is inseparable from the space they have inhabited, and continue to inhabit, as the canonical Scripture of the Christian church" (77). While secular readers can contribute to New Testament interpretation, they cannot fully apprehend the "ecclesial dynamic of life and worship" (ibid.) that provides the matrix of the New Testament texts. The New Testament texts emphasize that nonbelieving readers require the transformation of their minds (wisdom) before they will be able to understand. Does this claim underestimate the tensions intrinsic to the New Testament texts themselves? Critiquing Rowan Williams's "conflict-driven hermeneutics" (84), Bockmuehl argues that theology has its coherence in and through the exegesis of Scripture. Far from primarily revealing conflict, Scripture reveals God's wisdom addressed to the ecclesial implied reader in "the hermeneutic of the Spirit" (91). Yet as Bockmuehl indicates through a reading of Genesis 3 and Matthew 4, the New Testament's implied reader learns from Jesus not to claim power to control the meaning of God's word; instead Jesus' receptivity to God's word, a receptivity enacted in his Pasch, undergirds the standpoint of the texts' implied reader.

If the implied reader calls for the biblical texts to be read as God's wisdom for the Church, does this undercut Bockmuehl's earlier warning that theological readings of Scripture must be fully appreciative of, and engaged with, the historical setting and intention of the text? Bockmuehl surveys the increasing fragmentation of Scripture in scholarship since the eighteenth century, and concludes that today one finds "a virtually normative assumption that New Testament theology is possible only as a serial compilation of its authors' diverse theologies" (105). He points out that, as with the four Gospels, the canon itself recognizes (and gives shape to) a diversity that supports unity. Despite their differences in emphasis, the New Testament authors do not envision themselves as being at odds with each other. Rather the texts, while diverse, presuppose an ecclesial unity around one gospel, "a unified core of theological conviction"

(115). As regards the historical setting and intention of the text, "the New Testament does not *create* the church but rather *presupposes* and confirms it at every turn" (113). In this regard, it is readings that presuppose fragmentation, rather than readings that presuppose canon and creed, that are fundamentally ahistorical. If this is so, Bockmuehl suggests, then the New Testament's meaning cannot be limited to the Second Temple period, but rather receives legitimate interpretation in the "rule of faith" that is to be found in the New Testament's "effective history."

On this basis Bockmuehl turns to his second major recommendation, namely, that scholars should attend to the texts' effective history. The New Testament texts intend to shape their (ecclesial) readers in accord with the pattern of the gospel, and so the texts' effective history cannot be rigidly separated from their own historical settings and intentions. At this point, Bockmuehl takes up the question of whether he has overestimated the unity of the first-century Church. Were not Paul and Peter/James at loggerheads regarding the status of Jews and Gentiles in the Church (Galatians 2)? Critiquing F. C. Baur's influential reconstruction of a split between Hellenizers and Judaizers, Bockmuehl finds in 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Galatians 2, as well as in Mark, Matthew, and 2 Peter, evidence that Paul and Peter understand themselves to be in communion with each other, proclaiming the same gospel. Likewise Bockmuehl remarks upon "the *effect* of canonizing Paul's relationship with Peter" (132). The differences between Paul and Peter were not, either for them or for the Church, nonnegotiable.

In a similar vein, Bockmuehl retrieves as an exemplar the mid-twentieth-century New Testament scholarship of E. C. Hoskyns, who argued for "a unifying christological kerygma of the New Testament" (141). Hoskyns recognized that the New Testament presents itself as "the place of an arresting encounter with the living God" (147) and therefore envisions its own effective history. For Hoskyns, and for Bockmuehl as well, the Church's continual exegetical labor opens the Church to receive correction and renewal from God's word. Such biblical interpretation must be *fully* historical, attentive both to the original settings and to the effective history of the texts. Following Hoskyns, Bockmuehl recognizes that Christological/pneumatological claims change one's understanding of history and thus of "historical" biblical interpretation. Bockmuehl thus calls for "an integrated historical-critical reading of Scripture that is at once keenly theological and concerned for the organic lines of continuity connecting Jesus with the church" (156). It would be historically deficient to envision the New Testament texts in isolation from the "church that for all its division, diversity, and change maintained—and maintains—a defining loyalty to the same apostolic gospel" (157).

The task of fidelity to the apostolic gospel defines the Church's exegetical-theological labor: for Bockmuehl theologians must be trained biblical exegetes (evangelical) while at the same time valuing the ecclesial/creedal effective history of the texts (Catholic)—a "mediating position" (ibid.) that Bockmuehl finds in Hoskyns's Anglican approach.

Regarding the effective history of the New Testament, Bockmuehl draws particular attention to "the early Christian emphasis on living memory of the apostolic age" (161). While historical events cannot be separated from interpretation, historical events are not pure interpretation; moreover, the particular historical events of Scripture interpret the interpreters—the events resist efforts to restrict them to the past. How then to interpret the New Testament with due attention both to historical-critical analysis of the texts' original settings/intentions and to their effective history? Discussing Ulrich Luz's effort to achieve such an integration in his recent Matthew commentary, Bockmuehl inquires into what happens "in cases where the effects conflict with each other or even with the plain sense of the text itself" (165). He proposes that the "effective history" of the first 170 years after Christ deserves a place in historical-critical interpretation, because of the "living memory" possessed by people who knew the apostles or who were taught by others who knew the apostles. Following other recent scholars who have accentuated the role of memory in the New Testament and in the early Christian writers, he suggests that valuable effective history for biblical interpretation is largely limited to the first two centuries: "After 200, the chain of tradition might be expected to take on a different shape" (179).

Given this positive evaluation of the New Testament's effective history in the apostolic period, Bockmuehl expresses deep concern that the Church got away from Jesus' Jewish identity, to the point that the Church's Jesus, theologically identified by "universalizing abstractions" rather than by Jewish practices (194), became unrecognizable as *Israel's* Messiah. Bockmuehl particularly has in mind the parting of ways in the first century: "Jews and Christians came to agree on the tragic conclusion that one could not both follow Jesus and practice Judaism" (193). By choosing the Twelve and giving his own life for the restoration of Israel, Jesus reconstituted Israel around himself in a messianic/eschatological action, which Bockmuehl interprets in accord with the parable of the vineyard (Matthew 21/Luke 20). Jesus' commitment to the salvation of Israel, however, was in Bockmuehl's view obscured by the Church Fathers, beginning especially with Origen. As a result Paul's mission, after the fact, turned out to contradict Peter's: "The apostolic church had embodied the Abrahamic mission and the command of Jesus by pioneering at great personal cost a Jewish welcome of Noahide Gentiles as Gentiles. Subsequent Gentile Christianity generally failed to return the compliment" (224). Bockmuehl suggests that the solution may arise from the emerging communities of Messianic Jews, who, like many first-century Jewish Christians, confess Jesus as Messiah while continuing to observe Torah.

How might we evaluate Bockmuehl's position? He holds that a fully historical interpretation of the New Testament must include, in addition to the standard historical-critical approaches, attention to the implied reader and the effective history of the texts. The implicit suggestion seems to be that at issue is what kind of validity the Church's development of doctrine and sacramental structure possess.

Repeatedly, Bockmuehl raises the question of whether systematic theology can in fact be distinct from biblical interpretation (inclusive of its historical-critical tools). Against "historically oblivious models of doctrinal and ecclesial assertion" (232), he holds that when the Church (or the theologian) affirms doctrinal truth, such affirmations must rest on (inevitably contested) historical-critical analysis, broadened theologically by the implied reader and ecclesiologically by the texts' effective history, especially the apostolic period. Nonetheless, the question remains, how should one understand the development of doctrine and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the (sacramentally structured) Church? As a test case, Bockmuehl surveys the first-century division between Rabbinic Jews and Christian Jews/Gentiles, and argues that contemporary Messianic Judaism holds out the hope of overcoming this split. The number of theological issues here is staggering, and one wonders whether the test case actually reveals the need for systematic theology grounded on something more than theologically erudite historical-critical scholarship that privileges the first two centuries of reception history. Bockmuehl would probably agree, but his position might be made more clear in his otherwise rich and valuable book.

By examining how the Bible presents the discernment of true prophetic discourse, R. W. L. Moberly's *Prophecy and Discernment* seeks to strengthen the ability of contemporary Christians to present "divine revelation as a matter of public, albeit contested, truth" (1). How do believers know when God is truly speaking through human beings? Unless Christians can defend the possibility of "divine communication through human mediation" (12), Christian faith and preaching disintegrate. Contemporary biblical scholarship, however, generally denies that Old Testament prophecy can be discussed in terms of its truth or falsity. Instead, prophets succeed when the word that they speak is timely and adaptable to different situations. In explaining the motives of ancient prophets, scholars tend to appeal to unusual psychological experiences. Due to the presumption that God could only be an intruder in the world, God appears as a threat to the full humanity of the prophetic voice. For these reasons, Moberly fears that "legitimate difficulties in speaking appropriately of God seem to be threatening to remove issues of faith and transcendence out of the realm of rational discourse altogether, and to make them into an arbitrary a priori" (30). He proposes that a renewed account of prophetic mediation of God's word, employing "conceptual assumptions appropriate to a classic and renewed 'rule of faith'" (38), is in order.

Moberly undertakes this task by first turning to Jeremiah's contested prophetic mission. In Jeremiah 1, God gives Jeremiah a mission to proclaim God's powerful word despite Jeremiah's own professed weakness and vulnerability. In Jeremiah 18, God through Jeremiah compares himself to the potter (powerful), and Israel to the clay (dependent). Yet Jeremiah 18 also includes God's promise that if nations repent and obey him, then he will bless rather than curse them. The potter, in other words, is not arbitrarily powerful, but instead responds to the clay. God (the potter) seeks a response from the

nations (the clay) to his powerful word, spoken by the prophet. God also warns through Jeremiah that he has a plan for Israel (the clay), namely, to refashion it disastrously unless Israel repents. The clay must become malleable to God's word, or else it will be broken and refashioned by the God who is malleable to the clay (insofar as his curse will not come about if Israel hears and obeys his word through the prophet). In light of this understanding of God's word as "response-seeking speech" (52), Moberly reflects upon the signs of truly repentant "response": not solely performing a ritual, but internalizing the ritual so that it becomes an embrace of God. The Temple alone cannot protect Jerusalem and Judah; "YHWH's presence in the temple does not guarantee protection for the corrupt" (61), but rather portends the opposite. Compared with the holiness of God's word, the self-serving words of the false prophets, which suggest that God supports injustice, rend Jeremiah to the core.

On this basis Moberly proposes that true prophetic speech can be discerned by the conduct, moral seriousness, and divine vocation of the prophet. But how is one to discern whether the divine vocation is real? Moberly notes that John Calvin presented divine vocation in terms of whether the prophet knows Torah and interprets it rightly. If this is so, however, then every good interpreter of God's word is a prophet, and this seems to underestimate the distinctiveness of the prophetic vocation. Is prophetic authority then entirely subjective (as Walter Brueggemann and, in a different way, Patrick Miller suggest)?

In response to such a question, Moberly argues that a true prophetic vocation is revealed in the congruity between what we know of God's "character and priorities" and the content and priorities of the prophetic speech: "genuine prophetic speech . . . should be such as to confront sinful people with their need to turn to God" (88). Responding to Robert Carroll, Moberly returns again to the image of the potter and the clay, and examines the balance between Jeremiah's "strong portrayal of divine initiative" and "strong portrayal of divine and human responsiveness" (99). Judgment and restoration are combined in Jeremiah's prophetic word. As Moberly concludes, prophetic speech involves "concern both with human self-will which cannot bring itself to live rightly and respond to God's will and also with God's refusal to be bound by that failure" (ibid.).

Having identified these criteria for discerning prophetic authenticity, Moberly explores Jeremiah 28 and 1 Kings 22. While scholars generally find Jeremiah 28 to be particularly important for prophetic discernment—it describes Jeremiah's conflict with the false prophet Hananiah—Moberly points out that there is never any doubt that Hananiah is a false prophet. He suggests that the conflict between Micaiah ben Imlah and the four hundred prophets in 1 Kings 22 offers a better test case. The four hundred court prophets promise victory for King Jehoshephat of Judah and King Ahab of Israel against the king of Aram; only Micaiah ben Imlah, an outsider to the court, prophesies defeat. Moberly shows how the message of divine compassion, a message that requires repentance and humility on the part of the king, does not evoke the necessary response in the king—in part due to the self-serving false prophecy of Zedekiah, the leader of the court

prophets, but largely due to the king's pride. The central contrast is between the four hundred court prophets' sycophantic accommodation to power and Micaiah's vulnerability and critique of the king's pride. Micaiah's integrity stands against the king's refusal "to relinquish self-will and admit error" (126). The authentic prophet speaks on behalf of the God who compassionately challenges disastrous human pride. Moberly asks whether God reveals to Micaiah something beyond the capacity of unaided human reason. On the one hand, God reveals that Ahab will die if he chooses to fight the battle; on the other hand, Micaiah's prophetic knowledge has to do with ordinary life rather than esoteric information.

Next Moberly turns to the cases of Elisha (2 Kgs 2) and Balaam (Num 22), so as "to argue that what enables, or disables, prophetic vision of God is not different in kind, but only in degree, from what enables, or disables, anyone's vision; and that the discernment of God in Himself does not take place on a basis different from the discernment of God in a human person" (131). For Moberly, the key is purity of heart. Why does Elisha three times disobey Elijah's command to stay behind? Unlike the company of prophets, Elisha has the purity of heart required to follow Elijah and to see the divine power in Elijah's assumption into heaven. As for Balaam, once he agrees to come to Balak, God teaches him that mortal danger "awaits him if he continues to take the path he has embarked on, and it becomes more inescapable the further he proceeds" (144). Even an ass can see that self-seeking pride will lead not to discernment of God's will, but to disaster. Balaam's repentance, prompted by God, enables him to continue in his prophetic vocation.

Moberly finds that the New Testament, in its understanding of prophetic discernment, accepts the pattern found in the Old Testament but transforms this pattern so as to make it "Christ-centred and cruciform" (151). In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 7:15-16), Jesus warns against "false prophets," who can be known "by their fruits." True prophets must live in accord with God's will by loving God and their neighbor. The First Letter of John, with its admonition to "test the spirits" (1 John 4:1), argues that we must learn (in Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit) to know and love God in order to know whether others know and speak for him. If we do not love our neighbor, then we do not know and love God. Although John reformulates prophetic discernment around Christ and the Holy Spirit, he agrees with Jeremiah that "self-giving concern for the well-being of others is that form of moral practice which most displays the character of God" (167) and which therefore marks true prophetic speech.

In examining Paul, Moberly focuses his attention largely upon the Second Letter to the Corinthians. Paul confronts a challenge to his authority; the Corinthians have received another apostle who teaches "a different gospel" (2 Cor 11:4) from Paul's. Paul therefore has to provide "criteria whereby the Corinthians can evaluate his ministry" (183), and in so doing he emphasizes his self-giving service to others. The pattern of Jesus' life and death provides the model for testing the authenticity of Paul's vocation; if Paul's vocation is authentic, then believers will be able to see in him God's reconciling work in

Christ. It is not evidence of spiritual power, but evidence of cruciform love, that reveals apostolic authenticity. Moberly observes, "As elsewhere, a particular kind of (moral) human reality is the necessary corollary for (spiritual) claims to speak on God's behalf to be valid" (208). In this light he critiques Elizabeth Castelli's postmodern reading of Paul's letters in terms of power, as well as similar readings of Paul as power hungry by Graham Shaw and David Brown. Sympathetic reading of Paul, he points out, requires accepting Paul's premise that "life-giving truth is at stake" (218) and "trusting the historic decision of the Church to include Paul's writings within Scripture as a true revelation of the mind of Christ" (220). As Moberly demonstrates, Paul attempts to give criteria, rooted in Christ, for the discernment of whether his words merit such trust.

Such criteria remain important, Moberly notes, because for believers prophetic speech is not merely "an interesting phenomenon of the past" (222). Far from being outside the bounds of rational discourse, "claims to speak for God can be meaningfully tested both in terms of the moral character, disposition, and behaviour of the speaker and in terms of the moral and theological content of the message" (225). Committed to self-giving rather than self-seeking, the speaker of God's word becomes more, not less, human; psychological disturbances or narrow moralism cannot account for prophecy. Nor does the validity of prophecy depend upon the miraculous. But can persons speak God's word while engaged in grave sins? Moberly explores Martin Luther King, Jr. as a contemporary example of a truthteller who also committed, at least for a time, serial adultery. Moberly also surveys the case of Osama bin Laden, arguing that the content of bin Laden's message rules out accepting it as prophetic speech. Can God speak through nonbelievers? Citing John 3:19-21, Moberly holds that the movement of grace is present in nonbelievers who "do what is true," although their lives would nonetheless be transformed by grace. Lastly, taking up the issue of homosexual actions, he remarks that prophetic discernment, by itself, cannot suffice for the difficult "formation of that wisdom which the churches need in their decision-making" (251).

In short, Moberly suggests that beginning with contemporary theological concerns about truth is a good way to enter into Scripture itself, which is deeply concerned with the questions of whom to trust and how to live. For Moberly, it would be a mistake to trust the religious community as being so guided by the Holy Spirit that it is able to avoid teaching errors. Although Christian communities down the centuries have made a number of discernments in the name of God about doctrinal and moral truth, "fresh challenges often rightly lead to reassessment of the continuing appropriateness of past decisions" (18). This is a theological claim about the Holy Spirit's presence within the sacramental structure of Christ's Mystical Body, a claim that exegesis cannot by itself resolve. Moberly's contribution is to show the unity of love and truth in the discernment of prophetic speech, but he has trouble identifying how God's communication through human speech goes beyond, in its authority and in its claims upon the world, what a wise and humble human being might prudently

know. This lacuna in Moberly's book is filled, I think, by the work of Christopher Seitz reviewed below.

Do the Synoptic Gospels (like the Gospel of John) teach a preexistent Messiah? Since the mid-twentieth century, historical-critical scholars have generally agreed that the answer is no. In the past decade, however, studies by Ludger Schenke, Richard Bauckham, and Larry Hurtado either defend preexistence in the Synoptic Gospels or, at the least, argue for the Synoptic Jesus being "in some sense, 'divine' and 'transcendent'" (16). Simon Gathercole's *The Preexistent Son* builds upon this recent research to offer a robust account of the Synoptic Gospels' witness to the Messiah's preexistence.

By way of prolegomena, Gathercole treats Paul's letters, Hebrews, and Jude on the preexistence of Christ and the Synoptic Gospels on the transcendence of Christ. In the case of Paul and Hebrews, Gathercole has wide support from other contemporary scholars, with the exception of J. D. G. Dunn. Gathercole's discussion of Jude relies heavily upon Bauckham's commentary. With regard to the transcendence of Christ in the Synoptic Gospels, Gathercole demonstrates, again with widespread support from other scholars, that Jesus "has heavenly identity throughout his ministry" (53). He treats such topics as the recognition of Jesus by the demons, Jesus' identity in the transfiguration, his authority to forgive sins, his miracles, his name (especially the baptismal formula in Matt 28:19), his supernatural knowledge, and his ability to give commandments. As Gathercole shows, "a heavenly christology is not a distinctively Johannine phenomenon: there are plenty of thunderbolts throughout Matthew, Mark, and Luke as well" (79). On the basis of this research, he notes that the presumption should be that the Synoptic Gospels contain the doctrine of preexistence rather than that they do not.

Gathercole begins his discussion of preexistence in the Synoptics with a lengthy analysis of Jesus' "I have come" sayings. In these sayings, Jesus summarizes his mission. While scholars generally hold that these sayings do not indicate preexistence, Gathercole points out that "because the sayings talk of coming *with a purpose*, they imply that the coming is a deliberate act. A deliberate act requires a before-and-after, and, in the case of a 'coming,' an origin from which the speaker has come" (86-87). He argues that preexistence is not merely a plausible explanation of these sayings, but the correct one. Thus, against the view of Rudolph Bultmann and Otto Michel, he makes the case that the "I have come" sayings are not an instance of the "Hellenistic mode of prophetic self-presentation" (95). Likewise, he shows that it does not suffice to interpret "I have come" on the basis of "hypothetical Aramaic idiom" (100). In his view, the key consists in appreciating the statement of purpose and the "heavenly" implications that accompany the "I have come" sayings.

In this regard he compares Jesus' "I have come" sayings with similar sayings on the part of angels in the Old Testament and in extrabiblical Jewish and Christian literature. He argues that the only two real alternatives with respect to whence Jesus comes are heaven or Nazareth, and that exegesis of each of the

passages indicates that heaven is the proper interpretation—in which case Jesus in some sense preexists. He shows that this conclusion also makes sense of many of the parables, and he adds that later New Testament texts (Hebrews, John, 1 Timothy) explicitly connect "I have come" sayings with preexistence. Throughout this treatment, his exegesis often accords with the perspectives of prominent mid-twentieth-century scholars, and he finds support in the work of some contemporary scholars as well.

Gathercole takes a similar approach to the passages in the Synoptic Gospels that depict Jesus as the one "sent" (including the parables' indirect affirmations of this sending). On the one hand, he grants that "preexistence cannot be seen in statements about sending *per se*" on the grounds that "God also 'sends' other non-heavenly figures, in particular, the prophets" (177). Yet he argues that the "sending" passages in the Synoptic Gospels do not have in view Jesus as merely a prophetic figure. Instead he observes "a close formal correspondence between the 'coming' and the 'sending' sayings" (179). Although he recognizes the ambiguity of the "sending" sayings in themselves, he suggests that these sayings make most sense within the preexistence framework of the "coming" sayings. At the same time, he argues against earlier pro-preexistence interpretations of the "sending" sayings (generally by mid-twentieth-century scholars), on the grounds that these earlier interpretations claimed too much for the "sending" sayings taken in themselves.

Granting that the Christology of the Synoptic Gospels draws significantly upon the Old Testament/Second Temple figure of Lady Wisdom, Gathercole asks whether this indebtedness shows that "Jesus, like Wisdom, has *come from a preexistence in heaven*" (193). Against the view of numerous scholars up to the 1970s, he argues that the Synoptic Gospels, while indebted to Wisdom motifs, do not identify Jesus "with preexistent Wisdom in any strong sense" (199). He also points out, following G. B. Caird, that Second Temple Judaism generally regarded Wisdom not "as a preexistent *entity* distinct from or independent of God, but rather as an attribute of God and a way of speaking about his purpose: in short, a personification rather than a person" (209). Even if the Synoptics had identified Jesus with Wisdom in a strong sense, therefore, this would not entail personal preexistence.

Gathercole devotes special attention to Matthew 23:37, which provides the best case for preexistent-Wisdom Christology. Although he disputes the notion that Matthew here identifies Jesus with preexistent Wisdom, he finds that "the depiction of Jesus here is clearly as one longing for Israel's repentance through successive generations *within* history" (214). Does Matthew 23:37 also presuppose that Jesus transcends history (preexists)? Gathercole argues that the context and content of Matthew 23:37 "indicate Jesus' preincarnate longing for Israel's repentance in continuity with his present desire" (219). While the passage affirms that Jesus transcends history, so as to be active throughout Israel's generations, Gathercole points out that it is "only a single reference and so should not be overemphasized" (221).

Gathercole also discusses favorably E. C. Hoskyns's argument (whose main lines are found in various other scholars) that Luke 1:2 involves a "logos christology" comparable to John's (222). In light of various passages in Acts, he finds that Hoskyns's interpretation is a plausible one, even if not demonstrable. Yet Luke-Acts need not thereby be fully affirming preexistence in the fashion of John's Logos Christology. Gathercole finds that "it is quite possible that Luke regards Jesus as the embodiment (not necessarily *incarnation* in the full sense) of the Word of God which came upon the prophets in the OT" (227).

Gathercole next takes up the meaning of four titles applied to Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels: "Christ," "Lord," "Son of Man," and "Son of God." With regard to "Christ," he comments briefly on the debate regarding the extent to which Second Temple texts envision a preexistent Messiah, and then he explores the thirty-seven uses of "Christ" in the Synoptics. Evaluating the purpose of this title in the Synoptics, he finds that Mark 12:35-37 (with its parallels in Matthew and Luke) suggests the preexistence of the "Christ," who is not merely the son of David. He also argues that Zechariah's prophetic reference to the coming ἀνατολή (Luke 1:78) probably implies preexistence. Regarding the Synoptics' use of "Lord" (κύριος), Gathercole did not have the benefit of Kavin Rowe's recent study of κύριος in Luke, but he does observe how passages in Mark, Matthew, and Luke draw together Jesus and YHWH through the title κύριος. He does not, however, find that the title clearly denotes preexistence. Drawing upon the research of D. R. Burkett, Gathercole notes that the scholarly consensus through the 1960s was that the title "Son of Man" in the Synoptics indicates preexistence, and that even more recent research defends this view in connection with the interpretation of Daniel 7. As Gathercole shows, in the Synoptic Gospels "there is an association (which is nevertheless not emphasized) of the Son of Man with coming from heaven and consequent preexistence" (270). Lastly, he briefly takes up "Son of God" and "Son." As with "Son of Man," he notes that contemporary scholarship on "Son of God" and "Son" in the Synoptics is generally favorable to preexistence, and he emphasizes the connection of "Son of God" and "Son" with the "sending" sayings that play such an important role in his argument.

As a final step, Gathercole treats certain contemporary theological concerns. Responding to Bultmann and Pannenberg, he points out that preexistence does not rule out the virgin birth: "One would expect a supernatural being to enter the human realm in a supernatural way; if one begins with the Son's preexistence, then his humanity must have started somewhere" (285). Responding to John Macquarrie's concern that preexistence would destroy Jesus' full humanity, Gathercole notes that Hebrews and *4 Ezra* both present the Messiah as preexistent and fully human. Responding to R. Hamerton-Kelly's view that Jesus' preexistence is only in the mind or plan of God, he observes that confining preexistence to God's foreknowledge would deprive it of significance, because first-century Christians and Jews generally believed that God foreknows everything. Responding to Karl-Josef Kuschel's view that "preexistence is a marginal feature of the NT" (287) and to Robert Jenson's somewhat similar

relativizing of preexistence, Gathercole argues that, on the contrary, preexistence has a significant place throughout the New Testament. The fact that the New Testament emphasizes Christ's saving work rather than his preexistence does not mean that preexistence is insignificant: "it is precisely the heavenly Son of God who is crucified" (292).

This point is underscored by the Gospel of John, and so Gathercole observes in conclusion that "the ditch often assumed between the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel is not as ugly as many think. References to Jesus' coming have much the same sense in all four Gospels, although John does of course make explicit what is only implicit in the other three: it is a coming 'down from heaven' 'into the world'" (295). Gathercole grants that the Synoptic Gospels, unlike John, do not contain a doctrine of the Son's participation in the divine act of creation. Yet all four Gospels make clear that Jesus' coming into the world is his own purposeful action, which "presupposes a prior co-ordination of the Son's will with that of the Father, because of the parallelism between the Father's sending and the Son's coming" (296). It is therefore not inappropriate to speak, even as regards the Synoptic Gospels, of a relationship of the Father and the Son (however implicit in the Synoptics) prior to the Son's coming into the world. Even though "the focus is on the actual *purposes* of the coming" (ibid.), Jesus' preexistence has important ramifications for how one understands the purposes accomplished by his Cross and Resurrection.

The effect of Gathercole's arguments is to undermine the biblical basis of the standard theological distinctions between "low Christology" and "high Christology," or Christology "from below" and "from above." By examining Christology in terms of the "I have come" sayings and the "sending" sayings, and by showing that the construction of these sayings in the Synoptic Gospels rules out the supposition that they refer solely to a this-worldly movement, Gathercole succeeds in exhibiting the role of incarnational theology in the Synoptic Gospels—a role that is never isolated from Jesus' soteriological purpose. Likewise, Gathercole's attention to the titles of Jesus provides further evidence that the "I have come" and "sending" sayings do not pertain simply to a prophet or angel-like figure, as does Gathercole's careful distinction of Jesus' personal preexistence from Wisdom Christology. Gathercole helpfully builds his discussion of preexistence upon a survey of evidence of Jesus' transcendence according to the Synoptic Gospels. The result is a beautifully developed cumulative case.

In describing the purpose of his *Prophecy and Hermeneutics,* Christopher Seitz remarks that "the very definition of what we mean by 'history' is at stake. At the heart of history lies a figure, Jesus Christ. Understanding his place in time—our time right now—requires a full appreciation of the way he is prefigured in God's life with and witness within Israel" (7). Seitz argues that the biblical canon, as an inspired interpretation of history, exposes "configural" relationships between biblical texts that reveal how "God is acting consistently and comprehensibly across time" (8). God does not solely inspire the original

prophetic content and context; he also inspires how that original content will be heard, applied, and reconfigured in new contexts. It follows that fully historical research should primarily ask how God has been configuring prophetic speech into the witness that we find in the canonical form of the prophets. Seitz approvingly quotes Karl Barth: "'[T]he history in question is a 'history' which not only happened but happens and will happen in all times as the same history. . . . We are always at one with the prophets of the Old Testament'" (13).

Seitz's book emerges from his reflections upon the current condition of the genre of the "introduction to the prophets." Historical-critical research has enhanced scholarly understanding of when various books (and parts of books) in the prophetic corpus were written, and so the standard contemporary "introduction to the prophets" discusses the prophetic material in a historically reconstructed order rather than in the canonical order. Thus when Gerhard von Rad takes up the prophetic literature, his question is whether the historically reconstructed ordering can be shown to be theologically significant as a "tradition-historical movement" (22). In dialogue with von Rad, Seitz asks the opposite question, whether the canonical ordering can be shown to be theologically (and historically, once "history" includes God's providence) significant. As Seitz puts it, "The author of time has seen to the construction of a prophetic witness, whose very form tells us how to understand both history and the character of the one directing it" (24).

What might it mean to "introduce" the prophets? Seitz notes three options: first, a historical-sociological survey of Israel's "prophetic" literature as an ancient Near-Eastern phenomenon; second, a textbook for seminary instruction in Scripture; third, "an account of the way the prophets had been read in the church and synagogue—a history of the interpretation of the prophets" (28). In light of these three options, Seitz points out that new research into the canonical form of the prophets, without calling into question the historical-critical account of the gradual formation of the books, is showing that "the Twelve is a single coordinated work as well as a composite collection—now no longer random or requiring a basic historical retrofitting—of twelve coordinated witnesses" (30). If this is so, then the third option, the Church's and Synagogue's canonical interpretations of the prophets, gains importance. In addition, the isolation of the "introduction to the prophets" from other portions of the canonical literature needs to be questioned.

Turning to the origins of contemporary historical-critical scholarship, Seitz highlights the split between biblical and dogmatic theology advocated in the late eighteenth century by J. P. Gabler. In Gabler, biblical theology receives its organizing principle not from theology but from history understood as the linear progression of time: biblical theology focuses on "understanding the biblical authors and the writings associated with them as belonging to discrete and particularized periods" (35). The relationship of history to God, on the other hand, is the domain of dogmatic theology. As Seitz recognizes, the problem consists in the separation of linear time (now the domain of biblical exegesis) from what Seitz calls "figural" time (now the domain of dogmatic theology). The

separation undermines Scripture's way of attesting to its unity as God's revelation. As Seitz states, "Time was previously understood according to not just economic but also immanent and ontological considerations, and these were seen as subsisting together in, and then revealed by, a complex network of scriptural senses. Figural linkages assured that temporally discrete periods were coordinated through time" (35). As a result of the separation, biblical scholarship constructs an increasingly fragmented account of biblical authors/texts in their historical contexts. Even were it possible to master all the specializations, the separation produces "the disintegration of overarching theological, historical, literary, and curricular rationale for a common theological enterprise" (43).

On the one hand the study of the prophets benefits from this situation, because the prophetic literature seems well suited to reconstruction along a timeline. On the other hand "the prophets are also that portion of Christian Scripture most affiliated with the rest of the canon—by virtue of their own claim to speak through time and by the claim of a second canonical witness that they have done that well and truthfully" (ibid.). In other words, the separation produced by limiting biblical exegesis to linear history undermines the very claims that make the prophets intelligible as prophets. In response to this situation, theologically inclined Christian biblical scholars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries generally moved in one of two directions: either emphasizing (as Edward Pusey did) the prophets' miraculous capacity to predict later realities, or emphasizing (as von Rad did) "a reconstructed tradition-history of constant adaptation, dynamically transforming the former witness in radical ways until the witness of the New Testament culminates in one final fulfillment and dramatic external appropriation" (43; cf. 163). In both cases the prophets appear only as steps on the way to something further. For Seitz, by contrast, the prophets do not only predict or make way for something to come on a strictly linear timeline; rather, in the light of "figural" exegesis, they share with us (without losing their linear historicity) in the providential fulfillment.

Having made these programmatic points, Seitz undertakes an analysis of von Rad's approach. According to von Rad, the prophets had available to them the traditions of ancient "Jahwism" (in his view the substrate of the present Pentateuch). In making this affirmation, von Rad seeks to go beyond the tendency of some nineteenth-century interpreters to identify the prophets as "religious founders and geniuses at the ground floor of Old Testament theology, soon to be cramped by the legalism of postexilic Judaism, en route to a New Testament rescue operation" (63). While von Rad's prophets are not "religious founders," nonetheless their true significance can be known only through historical-critical reconstruction; von Rad has to provide an entirely new "understanding of inspiration, time, and providentiality" (68). He does this through his "tradition-historical" model, but since this new understanding depends upon his historical reconstruction, it lacks stability. Seitz suggests that the key deficiency in von Rad's approach—which he praises for "granting a positive theological value to the entire history of tradition" (192)—is that von Rad failed to ask whether the canonical form of the prophets might bear witness

to tradition-history in a more stable and theologically satisfying fashion than does von Rad's "tradition-historical" model.

For Seitz, the New Testament does not provide merely the final moment in the tradition-historical dynamic found in the prophets (as von Rad thinks). The newness proclaimed by the New Testament figurally accords with the canonical witness of the prophets. In order to place this position in context, Seitz describes more fully nineteenth-century scholarship on the prophets. Heinrich Hävernick and Gustav Oehler, among others, sought to retain a link to Moses and the Pentateuch, but this link came under increasing strain as scholars such as Heinrich Ewald and W. Robertson Smith began to call into question not only Moses and the Pentateuch but also the historical setting of the prophets themselves. Seitz attends in particular detail to E. B. Pusey's 1860 commentary on the Twelve. While he commends Pusey for avoiding emphasis on "the genius of the prophetic spirit" (101) and for appreciating the internal connections within the prophetic corpus, he finds that Pusey overemphasizes both the predictive aspect of prophecy and the historical accuracy of the canonical ordering. By making the linear timeline into the hermeneutical key, Pusey reduces his ability to attend to the canonical prophets' own account of providence and fulfillment.

By contrast, Seitz notes that contemporary research on the canonical unity of the Twelve, indebted to the work of Brevard Childs, suggests that the lack of dating in some prophetic books is purposeful: the corpus is (providentially) arranged so that the books bear upon each other, and upon all of Scripture, in a figural fashion without losing their historical particularity. Likewise, attention to the canonical form—at once a "single and twelvefold testimony" (149)—avoids placing all theological weight upon the historical reconstruction of the individual contribution of each prophet in the timeline, which mars the work not only of von Rad but also of scholars such as George Adam Smith (1928) and Joseph Blenkinsopp (1996), otherwise far removed from each other in time and perspective (as Seitz shows through a detailed discussion of Smith).

Seitz sums up his thesis regarding canonical reading of the Twelve: "The canonical form of the twelve Minor Prophets is concerned both to protect the original witness and to comprehend how that witness is meant to speak meaningfully across the ages, through time" (150). In this way both aspects of history are preserved: the original speech and the providentially arranged (canonical) speaking, the one always caught up in the other. Indeed, Seitz points out that although von Rad "does not regard the final form as theologically significant" (168) in the case of the prophets, he does consider (albeit in a tentative fashion) the canonical form of Genesis to be of theological interest. In von Rad's work on Genesis, Seitz finds passages "where von Rad saw quite clearly that it was in *the combination of the sources* that real theological interpretation of history came into sharpest profile" (193). Seitz thus emphasizes that the link between the Old Testament and the New cannot be located in historical reconstructions of the original sources, but requires attentiveness to the Old Testament in the form that it was providentially received by Christ Jesus.

This canonical form contains its own pattern of affiliation between the books, so that historical reconstruction need not take on the task of constructing a different pattern.

However, what about differences that one finds among ancient manuscripts as regards the ordering of the prophets? Did a standard ordering of the prophets exist in Jesus' time? Seitz proposes that "the Septuagint is best seen as an effort to recast a strange Masoretic Text order" (204), but he also explores the Masoretic ordering of the Twelve with the same goal of appreciating its intelligibility. Even if the earliest collections differ in their ordering of the Twelve's undated books, Seitz's basic point remains accurate: "historicality is more than just pulling prophetic witnesses apart, determining what is authentic and secondary, and placing this all within a reconstructed history of traditions or history-of-religion" (218; cf. 232). Grasping "how the Bible *relates to itself in its own system of cross-reference*" (228) is required by a historical reading of the Bible, and is fundamental to the Bible's own theology of history. As Seitz remarks, "The very notion of a canonical process assumes a doctrine of inspiration that spills out from the prophetic word once delivered, as God superintends that word toward his own accomplishing end" (240; cf. 250).

By attending to the formation of the prophetic witness within a canonical process, Seitz enables us to understand prophecy and fulfillment in a manner that appreciates the working of God's (Trinitarian) providence in and through the linear unfolding of history. The figural accordance of this prophetic witness with the gospel instructs us about the God who is acting: "Because the word is God's, he undertakes to carry it through time and outfit it to do what he purposes: to show that it is his word, that he did what he promised, and that inside of every one of his promises there is a providentially overseen surprise as well" (252). Seitz's book is a major contribution to our understanding of what it means to do fully historical research from a critical, and Christian, perspective. The discernment of true prophecy cannot be separated from God's providential arrangement of the canon. History is not neutral terrain. Recognizing that the account we give of history is inevitably a theological account, Seitz inaugurates a deeper exploration of the prophetic canon as witness to God's activity in history and in the Church.

In *Reading Scripture with the Church,* four leading exponents of theological exegesis—A. K. M. Adam, Stephen E. Fowl, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and Francis Watson—engage in constructive dialogue, each author providing two essays. In their preface, the authors note that they agree on four principles: first, "the church's teaching traditions complement the truth that comes to expression in the theological interpretation of Scripture" (9); second, interpretation of the Bible requires theological judgments throughout interpretative labor; third, the "postmodern" critique of modern philosophy has value; fourth, how one interprets the Bible is inseparable from how one lives one's life.

A. K. M. Adam provides the first essay, "Poaching on Zion: Biblical Theology as Signifying Practice." Adam proposes that biblical theology should be weighted

in favor of an abundance of possible meanings rather than begin with the inevitably polemical and exclusionary assumption that the goal of exegesis is to search for the one correct meaning. When we flatten "discourse into polarities" (20), we tend to limit biblical interpretation to our favorite group of experts, whose interpretations become "a fortified outpost isolated from the teeming flux of signification outside its secure walls" (23). Adam does not reject "criteria for evaluating interpretations" (25), but the effort to identify such criteria should not privilege words over the nonverbal meanings of "images, sounds, and gestures" (28). As a "signifying practice" that includes nonverbal meanings, biblical theology should be attuned to the embodied dimension of interpreting Scripture, including ethics, homiletics, and liturgics.

On this view, biblical interpretation is like an improvisational performance, in which interpreters undertake to perform "the shared scriptural score" (31). Scripture informs how we interpret the "waves of signification" (30) that we receive from our surroundings, and Scripture guides us in the "signifying practice" by which we attempt to communicate Scripture's meanings to others. No performance can claim to be *the* fulfillment of the "biblical score," and no performance can use one aspect of the biblical score for negating another aspect. Rather, the biblical canon, read in light of the saints and within our communal labors of exegesis (preeminently worship), should be expected to unveil its own richness and harmony. Adam calls for a theocentric exegesis that directs "attention away from us, away from our ingenuity, away from the urgent messages we need to convey, away from our resourcefulness, and toward the God whom we praise" (33). By imitating and trusting "reliable friends" (34) who teach us how to imitate Christ in communities of worship, we learn how to be "better biblical theologians" who need not confine the Bible to "splendid disciplinary isolation" (ibid.), but who instead rejoice in "the abundant flux of meaning that surrounds and suffuses us, practicing at every turn the harmony, the diligence, and the gratitude by which our biblical theology testifies to the grace of Christ" (ibid.).

The second essay, Stephen E. Fowl's "The Importance of a Multivoiced Literal Sense of Scripture: The Example of Thomas Aquinas," begins by noting that recent theological arguments among Episcopalians (most notably over the moral status of homosexual acts) are in fact arguments about the literal sense of Scripture. In Fowl's view, however, both sides have too narrow a notion of what the literal sense includes. Fowl suggests that Thomas Aquinas provides a broader notion of Scripture's literal sense, and that Aquinas's approach has clear benefits as regards the theology of God, the communion of saints, the dignity and place of Scripture, and the growth of our friendship with God.

For Aquinas, Fowl shows, Scripture has the foremost place within *sacra doctrina*, "holy teaching" that guides human beings to holiness. Scripture has both a spiritual sense and a literal sense. The spiritual sense, which is threefold, flows from the Holy Spirit's ability to use human deeds and words to signify something further: "spiritual senses depend on one's ability to discern similarities between things mentioned in the Old Testament and things mentioned in the

New Testament, between Jesus's deeds and our own, between our final end and our present situation, and so on" (39). Scripture's literal sense provides the norm for discerning the spiritual sense. The literal sense is the meaning intended by the human author and the divine author of Scripture. The literal sense intended by the divine author may go beyond the literal sense intended by the human author, and so there may be more than one literal sense of a passage.

As an example, Fowl discusses Aquinas's commentary on John 1:1, where Aquinas assents to three patristic suggestions as regards the literal sense of "principium" on the grounds that each suggestion contains a truth about "principium." Likewise, in the face of different patristic interpretations of Genesis 1:2, Aquinas affirms that each can be the literal sense, and warns against constricting "'the meaning of a text of Scripture in such a way as to preclude other truthful meanings that can, without destroying the context, be fitted to Scripture'" (44, citing Aquinas's *De Potentia*). How then can one discern a true literal sense from a false one? In his engagement with Aquinas, Fowl points to the canonical Scripture, read in light of the "rule of faith" (49), as normative. He also argues that a true literal sense is one that "enhance[s] believers' friendship with God" (48), since the purpose of Scripture—and of the exploration of its possible literal senses—is "drawing us into deeper love of God" (49) as reflected in our doctrine and practice.

The third essay is Kevin Vanhoozer's "Imprisoned or Free? Text, Status, and Theological Interpretation in the Master/Slave Discourse of Philemon." Vanhoozer is concerned that the theological interpreter, including the Church, sometimes becomes deaf to the biblical text. He also recognizes, however, that imagining biblical interpretation as a power struggle between the text and the interpreter is inadequate. He therefore inquires into the nature of true "interpretive freedom" (53), in critical dialogue with Hegel's master/slave paradigm. If the interpreter (master) constitutes the meaning of the text (slave), then the text/author is radically dependent upon the interpreter. But if the text is master and the interpreter slave, then the interpreter's intelligence has no role.

As Vanhoozer observes, the problem is with the master/slave dichotomy: the author/text's "right to be heard" (59) need not be in conflict with the interpreter's intelligent freedom. Granting that "[t]he church is not an error-free zone" (61), interpreting the Bible requires reading "in order to hear what God is saying to the church—to discern the *divine* discourse in the *canonical* work" (62). As "God's word written" (ibid.), the biblical text speaks to and in the Church. The Bible and the Church need not be at odds. God inspires prophets and apostles who teach the gospel of Christ in a manner that bears spiritual fruit in the Church.

After surveying various contemporary means of accounting for the canonical unity of the Bible, Vanhoozer follows Nicholas Wolterstorff's *Divine Discourse,* which interprets "Scripture as a divine work—a unified discourse made up of diverse human discourses" (69). Vanhoozer concentrates here on the question of what the divine and human authors are doing with their words; since the divine author is the author of the whole, what he is doing can be known only

canonically, with Jesus Christ at the center. For Vanhoozer, therefore, "Theological interpretation is not a matter of breaking some code ('this means that') but of grasping everything that God is doing in and with the various strata of biblical discourse" (71). Biblical interpretation includes "right reception and right response" (72) guided by the Holy Spirit, and so God speaks not only in Scripture, but also through Scripture.

Vanhoozer concludes that Scripture, as God's speech and action in the "servant form of human language and literature" (74), is like a dramatic script: Scripture not only sets forth the theo-drama, but also calls upon its interpreters to participate in the theo-drama. Not only the author (the triune God), but also the interpreters (the Church) are present and active in the "theodramatic action" (75) of Scripture. The result is not a power struggle between text/author and interpreter, but rather a rich "*intersubjectivity* (dialogue, communicative interaction): both the interpersonal interaction of the Spirit of God with the human authors of the Bible (inspiration) and the interpersonal interaction of the Spirit of God with the human readers of the Bible (illumination)" (76). Sanctified by God for evangelization, Scripture has a unique and primary place as God's speech and action in human words—but to say this is also to affirm the efficacy of the Spirit's work through Scripture, "in the church's reception of the gospel over the centuries and across cultures" (77).

Theological interpretation thus has as its goal ecclesial participation in the theodrama, a participation or wise performance whose guidelines are laid down by doctrine. Vanhoozer gives an example of such theological interpretation as regards Paul's Letter to Philemon. Paul suggests that status in Christ is based upon "free obedience" (89). In terms of exegesis, this means that the interpreter's free obedience to the text/author liberates the interpreter, by means of "hermeneutic hospitality" (91) through the Spirit. Theological exegesis, in short, bears fruit through humbling itself, in imitation of Christ, to serve the biblical texts and to embody them in "free improvisation" (93).

Francis Watson provides the fourth essay, "Are There Still Four Gospels? A Study in Theological Hermeneutics." Watson notes that Jesus is mediated to Christians through texts; the biblical texts specify even the nontextual encounters with Jesus, such as the Eucharist. Without the four Gospels, the Church could not exist. Yet what sets these four Gospels apart from other texts about Jesus? Does the canonizing of only four Gospels serve to silence other voices with respect to Jesus?

Critiquing the notion that "the church's leaders successfully concealed the original revelation, substituting a religion that expressed their own will to power" (98), Watson examines Irenaeus's theological rationale for the fourfold gospel, which Irenaeus (followed in slightly different ways by Augustine and Jerome) links with the four faces of "the four mysterious figures who uphold the divine throne" (103) in Ezekiel 1 and Revelation 4. Irenaeus suggests that these figures "attest the four-dimensional mission of the Son of God: his regal authority, his sacrificial self-giving, his true humanity, and his bestowal of the Spirit" (106). Watson finds here "a *via media* between pure singularity and

limitless plurality" so that the Gospels reveal "a Christ who evades our attempts to grasp his being as a whole, yet whose person and work are subject to the constraints of definite form" (107). Theologically, the fourfold witness shows that Christ exceeds our grasp without thereby being unintelligible. Diversity does not negate coherence.

Watson also looks at Justin Martyr's account of the role of the Gospels, or "'memoirs of the apostles'" (110, citing Justin's *First Apology*), in the Eucharistic liturgy. In describing the celebration of the Eucharist, Justin draws upon all four Gospels, which provide a fourfold attestation to the Eucharist (also confirmed for Justin by Malachi 1:11). By contrast, the apocryphal gospels do not attest to the Eucharist. In the "eucharistic life of the church," as in the four Gospels, diversity and unity come together.

Each of the four authors then briefly responds to the three others, in reverse order. Interested by his colleagues' focus on the relationship of author/text and reader, Watson points out that "[a]t least two of these authors were also readers" (120), namely Matthew and Luke. *Pace* Vanhoozer and Adam, Matthew's and Luke's "[r]eading seems to conform neither to the model of self-subjection to the prior canonical authors nor to the model of unlimited semantic abundance" (121). Furthermore, the earliest readers invested heavily in the harmonization of the Gospels with each other and of the Old Testament with the New. As the basis for contemporary hermeneutics, Watson proposes Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine*, which balances theological, linguistic, literary, and historical elements.

Fowl emphasizes that "the key to interpreting theologically lies in keeping theological concerns primary to all others" (126), and he too cites *On Christian Doctrine* for its awareness that exegesis aims at attaining to union with God, not at any lesser goal. In a "fractured church" (127), Fowl argues that local congregations need to be places of formation in the "rule of faith" and in "Christ-focused practical reasoning" (129), whose success is known by the "fittingness" of its display of cruciformity.

Vanhoozer argues that biblical interpretation is an opportunity not for proposing an abundance of creative meanings, but rather for humbly listening to the texts of Scripture. Rather than scorning hermeneutical theory, interpreters should seek a theory of interpretation rooted in "apprenticeship to Jesus' own reading practice" (134). Vanhoozer also light-heartedly associates each of the book's four approaches with one of the four faces of Ezekiel 1. *Pace* Fowl, he argues for a "multifaceted" literal sense rather than literal senses, and he insists upon interpretation of the historical Greek text rather than the Latin "principium." He also suggests that Adam does not sufficiently appreciate the fact that there has "always been a certain polarization between God's people and 'not-my-people'" (138), which envisions biblical norms for truthful witness.

Adam finds that the essays show "both an increase in the degree to which our positions converge and an increase in the nuance of our disagreements" (143). Both aspects, he suggests, indicate that theological exegesis has come of age; no longer can historical-critical methodology claim sole legitimacy. Adam calls for further attention to "ambiguity, presuppositions, context, and power" (145) so

as to clarify the significance of interpretive difference, given its inevitability. He appreciates Watson's exploration of how the fourfold gospel affirms both diversity and unity, Vanhoozer's emphasis on "dramatic improvisation between the close of the canon and the consummation foretold in Revelation" (146), and Fowl's point that the literal sense does not dispel all ambiguity but rather can contain many true meanings. For Adam, the book's project of exegetical convergence is ultimately an eschatological one, "reaching toward a resolution yet to be revealed" and awaiting "the eventual recapitulation that will bring our efforts into harmony with one another and the truth" (148).

At the center of the book's dialogue, it seems to me, is the question of how to read Scripture with the Church if the (teaching) Church cannot be trusted to read Scripture adequately. For Adam the answer awaits an eschatological resolution; for Fowl the Church can be instructed by Scripture's own openness to multiple literal meanings; for Vanhoozer the answer consists in how one conceives the "theodramatic action" in which the Church participates through the faithfulness of her members to Scripture's Word; for Watson the answer may well be the Anglican "via media" between Catholic and evangelical. Vanhoozer's work here strikes me as particularly impressive, but I would connect his emphasis on the humble receptivity of interpreters to the embodied sacramental receptivity fostered by the apostolic constitution of the Church.

Francis Watson's *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* has four parts. The first part introduces his thesis, which is that Paul reads the Torah as containing two antithetical affirmations: the unconditional blessing of Genesis 15:6 ("And he [Abraham] believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness") and the conditional blessing of Leviticus 18:5 ("You shall therefore keep my statutes and my ordinances, by doing which a man shall live: I am the Lord"). Watson argues that Paul's interpretation of the Torah critiques Leviticus 18:5 in favor of Genesis 15:6. The second, third, and fourth parts defend this position by comparing Paul's exegesis of texts from the five books of the Torah with exegesis of the same texts by roughly contemporaneous Jewish interpreters. Paul reads the Torah in light of Christ; the other Jewish interpreters (arriving at the opposite conclusion from that of Paul) also appeal to "some kind of revelatory hermeneutical event" (532). Watson thus aims to show that, despite Paul's disagreement with other Jewish exegetes, Paul's exegesis and that of his Jewish contemporaries belong within a continuum of possibilities open to Jewish readers of Paul's time. This conclusion does not "erase the difference between Pauline Christian Judaism (for want of a better expression) and non-Christian Judaisms" (ibid.)—a Christological difference. Rather, Watson holds, his analysis provides "a possible non-reductionistic way of negotiating that difference" (533).

Watson begins by placing his argument within the context of the "new perspective on Paul" put forward by E. P. Sanders and others (including Watson himself in his 1986 *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*). Sanders holds that Jews of Paul's day practiced a "covenantal nomism" in which covenant had priority to Torah observance. By contrast, Watson notes that although Paul strongly

prioritizes covenant, other contemporaneous Jews exhibit "broad agreement that Israel's observance or non-observance of the law is fundamental to the covenant itself" (9). The result is that "[i]n Sanders no less than in Bultmann, 'Judaism' is subjected to a generalized Pauline norm" (12). Watson suggests that a richer understanding of Judaism in Paul's day would make clearer that Paul's disagreements with his fellow Jews flowed not solely from his profession of Christ, but also from his exegesis of Torah. As Watson proposes in dialogue with Richard Hays's *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul,* "In Paul, scripture is not overwhelmed by the light of an autonomous Christ-event needing no scriptural mediation. It is scripture that shapes the contours of the Christ-event, and to discern how it does so is to uncover the true meaning of scripture itself" (17). Reading Torah in light of Christ (soteriologically), Paul locates the Torah's true meaning in its own internal fractures: "the tension between the unconditional promise and the Sinai legislation, and the tension between the law's offer of life and its curse" (23). The Torah contains an internal critique of the Law, a critique that is illumined and resolved in Christ.

Watson recognizes the similarity of his reading to that of Martin Luther, who likewise appreciated the "distinction between a reading of the Torah that lays all possible emphasis on the promise to Abraham of unconditional divine saving action, worldwide in its scope, and a reading centred upon the demand emanating from Sinai for specific forms of human action and abstention" (29). In Watson's view, critiques of Luther's reading of Paul (among which Watson most values Albert Schweitzer's) have not adequately understood how Paul's "doctrine of righteousness by faith is an exercise in scriptural interpretation and hermeneutics" (39). For this reason, Watson undertakes a careful exposition of the place and function of scriptural citations in Paul, with a focus on the meaning of the citation in the Letter to the Romans of Habakkuk 2:4. In Romans 1-3, Paul shows that Scripture both denies that anyone is righteous and affirms a righteousness by faith. For Paul the Torah reveals human sin and guilt (the curse), but it also reveals the unconditional divine blessing. As Watson puts it, Paul holds that "[t]he law declares that 'works of law'—its own works, the observance of its commandments—are not the way to righteousness. But the observance of its commandments is precisely what the law enjoins from beginning to end, from the Decalogue in Exodus 20 to the eloquent exhortations of the book of Deuteronomy" (68). By revealing its own failure as a path of blessing, the Torah leads the attentive reader back to the Torah's promise of unconditional blessing through divine saving action.

Watson adds a lengthy discussion of Habakkuk 2:4 in the context of the Book of the Twelve, with particular attention to how the Qumran pesherist interprets Habakkuk 2:4. For the Qumran pesherist, as opposed to Paul, "The righteous will live not 'by faith alone' but by virtue of their practice of the law as well as their faith in the Teacher" (123), and so the Qumran persherist Habakkuk 2:4 lacks "the Pauline emphasis on faith's universal scope" (124). Addressing the question of whether Habakkuk 2:4 can plausibly be read to mean what Paul thinks it means, Watson shows that within its canonical context in the Twelve,

Habakkuk 2:1-4 stands as a privileged expression of the "canonical hermeneutic of hope in the face of non-fulfilment" (138). In this regard, Watson concludes, both "Paul and the pesherist draw on the semantic potential of the scriptural text itself—while not allowing themselves to be confined self-effacingly within its limits, as though they had nothing of their own to contribute" (163).

Watson next examines Paul's exegesis of specific passages from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Describing Paul's overall outlook, Watson comments that Paul views Scripture as revealing that humans are so entangled in sin that only divine action can extricate them: "Despairing of all human capacity, we must place our hope in God alone: that for Paul is the sum of the law and the prophets" (169). As Watson points out, the narrator in the Abraham story attributes numerous good works to Abraham, and so the interpretation found in *Jubilees,* which presents "an image of a Torah-observant Abraham" (237), is not far-fetched. Paul, however, holds that God's unilateral blessing in Genesis 15:6 provides the key to interpreting everything else about Abraham. Watson shows that this position fits with the commencement of the Abraham narrative (Genesis 12:1-3), where God unconditionally gives Abraham the promise of divine blessing. Citing Genesis 12:3 and 15:6, Paul argues in Galatians 3 that Abraham's blessing consists in his righteousness by faith, which "is identical to the blessing that God will bestow on the Gentiles" (189). The point, Watson notes, is that "salvation is wholly God's act" (196); God gives a "unilateral, unalterable covenant of pure promise which cannot be emended even by the law" (198). Watson also examines Romans 4:13-16 for its similar exegesis of Genesis 15.

Along the same lines, Watson explores Galatians 4 and Romans 9, which discuss the theological significance of Ishmael (law) and Isaac (promise). Ishmael symbolizes the Law because Abraham's intercourse with Hagar represents "the possibility that human initiative is a necessary precondition for the fulfilment of the promise" (207), whereas God unconditionally promises Isaac's miraculous conception. Watson also notes that Abraham is not circumcised until Genesis 17, and so (as Paul argues in Romans 4) the unconditional promises (to a Gentile) precede the conditional relationship. After discussing *Jubilees'* Torah-observant Abraham, Watson compares Paul's account to Philo of Alexandria's depiction of Abraham as an exemplar of virtuous living in accordance with natural law. As Watson observes, neither *Jubilees* nor Philo fully appreciates the (theocentric) unilateral divine promise that has such a central place in the Abraham narrative. In Philo, Watson states, the divine promise means simply that "God comes out to meet the soul that is already journeying towards him" (246) via natural gifts. Josephus, for his part, argues that God's promise in Genesis 15:6 comes about because of Abraham's good action in refusing to take more than his share of the spoil in Genesis 14; Josephus also presents Abraham as spreading "Chaldean science and culture" to Egypt (258).

Regarding Exodus, Paul generally focuses on the law given at Mount Sinai. In 2 Corinthians 3:7, Paul refers to the giving of the two stone tablets as "the dispensation of death." Watson connects this with the slaughter that occurs after

Moses' first descent from Mount Sinai (Exod 32). When Moses descends from the mountain a second time, he face shines with dazzling glory; after talking with the people, Moses veils his face in order (Paul reasons) to conceal the departing of the glory. Watson suggests that according to Paul, the Torah thus reveals its own inadequacy: "In the allegorical figure of the veiled Moses, the Law of Moses secretly acknowledges that it does not speak with complete openness, that it conceals the fact of its own transitoriness, and that its glory is destined to be eclipsed by a surpassing glory that endures for ever" (295). By contrast, Watson notes, Philo does not describe the first descent's violent result and instead focuses on the glory of the second descent.

Regarding Leviticus, Watson brings Paul's critical reading of Leviticus 18:5 into dialogue with Josephus's use of this text. While Paul affirms the unconditional promise, "Leviticus assumes that everything that preceded the Sinai disclosure comes to fruition in it" (325). Josephus accepts Leviticus's view that salvation flows from observance of God's law, and he "paints an idealized picture of the law and the benefits it has to offer to the human race" (347). Similarly, Watson compares Paul's understanding of Numbers with that of *Wisdom of Solomon*. Whereas Paul emphasizes the destruction of the sinful and rebellious people on their journeying, *Wisdom of Solomon* grants that sinners undergo judgment but underscores more broadly the "antithesis between the divine judgment inflicted on Egypt and the saving goodness experienced by Israel" (383). In *Wisdom of Solomon,* the figure of Wisdom is active in creation (Genesis) so as to establish the basis for salvation and judgment (Exodus and Numbers). In its rewriting of the stories of Numbers, *Wisdom of Solomon* ignores or minimizes the destruction of the Israelites. As Watson puts it, "Paul exploits the fact that the history of Israel in the aftermath of Sinai is a history of disaster, whereas the author of *Wisdom* does his utmost to conceal this fact" (404). Even where Paul deliberately echoes *Wisdom,* as in Romans 1, Paul turns the tables by emphasizing that Israel "is itself deeply complicit in the idolatry and ungodliness that it prefers to ascribe to the Gentiles" (411).

Watson identifies five Pauline citations and allusions from Deuteronomy 5-26, and eight from Deuteronomy 27-34. The citations and allusions from Deuteronomy 5-26 appear almost entirely in the Corinthian correspondence, and generally describe "laws or commandments with direct practical applications within the Christian community" (416), such as the commandments to love God and to expel evildoers. The citations and allusions from Deuteronomy 27-34 show that life under the Law is defined by the covenantal curse. While Paul knows that "according to Deuteronomy 30, the predicament created by the law's curse is to be resolved by way of the law" (427), Paul argues on the basis of Deuteronomy 27-29 that the curse is inescapable because of human sinful inability to follow the Law. Deuteronomy 30 makes obeying the Law sound easy, but the entire history of Israel stands against this. For Paul the true way forward is found in the prophetic Song of Moses (Deut 32), regarding which Paul emphasizes two texts: "the jealousy text, and the exhortation to Gentiles (Deut. 32.21, 43)" (449). Watson argues that for Paul the Song gives indications of an

"unconditional divine saving act" that will achieve "a final comprehensive mercy, encompassing a recalcitrant Israel and the 'non-nation' of the Gentiles alike" (453). Paul thus contrasts Moses the lawgiver, whose anthropocentric path will fail, with Moses the prophet, whose theocentric path will succeed.

Watson compares Paul's reading of Deuteronomy with two roughly contemporaneous alternative readings, *Baruch* and *4 Ezra*. *Baruch* first confesses the people's sins that have brought upon them the just judgment of God. He then praises the gift of the law as the path of wisdom and life, and looks forward to Israel's future glory, with a focus on Deuteronomy 30 as the source of hope. Watson contrasts this view with Paul's perspective: "In one case, the turning-point between the old and new is a matter of appropriate *human* action, beginning with confession and determined by the law. In the other case, the turning-point is a matter of definitive, unsurpassable *divine* saving action, which reorients human action towards itself and so represents a breach with the law" (464).

Turning to *4 Ezra*, Watson finds that it contains the same concerns that one finds in Paul. *4 Ezra* contains a passionate dialogue with God's representative, the angel Uriel, in which the figure of Ezra challenges God's goodness vis-à-vis Israel. Since Israel has tried to observe God's law, Ezra suggests that the curse may be too harsh. As Watson puts it, "On the grounds both of Israel's conduct and of the electing divine love, present suffering is incomprehensible" (479). When Ezra learns that only a tiny fragment of the people of Israel will be saved—namely, the tiny fragment that has observed the Law in accord with Deuteronomy 30—he pleads on behalf of all Israel, but to no avail. Watson puts his finger on the problem: "The Gentiles subject Israel to temporal suffering in this world, but Moses condemns the majority in Israel to eternal suffering in the next" (493). By contrast, Watson holds that Paul, in Romans 11, "has reached a position that goes far beyond even Ezra in its absolutizing of the divine mercy" (504). Paul's portrait of God's mercy, Watson suggests, fits better exegetically with the character of the God who makes himself known in Israel's Scripture. In this regard Watson argues that "Genesis as a whole gives little occasion for the lament, 'O Adam, what have you done?' Sin and death only become serious later, with the coming of the law" (513).

Watson concludes by summarizing once again the key passages in Galatians and Romans where Paul offers a "construal of the Torah as a whole" (519), with particular attention to Genesis 15:6, Leviticus 18:5, Exodus 32 and 34, and Deuteronomy 27:26. The question is whether Watson might extend Paul's "construal of the Torah as a whole" to include the question of whether Paul envisions Christ, and Christians, as fulfilling the Mosaic law. Or does Paul conceive Christ as simply the embodiment of God's universal and unconditional promise of salvation? What does Paul mean when he says, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21)? One thinks likewise of Romans 8:3-4, "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." Watson's account of Paul's exegesis will greatly enrich future consideration of Christ's relationship, as revealed by the New Testament, to the Mosaic law—as well as of Christians' relationship to the "law of Christ."

How does Christ Jesus communicate to us? How do we learn who he is and what he has to teach us about the divine life and our lives? How can we live out the reconciliation that he has achieved? All six books reviewed here return us to these fundamental questions and remind us that the visible Church embodies answers to these questions (without negating their eschatological dimension). Exegetes and theologians ponder, in different ways, the mystery of what God, in Christ and the Holy Spirit, has brought forth in the world.

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Reason with Piety: Garrigou-Lagrange in the Service of Catholic Thought. By AIDAN NICHOLS, O.P. Naples, Fla.: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2008. Pp. viii + 152 (paper). ISBN 978-1-932589-49-8.

R. R. Reno has written recently that Catholic theology "after the revolution"—after the labors of Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Marie-Dominique Chenu, and the other greats, that is—suffers from terminal idiosyncraticity. The achievements of the giants could be speculatively profound and historically incisive, sometimes in one and the same work, and were always brilliantly original as measured against the common foil of Leonine neo-Scholasticism. Because of this last point, alas, that is, because they were brilliant in unique ways, we of the next generation (or two), their heirs, have no theological *lingua franca* with which to speak among ourselves, no common theological discourse in which to educate our own successors, and no easy way to introduce a would-be student even into the thought of the great revolutionaries themselves, since the common foil against which they worked and which is necessary for understanding them, Leonine neo-Scholasticism, has largely vanished, dismantled by their common effort. Along comes Aidan Nichols, a man in the resurrection business, inviting us to look at an exemplar of theology very much before the revolution, namely Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (1877-1964).

Nichol's characterization of Garrigou as a Thomist of the "Strict Observance" is important for understanding the inventory of his work that makes up the bulk

of this book. Such a Thomist holds that the philosophy and theology of St. Thomas alone provide the only wholly adequate instruments for the defense, for the most truthful expression, and for the exploration of revelation. Moreover, such a Thomist is confident that the commentatorial tradition, from Capreolus to Cajetan to John of St. Thomas and beyond, provides a reliable interpretive guide to and authentic development of the thought of St. Thomas. There is no need to get behind the tradition of commentators and scholiasts in order to find the "true" Thomas; the tradition in question, like the larger Tradition of the Church, is a window and even a magnifying glass, not an encrustation or opaque film obscuring our vision of what has been handed down. A Thomist of the Strict Observance in the first part of the twentieth century, furthermore, was especially concerned to defend Catholic teaching from Modernism, which destroyed the objective reference of dogma as the expression of a revelation spoken from outside of us and made of it rather a token of interior religious experience and subjective aspiration.

This takes us to Garrigou's intervention in the previous century's first great clash of theological arms, his brief contra Modernism. Nichols, in his discussion of *Le Sens commun, la philosophie de l'être et les formules dogmatiques* (1909), points us to the foundational philosophical commitments informing all of Garrigou's writing. Furthermore, with his usual conciseness and lucidity, he inventories the contents of Garrigou's theological *oeuvre*, from his theology of revelation to the great treatises on God and his attributes, through Christology and on to the theology of grace, predestination, and the mystical life. Nichols ends with an evocation of Garrigou's political commitments, a reality affecting the reception of his theology especially after the Second World War.

Along the way there are dazzling glimpses of speculative brilliance and theological profundity: Garrigou's elaborate deployment of the Fourth Way, his demonstration of the confluence of all the Ways to *esse subsistens*, the ordered ensemble of the divine attributes, Trinitarian fecundity, and the structure of providence. All this makes us want to read or re-read. Along the way, as well, we see that Garrigou gives us a great example of confidence in the Church, confidence in the continuity of the life and the life of the mind of the Church. This goes hand in hand with Thomism of the Strict Observance.

Nichols's conciseness and modesty can sometimes seem to be pressed to a fault. He does not tell us enough to let us make up our minds on the question of Garrigou's reduction of the principle of causality to the principle of identity, or on that of his alleged theological determinism, nor is any critical question raised about his attempt to prove the fact of revelation prior to the act of faith. On the other hand, there is a good evocation of the importance of getting the relation between ascetical and mystical theology right, and of Garrigou's role in the Second Vatican Council's teaching of the universal call to holiness.

Can we just go back to Garrigou? Reno laments the impossibility of giving the works of the great revolutionaries to beginning students of Catholic theology. Can we give them the books of Garrigou? Certainly, he speaks a theological discourse common to his time and place, and is an example of how to build

within such a commonly shared framework. But the framework itself supposes a greater culture of Catholic thought and letters, hardly any of which finds cultivation today. So, no, we can't give them Garrigou's books, either.

Moreover, there are two issues intrinsic to the *oeuvre* that need to be addressed before we recommend Garrigou even to the student who is acquainted with the *Posterior Analytics,* knows something of the doctrine of the predicables, has a more developed capacity to follow an argument than is usual with students today, and is appreciative of the careful, hierarchical, and brook-no-contradiction deployment of authorities that structure such thinking as Garrigou's.

The first issue is that of the soundness of Garrigou's theory of common sense, which alleges both the universality of the basic concepts of the philosophy of being and the Church's adoption of just these concepts for the expression of its doctrines. The second issue is Garrigou's indifference to the historical-critical location of texts. In fact, however, these are not two issues but one and the same thing, since the theory of common sense is Garrigou's philosophical warrant for why it is safe—intellectually safe—to avoid the kind of historical studies, especially including that of St. Thomas, undertaken or appreciated by almost all his adversaries, from the Modernists to the exponents of the *nouvelle théologie.* Garrigou is to be honored for the tenaciousness with which he defended the objectivity and truth of dogma throughout the course of his career, and for the accuracy of his discernment of neo-Modernist currents within the *nouvelle théologie.* But he found himself, I think, in the position of the master of St. Thomas's fourth *Quodlibet* who, while he correctly determines the truth of some question, sends the student away unsatisfied because he has not illumined him with an understanding as to how the truth is true. And this is so for the reason that part of our understanding of any truth today, however necessary and timeless and eternal it may be, consists of an awareness of the concrete contingency of its appearance, of how it came to be manifest, and in that sense of its history. Just in order to defend the objectivity and truth of, say, fourth- and fifth-century Christological dogma, we have to assure ourselves of how and under what concrete conditions of thought and imagination the gospel appeared—truly!—to the blessed 318, to the Cappadocians, to Cyril, to Leo, and this in order that we may behold it appearing truly to us in the very terms and relations worked out by the saints. To be sure, such historical inquiry could not be merely extrinsically related to dogmatics. Still, dogmatics cannot replace such inquiry or pretend that it has no role to play. Nichols writes that for Garrigou, "What mattered was what was true not who said it." There is, of course, a sense in which this indicates the praiseworthy avoidance of *ad hominem.* But it can also conceal an unwillingness to recognize the necessity of history.

By speaking of a contemporary requirement of the knowledge of the conditions of the historical manifestation of dogmatic truth, I mean very much to evoke what Robert Sokolowski calls "the theology of disclosure." What Sokolowski would have us as theologians pay attention to is not only what is disclosed by revelation, but how it is disclosed, which can include also at certain

crucial points some of the historical circumstances of its disclosure. For instance, we need to see such things as how a concern both for the transcendence of God and for human nature as an integral object of salvation come together in the Cappadocian rejection of Apollinarianism. Or again, we need to see how the Cappadocian distinction between hypostasis and nature, just by itself, was an open invitation to Nestorianism. It is this sort of analysis-in-history (which of course cannot be conveyed in any convincing form in a book review) that gives us to understand why the Church's doctrinal formulae had to be articulated as they were and why such articulation remains meaningful and true, and not an antecedently constructed "conceptual realist theory of common sense."

Saying as much on behalf of historical-critical inquiry, which is also to be deployed in reading St. Thomas, is not by any means to endorse the twentieth-century depreciation and even vilification of the Thomist commentatorial tradition undertaken by Gilson, Chenu, and de Lubac. There are likely rehabilitations to be made there, too, and such work is already apace. I think of Romanus Cessario and Lawrence Feingold. What I want to say is that we can have it all; we can have everything—the objectivity and stability of dogma, defended in metaphysical depth as it of course needs to be today; knowledge of the historical conditions of the manifestation and expression of dogmatic truth and so of the fatedness of its appearance; and appreciation of the traditions, both magisterial and theological, that have preserved and deepened our hold on dogma and the understanding of dogma. It's not just that we *can* have everything, however; today, we *need* to have everything.

The remarks in the last half of this review are not meant to be critical of Nichols, but I hope are an example of the kind of engagement his book will provoke, since he has in every way shown himself to be once again "in the service of Catholic thought."

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Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies. By DAVID BENTLEY HART. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009. Pp. xiv + 253. $28.00 (cloth). ISBN 9780300111903.

In his *Pensées*, the seventeenth-century mathematician Blaise Pascal admonishes his readers to avoid any untoward atheist-bashing: "Pity the atheists who are searching. Aren't they unhappy enough already? Revile those who boast about it." In his latest book, *Atheist Delusions*, David Bentley Hart never mentions Pascal in his brilliant dissection and diagnosis of the atheist soul; but

the spirit of this great apologist for Christianity pervades Hart's brilliant *tour de force*, a sober and deeply pessimistic depiction of the dreariness infecting our post-Christian civilization.

Like Pascal, Hart admires some enemies of Christianity, above all the pagan emperor Julian the Apostate (331-63), who was raised a Christian but abandoned the religion of his childhood and tried to restore paganism in the Roman empire; and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), who also abandoned the Christianity of his childhood for a belief in a godless universe bereft of meaning. "Of all the emperors in the Constantinian line," says Hart, "Julian alone stands free of any suspicion of bad faith." And Nietzsche, whom Hart calls "the most prescient philosopher of nihilism," correctly foresaw a post-Christian world dominated by what he called the Last Men: a race of self-absorbed narcissists sunk in banality and self-congratulation. As Hart observes, Nietzsche was entirely accurate in his predictions: "Contemporary culture does after all seem to excel at depressing mediocrity and comfortable conventionality, egoistic precocity and mass idiocy."

On the other side of the ledger, there are those braggart atheists whose books now crowd the bestseller lists. On them Hart is withering. Richard Dawkins, for example, concludes his most important book, *The Blind Watchmaker*, with this philosophical whopper: "Natural selection is the ultimate explanation for our existence." To which Hart deftly replies: "Even the simplest of things, and even the most basic of principles, must first of all *be*, and nothing within the universe of contingent things (not even the universe itself, even if it were somehow 'eternal') can be intelligibly conceived of as the source or explanation of its own being."

On Christopher Hitchens's *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* Hart is especially devastating. After first noting the petulance of the title and subtitle, he skewers Hitchens's "heads-I-win, tails-you-lose" trickery: For Hitchens, when atheists commit crimes, that is only because they belong to a "political religion," but when believers succor the poor, they are merely being "enlightened" despite their religion. "By the same token," Hart says, "every injustice that seems to follow from a secularist principle is obviously an abuse of that principle, while any evil that comes wrapped in a cassock is unquestionably an undiluted expression of religion's very essence." Even in strictly Darwinian terms, this thesis will never work. For it is a fact, often airbrushed away by the keepers of Darwin's flame, that Charles Darwin was the first Social Darwinist. In *The Descent of Man* he asserted, "At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace throughout the world the savage races." Moreover, the idea is simply risible that humans were once born super-nice and only became violent because of this excrescence called "religion," which, suddenly and without provocation, was foisted on innocent primitive societies by scheming shamans.

It would be far more accurate to say that every injustice flowing from a secularist principle is an expression of the essence of *its* fondness for Social Darwinism (on right and left), whereas religiously motivated violence by

Christians represents a departure from the teachings of Jesus. For that reason, one must stress that Hart's book in no way attempts a brief for Christianity (an *apologia*, in the traditional sense of that word), for he is just as harsh on such "Christian" emperors as Constantine and Justinian, and on the Inquisition and the Thirty Years War, as any modern-day Voltaire.

But there is a crucial difference between Christian crimes and modern, secular ones. For one thing, the ethical perspective that allows one to see atrocities as crimes against humans of *equal worth and dignity*, endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, comes from the revolution in human outlook brought about alone by the religion of the God-man. In one telling passage, Hart mentions that some Arians in the ancient world claimed that Jesus could not be fully God because St. Paul had said that Christ took on the form of a slave, and what kind of God would do that? To which one Church Father, Gregory of Nyssa, indignantly replied: such was the whole *point* of Christianity. So Nietzsche was right after all: Christianity really *is* a "slave revolt in morality," a "transvaluation of all values," a total revolution of how human beings understood themselves and their place in the cosmos:

> [T]he term "post-Christian" must be given its full weight here: modernity is not simply a "postreligious" condition; it is the state of a society that has been specifically a Christian society but has "lost the faith." The ethical presuppositions intrinsic to modernity, for instance, are palliated fragments and haunting echoes of Christian moral theology. Even the most ardent secularists among us generally cling to notions of human rights, economic and social justice, providence for the indigent, legal equality, or basic human dignity that pre-Christian Western culture would have found not so much foolish as unintelligible. It is simply the case that we distant children of the pagans would not be able to believe in any of these things—they would never have occurred to us—had our ancestors not once believed that God is love, that charity is the foundation of all virtues, that all of us are equal before the eyes of God, that to fail to feed the hungry or care for the suffering is to sin against Christ, and that Christ laid down his life for the least of his brethren. (32-33)

For that reason, as Nietzsche rightly saw (again), any attempt to cling to an ethics founded on the universal dignity of man while jettisoning the religion that bequeathed to us that ethic will never work. "In England," he sarcastically noted of the prim but unbelieving novelist George Eliot, "one must rehabilitate oneself after every little emancipation from theology by showing in a veritably awe-inspiring manner what a moral fanatic one is. That is the penance they pay over there." But there was to be no penance in Nietzsche's Dionysian religion: "If we cast a look a century ahead and assume that my assassination of two thousand years of opposition to nature and of dishonoring man succeeds, then that new party of life [!] will take in hand the greatest of all tasks—the higher breeding of humans, including the unsparing destruction of all degenerates and parasites."

We do not need Nietzsche's foresight to see the connection between the Christian worldview and the metaphysical equality of all human beings, or to foretell the violence that will inevitably follow in the wake of the abandonment of that worldview—all we need is history. In one of the most eloquent passages in the book, and which bears quoting in full, Hart comes to this conclusion:

> The savagery of triumphant Jacobinism, the clinical heartlessness of classical social eugenics, the Nazi movement, Stalinism—all the grand utopian projects of the modern age that have directly or indirectly spilled such oceans of human blood—are no less results of the Enlightenment myth of liberation than are the liberal democratic state or the vulgarity of late capitalist consumerism or the pettiness of bourgeois individualism. The most piteously and self-righteously violent regimes of modern history—in the West or in those other quarters of the world contaminated by our worst ideas—have been those that have most explicitly cast off the Christian vision of reality and sought to replace it with a more "human" set of values. No cause in history—no religion or imperial ambition or military adventure—has destroyed more lives with more confident enthusiasm than the cause of the "brotherhood of man," the postreligious utopia, or the progress of the race. (107-8)

In the fifth century, St. Augustine's *City of God* helped Christians come to terms with the collapse of the Roman Empire. In that same tradition of offering a vigorous defense of the Christian religion in dolorous times, Hart's *Atheist Delusions* has given Christians who are now trying to negotiate the shoals of post-Christian civilization just the book they need.

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The Hermeneutics of Doctrine. By ANTHONY C. THISELTON. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007. Pp. 649 $46.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-0-8028-2681-7.

Starting with *The Two Horizons* in 1980, and later with *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (1997) and *Thiselton on Hermeneutics* (2006), Anthony Thiselton has established himself as a master in cataloguing various interpretative theories, particularly as applied to biblical exegesis. As the title indicates, the present work is concerned with establishing a proper hermeneutics for doctrinal claims. The book is sweeping in its scope, as its length attests, because the author seeks not

only to provide general interpretative guidelines, but also to offer examples of a hermeneutically sensitive approach to virtually the entire realm of Christian doctrine: the person and work of Christ; the meaning of the cross, expiation and substitution; the significance of the Trinity; the nature of the Church; and the sacraments and eschatology.

Although the book offers many themes worthy of discussion—such as the author's distaste for easy condemnations of foundationalism or for similarly facile invocations of "incommensurability"—all of his minor digressions are ultimately in service to his central claim: Christian doctrines can never be understood as jejune abstractions because they arise from the performative, dramatic, embodied life of the Church. As such, doctrines are lived out publicly in communal settings and "invite and . . . deserve belief" (21). Markedly accented here is the Wittgensteinian claim that the utterance "I believe" is necessarily incarnated in patterns of action and commitment which surround the believer's assertions (20). Doctrine, therefore, is "indissolubly interwoven with practices and a form of life" (97). Thiselton intends to obviate, then, any understanding of dogma as a brittle thing, severed from its living meaning in Scripture and in the practices and rituals of the Christian community. His approach is to examine biblical teachings by means of the historical-critical method, to discuss how such claims have been read in the later tradition and, finally, to make such teachings—by a hermeneutically perceptive reading—intelligible for today. Although this methodology may have the scent of varying correlational approaches, Thiselton strongly rejects any tendency to collapse biblical teaching into contemporary experience. And he emphatically wishes to overcome the kind of thinking which holds that the New Testament needs an emptying of its traditional content in order to become acceptable to present-day sensibilities. On the contrary, he champions the continuing relevance of New Testament teachings for the Church's later history.

Thiselton has little use, then, for Harnack's attempt to juxtapose adversely the claims of Christ and the New Testament with the teachings of the apostolic Fathers. In the first place, the New Testament itself clearly includes doctrine; in the second place, it is not the case that "the theological formulations of the early Church Fathers are 'hellenized' abstractions or metaphysical speculations that have little in common with the New Testament" (37). One can fully agree with these affirmations, although the second will, unfortunately, undergo some modification later in the volume. In general, however, Thiselton insists that there is an "evident continuity" between the confessions of faith in the New Testament and later Christian declarations. Such continuity is, indeed, the general thesis and driving idea of the book, an idea which one can warmly endorse as it develops in Thiselton's artful hands. He is concerned that only with a sophisticated hermeneutics (equally sensitive to the two horizons of biblical text and contemporary intelligibility) can we remain faithful to the New Testament even while extrapolating biblical meaning for the sake of addressing issues of our own times (215).

Despite my agreement with Thiselton's fundamental intentions and my admiration for his erudite and comprehensive work, I find several problems that weaken his attempt to establish a fully adequate hermeneutics of Christian doctrine.

First, Thiselton indicates, early in the volume, that he will resist any attempt to drive a wedge between the claims of the New Testament and the later, alleged philosophical domination of Christian formulations. This is a narrative, of course, that has its roots in the Reformation but which was given new force by Karl Barth with his dyslogistic comments about philosophy, particularly metaphysics and the language of being. This critique has found resonance in some contemporary Catholic thinkers as well, such as the early Jean-Luc Marion, who thought that the language of "being" constituted an unnecessarily predeterminative boundary for Christian revelation—an affront, therefore, both to a proper understanding of phenomenology and to the appearance of revelation in its fullness. Elements of this narrative find their way into Thiselton's account, unsurprisingly so considering how deeply he leans on Moltmann's work. For example, the author argues that speaking of God as immutable and impassible clearly indicates the later mindset of "Hellenistic metaphysics" rather than of the biblical narrative (40, 478)—although the case is scarcely proven with a few scattered references to Moltmann's reflections upon a loving and suffering God. Further, while strongly defending the importance of theological reasoning, Thiselton nods in assent to Pannenberg's claim that Luther had to disagree with Aquinas because "the contents of the Christian faith could not be derived from these [Aquinas's Aristotelian] *a priori* principles" (228). Needless to say, Aquinas would vigorously refute the assertion that he was educing Christian doctrine from predetermined philosophical positions. Similarly, Thiselton eulogistically cites Colin Gunton's claim that Augustine and his Western successors "allowed the insidious return of a Hellenism in which being is not communion" but nonrelational *substantia* (467-68). This, of course, is a now-familiar story—perhaps traceable as far back as Joachim da Fiore's attack on Lombard—which has been successfully rebutted by Gilles Emery and others. There is, then, in this volume an underlying, though modest, adherence to aspects of the narrative that an overweening Hellenism imposed a foreign metaphysics on Christian doctrine to detrimental effect. It would have been better to point out that the Reformation insightfully saw that the gospel of grace could not be obscured by any alien account even while underestimating the extent to which philosophy and metaphysics have been traditionally understood as conjunctive with, but necessarily subordinate to, the claims of Christian truth. The Catholic Church's invocation of philosophy is hardly for the sake of establishing a conceptual foundation for theology outside of Scripture. As Pope Benedict again repeated in the Regensburg Address of 2006, the convergence of faith and reason is essential because reason offers support, in the philosophical order, for faith's claims.

Second, in a book devoted to defending the continuity of doctrine, one wishes that Thiselton had given a richer account of the material identity of Christian

truth over the course of time. How does one explain the universal validity and stability of doctrine, the claim that the same perduring meanings are held by all peoples despite deep socio-cultural-linguistic differences and the profound effects of historicity? How does one offer theoretical reinforcement, in other words, for the universal, transcultural, and transgenerational claims of the Christian faith? Is such continuity only a matter of grace or of long-standing rituals and practices? Does not the issue of stability within change, unity within multiplicity, and perdurance within temporality, inevitably raise questions concerning the metaphysical and ontological dimensions of reality? This invocation of metaphysics has traditionally helped the Church find support, in the philosophical order, for what she holds by grace and faith.

John Caputo has stated that the appeal to hermeneutics means the inevitable death of metaphysics. But while this is surely true for the Gadamerian approach, it is not at all inexorably the case. In fact, a metaphysical dimension *within* hermeneutical theory is the only interpretative approach that can ultimately offer support for the determinate claims of Christian doctrine and, indeed, for the stability of textual meaning of any kind. It is just here that one wishes Thiselton were more pointedly aware of precisely how metaphysical thought, properly used, can illuminate faith's claims. Failing to discuss this issue weakens his attempt to establish the material continuity of the Christian faith from biblical times to our own day.

Third, Thiselton is rightly known for his interest and expertise in Gadamerian thought. In this volume, Gadamer is not at all uncritically followed, and is usually invoked (as, to the author's enduring credit, Emilio Betti is as well) in order to accent the marked "otherness" of the "form" that one is interpreting. Thiselton's legitimate point is that when one interprets the biblical text—for example, when speaking about "expiation" or "substitution"—one must be hermeneutically sensitive to the way these terms have been traditionally used, particularly if one hopes to make them intelligible to contemporary society. He even endorses Schleiermacher's claim (often a whipping post for *au courant* theories) that one must enter into the frame of mind of the author, of the "other" (183). My concern here is that while Betti and Gadamer both stress the "alterity" of the interpreted form, the *manner in which they seek to protect its otherness* is very different indeed, a difference not averted to at any length—even though the author does note that Pannenberg cautiously approved of Betti's more profound accent on objectivity in interpretation (158). Although Gadamer has certainly made contributions to theological hermeneutics (one thinks of his marked emphasis on the constitutive importance of tradition), Gadamerian thought, with its deeply Heideggerian abjuration of metaphysics (and with its consequent abandonment of recoverable textual meaning inasmuch as there exists no ontological warrant for it) can only be adopted by theologians in a qualified way precisely because Gadamer, dismissing recoverable meaning as founded on the allegedly "Romantic" notion of a common human nature, tries to re-establish historical continuity on the "fusion of horizons," a construct which cannot support the material identity of meaning in and through

temporality. But Thiselton does not here discuss the deep difference between Gadamerian and Bettian approaches or the extent to which each is or is not able to offer support for the substantial continuity of Christian teaching. This issue is especially important to Catholicism with the claim of Vatican II (and afterwards) that one may make a (careful) distinction between perduring meaning and mutable conceptual expression, thereby allowing for a theological reconceptualization which protects a fundamental affirmation throughout the irrepressible "differences" of historicity, culture, and language. The pressing question remains: how is this carefully wrought distinction (which echoes Vincent of Lerins's famous fifth-century dictum "dicas nove non dicas nova") philosophically supported? Precisely here is where crucial problems in Gadamerian thought may be discerned. In my judgment, Betti's hermeneutics are more clearly congruent with the author's project of recovering biblical meaning through exegetical methods and making it "speak newly" in the contemporary world. Unfortunately, Thiselton never presses the hermeneutical question down to its underlying and unavoidable metaphysical roots.

Fourth, in his admirable desire to be comprehensive, the author occasionally does a bit too much. Offering summaries of various positions can buttress arguments, to be sure. But it can also give the sense of a montage of thinkers, distracting from the main point. In the space of fifteen pages (293-308), we are given summaries of the hermeneutics of sin found in Schleiermacher, Ritschl, F. R. Tennant, Barth, Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr, Tillich, Berkouwer, Rahner, Küng, Zizioulas, and Pannenberg. Undoubtedly, Thiselton retrieves valuable points in each thinker, but such a rapid review has a numbing effect which blocks the flow of the argument.

Despite these criticisms, I willingly endorse Thiselton's substantive book for its significant and undeniable merits: the author's vast learning on biblical and theological themes, his steadfast and skillful defense of the continuity existing between biblical teaching and the later theological tradition, and his insistence that, with the proper use of hermeneutics, one may ably defend the full intelligibility of Christian faith and doctrine.

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