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INCARNATE *DE SPIRITU SANCTO*: AQUINAS ON THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRIST'S CONCEPTION

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"She was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit." (Matt 1:18)

"And the angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.'" (Luke 1:35)

THE GOSPELS OF Matthew and Luke connect the conception of Christ to the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed professes that "by the Holy Spirit," the only-begotten Son of God was "incarnate of the Virgin Mary." But what, precisely, does this mean?

Some scholars have recently found important clues in other allusive passages of sacred Scripture to the conception of Christ.[1] In Exodus, the cloud "abode upon" the tent of meeting, "and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle (Exod 40:35)."[2] Might the words of the angel Gabriel allude to that mysterious cloud associated with the Holy Spirit, the descent of which accompanies the presence of the Lord (the child who is God and man)

[1] For a detailed case for seeing references to the Holy Spirit in Old Testament texts, see Matthew Levering, "The Holy Spirit and the Old Testament," *The Thomist* 79 (2015): 345-81.

[2] All Scripture quotations are from the Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

in his tabernacle, the womb of the blessed Virgin?[3] One might think of the opening lines of Genesis, with their references to "the Spirit of God" who "was moving over the face of the waters" (Gen 1:2), and to the breath of God that brought the clay of Adam's nature to life. Might Gabriel's words refer to this life-giving Spirit, active in the first creation of Adam, now also active in the first moment of the new creation in Christ?[4] Indeed, one might rightly wonder whether Gabriel's message—"The Holy Spirit will come upon you," and "the power of the Most High will overshadow you"—makes reference to all three persons of the Trinity, for St. Paul tell us that the Christ the Son is the Power of God (1 Cor. 1:24), and the Father is the Most High.[5]

Saint Thomas Aquinas was highly interested in these sorts of references to the persons of the Holy Trinity. He regards the conception of Christ not only as a Christological mystery, but as a Trinitarian one as well, where the Holy Spirit's action is at center stage. Unfortunately, his account of the Holy Spirit's place in Christology is seriously underappreciated, leading to a common critique that Aquinas does not say enough about the Holy Spirit.[6] Some contemporary exegetes and theologians approach

[3] Kindalee Pfremmer De Long, "Angels and Visions in Luke-Acts," in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition and the Shaping of New Testament Thought*, ed. Benjamin E. Reynolds and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 83. See also Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, new updated ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 290.

[4] See Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, 124-25; 160-61; 314; John J. Kilgallen, "The Conception of Jesus (Luke 1,35)," *Biblica* 78 (1997): 228.

[5] For the Father as "the Most High," see, e.g. Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Romans*, trans. and ed. Bart D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers I* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 268: "the Father Most High" (πατρὸς ὑψίστου). For the views of a contemporary theologian on the significance of Christ's conception *de Spiritu Sancto* for the revelation of the relation of Jesus to the Holy Spirit and also for the manifestation of the Holy Trinity, see Gerald O'Collins, "The Virginal Conception and Its Meanings," *New Blackfriars* 89 (2008): 431-40 (especially 439).

[6] See, e.g., Bruce D. Marshall, "*Ex Occidente Lux?* Aquinas and Eastern Orthodox Theology," *Modern Theology* 20 (2004): 25 and 40, articulating the criticisms of twentieth-century Orthodox theologians. See also Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 2, *Spiritual Master*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 153-54.

this mystery as if Aquinas's traditional claims about Christ's supernaturally elevated human knowledge and power leave little place for the Holy Spirit's role in Christology.[7]

Rightly understood, however, Aquinas offers a scripturally and dogmatically satisfying and coherent solution: a rich Spirit-Christology.[8] The Holy Spirit's role is absolutely indispensable in the mystery of Christ in general, and, as this article will show, of his conception in particular. Yet Aquinas accounts for this without compromising the central place of Christ's identity as the Word, or endangering the consubstantial unity of the triune God. In examining Christ's conception, we will see this Spirit-Christology at work and will discern some of its features.

This article has four sections: a preface, followed by a three-part analysis of Christ's conception *de Spiritu Sancto*. The preface identifies the theological frame within which Aquinas sets this subject. From there, the first main part discusses the preparation of the Blessed Virgin Mary for this wondrous conception. The second part then examines Aquinas's account of the Spirit's presence and activity *in Mary* at Christ's conception. Finally, the third part outlines the Holy Spirit's role (and those of the other divine persons) in bringing about the conception of Christ,

[7] See, e.g., François-Marie Humann, *La relation de l'Esprit-Saint au Christ: Une relecture d'Yves Congar* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 2010); James D. G. Dunn, *The Christ and The Spirit*, vol. 1, *Christology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998); Thomas Weinandy, *The Father's Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 53-85; Ralph Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit: Spirit Christology in Trinitarian Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 3, *The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 183-91; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus–God and Man*, 2d ed., trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977), 169-79; Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, trans. V. Green (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 250-52; James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1975); G. W. H. Lampe, "The Holy Spirit and the Person of Christ," in *Christ, Faith and History*, ed. S. W. Sykes and J. P. Clayton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 111-30.

[8] For a more extensive examination of and argument for the importance and centrality of the Holy Spirit in Aquinas's Christology, see Dominic Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 129-231.

understood as the first moment of the visible mission of the Word. Taken together, these sections will enable us to answer the question: What does this mystery of Christ reveal about the Holy Spirit and, indeed, about all of the persons of the Holy Trinity?

I. A Preface: The Theological Frame

Aquinas frames our subject as the Son's *ingressus* or entry into the world. He draws this from the structure of the Gospels themselves. For example, in the opening lines of his *Commentary on Matthew*, he writes:

> Among the evangelists, Matthew is especially concerned with the humanity of Christ. . . . Through his humanity, Christ entered into the world, advanced, and went forth [from the world]. And so the whole Gospel [of Matthew] is divided into three parts. First, the evangelist treats of the entry [*ingressu*] into the world of Christ's humanity; second, of his advance; and third of his going-forth [*egressu*].[9]

In his systematic treatment in the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas makes this triple division (*ingressus, progressus, egressus*) the organizing principle of a wide swath of material (*STh* III, qq. 27-59) under the general rubric of "what the incarnate Son of God did or suffered in the human nature united to himself,"[10] or, as he puts it later, simply "the mysteries of the Incarnate Word."[11] He explains that questions 27-39 will address "those things that pertain to [Christ's] entry [*ingressus*] into the world."[12] So in fact, the subject of this article is not just Christ's conception, but the Holy Spirit's role in Christ's entry into the world.

The key point here is that this is a real "entering," a true *ingressus*. When Mary conceives Christ in her virginal womb *de Spiritu Sancto*, the eternal Son enters the world in a new way. He

[9] *In Matt*., c. 1, lect. 1 (*Super evangelium s. Matthaei lectura*, ed. R. Cai [Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1951], no. 11). Unless otherwise noted, all references to works of Aquinas are to the Leonine edition; where no Leonine text is available, I have indicated the edition used. All translations are mine.

[10] *STh* III, q. 27, prol.

[11] *STh* III, q. 60, prol.

[12] *STh* III, q. 27, prol.

does not begin to be, simply speaking; rather, the Word who "was in the beginning with God" and through whom "all things were created," already present everywhere by his divinity, begins to be in the world as man, sent by the Father. Or, to put it another way, this miraculous conception in Mary's womb marks the beginning point *in time* of the visible mission of the Son, by which the eternal procession of the Son from the Father is made present in the humanity of Jesus, sent for the salvation of the world.[13] This is one of the central themes of Aquinas's theology: not only does all creation come forth from God and return to him (the often-noted *exitus/reditus* theme), but in the incarnation, the divine Word is sent by the Father and enters into the world in a new way (*ingressus*), in order to manifest the truth about God and to accomplish the work of salvation (*progressus*) and, in returning to the Father, to open the way to heaven for our humanity (*egressus*).

Consequently, we should read Aquinas's treatment of the Holy Spirit's role in Christ's *ingressus* (as well as of Christ's *progressus* and *egressus*, themes that fall outside the scope of this article) within the frame of Aquinas's teaching on the divine missions. A divine mission always involves the eternal procession of a person with the addition of a created effect by which the divine person is made present in the world in a new way.[14] We can identify the subject of this article, therefore, as the Holy Spirit's role in the origin of Christ's humanity, understood as the created effect according to which the eternal procession of the divine Word from the Father is made visibly present in the world.

To understand what this means in the framework of Aquinas's thought, we should start with his teaching on the eternal processions. There are only two "notional acts" in God, eternal acts of the intellectual divine nature that remain entirely within

[13] See, e.g., *In Hebr.* c. 10, lect. 1 (*Super epistolam ad Hebraeos lectura*, in *Super epistolas s. Pauli lectura*, vol. 2, ed. R. Cai [Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1953], no. 485).

[14] Gilles Emery, "*Theologia* and *dispensatio*: The Centrality of the Divine Missions in St. Thomas's Trinitarian Theology," *The Thomist* 74 (2010): 521; Legge, *Trinitarian Christology*, 14-23.

God himself: to understand and to will.[15] The eternal Son proceeds from the Father by way of intellect. In God, the Father "understands himself" by a single eternal act and so generates his eternal Word—as a conception proceeding from his act of understanding—that "expresses" all that is in the Father.[16] The Holy Spirit, by contrast, proceeds from the Father and the Son according to will, a "procession of love."[17] This procession is ordered to the procession of the Word, since "nothing can be loved by the will unless it is conceived in the intellect."[18] The Holy Spirit is thus Love in person, the mutual love and nexus of the Father and the Son;[19] "Love" is a proper name for him.[20] From this, another proper name for the Spirit unfolds: he is "Gift," because love is the "first Gift" from which every other gift proceeds.[21]

If we are seeking to grasp the place of the Holy Spirit in Aquinas's Christology, we must start here. The proper names of the Holy Spirit of "Love" and "Gift" point us to how the Spirit's procession is an origin of the economy of grace—including the divine plan to save us in Christ.[22] Every good bestowed on a creature is given through the Holy Spirit, because a true gift—which has absolutely no strings attached—flows from the giver's love.[23]

This means that the dispensation of salvation itself, with the incarnation at its center, has the Holy Spirit's procession as Love as its *ratio* or explanation, just as much as it does the eternal generation of the Word.

> The love of the Father towards the Son . . . is the *ratio* in which God bestows every effect of love on the creature; and therefore the Holy Spirit, who is the

[15] See Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 74-77.

[16] *STh* I, q. 34, a. 3.

[17] *STh* I, q. 27, a. 3.

[18] Ibid., ad 3.

[19] *STh* I, q. 37, a. 1 ad 3.

[20] *STh* I, q. 37, a. 1.

[21] *STh* I, q. 38, a. 2.

[22] See Legge, *Trinitarian Christology*, 16-17.

[23] *STh* I, q. 38, a. 2.

Love by which the Father loves the Son, is also the Love by which He loves the creature by imparting its perfection to it.[24]

Indeed, Aquinas affords such a central place to the Spirit that he even claims that "all gifts are given to us through [*per*] him."[25]

Aquinas's teaching on these points is easy to misunderstand. He is not simply speaking by way of appropriation when he holds that the Holy Spirit's procession is an origin, cause, or exemplar of the economy of grace.[26] Nor is he suggesting that the Holy Spirit is an efficient cause of the dispensation of salvation apart or separate from the Father and the Son—which would be an impossibility. Rather, he means that the Father and the Son give us the gifts of grace "through [*per*]" the Holy Spirit. Above all, this is because supernatural charity in the soul is the *sine qua non* of sanctifying grace (and also of every virtue and gift that is given with and in sanctifying grace); as we will explain, Aquinas teaches that the Holy Spirit is the eternal exemplar of that created gift of charity, and therefore, whenever charity is present, the Holy Spirit is also personally present in the soul according to what is proper to him. (This is the foundation for Aquinas's doctrine of the divine indwelling of the persons in the soul.) Thus, when we know that the Holy Spirit proceeds as Love and Gift in person,

[24] I *Sent*., d. 14, q. 1, a. 1 (*Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, vol. 1, ed. Pierre Mandonnet [Paris: Lethielleux, 1929]).

[25] III *Sent*., d. 2, q. 2, a. 2, qcla 2, ad 3 (*Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, vol. 3, ed. Maria Fabianus Moos [Paris: Lethielleux, 1933]). Of course, Aquinas does not mean that these gifts are not also given to us by the Father and the Son. In the order of efficient causality, all three divine persons are equally the efficient cause of every gift given to creatures. Yet the Holy Spirit has a distinct mode of causality for every gift, insofar as the Spirit's procession by way of Love is the exemplar of every gift to creatures. See I *Sent*., d. 14, q. 1, a. 1.

[26] In an action common to all three persons, we are often able to grasp a kinship or likeness to the distinct personal property of one divine person, and this is by appropriation. Scripture often speaks in this way. In his important study, Dominique-Marie Cabaret shows the key importance of the doctrine of Trinitarian appropriations in Aquinas: Dominique-Marie Cabaret, *L'étonnante manifestation des personnes divines: Les appropriations trinitaires chez saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Les Plans-sur-Bex, Switzerland: Éditions Parole et Silence, 2015). See also Emery, *Trinitarian Theology*, 322-31.

we are able to discern the Spirit's distinctive mode of action in the dispensation of salvation, together with those of the Father and of the Son (who likewise each act in their proper mode).

Aquinas's statements along these lines must be read against the backdrop of his sophisticated theology of the triune God, which includes careful distinctions between what we say of the three divine persons and what we say of the one divine essence or nature. Every divine action *ad extra* is inseparably a single act of all three divine persons in virtue of the one divine nature.[27] Yet within this joint efficient causality of the three, Aquinas holds that we can distinguish how "the divine persons have causality with respect to the creation of things according to the *ratio* of their processions," and specifically, that their processions "are the *rationes* of the productions of creatures."[28] This analysis also applies to the dispensation of salvation, since creation returns to God according to the pattern of the divine processions:

> As the procession of the persons is the *ratio* of the production of creatures from the first principle, so also the same procession is the *ratio* of returning unto the end, because just as we were created through the Son and the Holy Spirit, likewise we also are joined [through them] to our ultimate end.[29]

As Gilles Emery has shown, in God's actions *ad extra*, the whole Trinity is one *efficient* cause according to the unity of the divine essence, and the divine processions also exercise an *exemplar* causality within this one efficient causality according to the

[27] As Aquinas puts it succinctly at *ScG* IV, c. 25: "The three persons are one principle of creatures, and they produce creatures by one action" ("Tres personae sunt unum principium creaturae, et una actione creaturam producunt"). And again, *ScG* IV, c. 21: "Since the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have the same power, just as [they have] the same essence, it is necessary that everything that God works in us as from an efficient cause would be at once from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" ("Cum ergo eadem virtus sit Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, sicut et eadem essentia; oportet quod omne id quod Deus in nobis efficit, sit, sicut a causa efficiente, simul a Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto").

[28] *STh* I, q. 45, a. 6.

[29] I *Sent*., d. 14, q. 2, a. 2. Aquinas makes the same point again at I *Sent*., d. 15, q. 4, a. 1.

proper *rationes* of their processions.[30] Aquinas offers an analogy: the Father acts through the Word and the Holy Spirit in a way like that in which a carpenter makes a table "through" the plan of the table he conceives in his mind, and "through" the love of his will for some good.[31] In every exercise of efficient causality, the eternal processions are already exercising their influence as the origin, the *ratio*, and exemplar of what comes forth from God.[32]

In every gift of grace, therefore, Aquinas identifies the special exemplary influence of the Holy Spirit: "every gift, insofar as it is a gift, is attributed to the Holy Spirit, because as Love he is the First Gift."[33] More specifically, charity is "properly

[30] Gilles Emery, "The Personal Mode of Trinitarian Action in Saint Thomas Aquinas," *The Thomist* 69 (2005): 31-77. Aquinas repeats this teaching often, and underlines that it is the proper mode of the causality of the Word and of the Holy Spirit. For example, it is not an appropriation to say that the Father creates the world *through* his Word. This is said properly. *In Ioan*., c. 1, lect. 2 (*Super evangelium s. Ioannis lectura*, ed. R. Cai [Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1952], no. 76): "If the word *per* designates causality on the part of what is done, then when we say 'The Father does all things through [*per*] the Son,' it is not appropriated to the Word, but is proper to him, because he has from another (namely, the Father from whom he has being) that he is the cause of creatures." See also *STh* I, q. 39, a. 8; I *Sent*., d. 32, q. 1, a. 3; and the detailed discussion in Legge, *Trinitarian Christology*, 67-74.

[31] The analogy is from Aquinas himself; he uses it frequently. See *STh* I, q. 45, a. 6. On how the Father acts "through" the Son, see *In Ioan*., c. 1, lect. 2 (Marietti ed., nos. 76-77); on how the Father also equally acts "through" the Holy Spirit, see I *Sent*., d. 14, q. 1, a. 1.

[32] Camille de Belloy offers an elegant account of the delicate interplay of these types of causality in Aquinas, and of his account of the gift of the created form in sanctifying grace, showing that, "in the divine missions, the common efficient causality of all three persons is always realized as determined by exemplarity of the personal properties of the Word and of the Holy Spirit, who impress wisdom in our intellect and charity in our will" (Camille de Belloy, *La visite de Dieu: Essai sur les missions des personnes divines selon saint Thomas d'Aquin* [Geneva: Ad Solem Editions, 2006] 115-16). An intelligent agent only exercises efficient causality according to some exemplar idea that determines that activity. "This is a metaphysical law of action" (Emery, *Trinitarian Theology*, 197).

[33] *STh* I, q. 43, a. 5 ad 1. See also *ScG* IV, c. 21, where Aquinas is particularly clear in delineating the distinction between the common efficient causality of all three persons in grace and the proper mode of the Holy Spirit's exemplar causality.

representative of the Holy Spirit."[34] Although it "is from the whole Trinity efficiently . . . according to exemplarity, it flows from Love, who is the Holy Spirit."[35] "According to exemplarity . . . in the infusion of charity there is a termination to a likeness of the personal procession of the Holy Spirit."[36]

Thus, when Aquinas says that the Holy Spirit's procession is at the origin of the economy of grace, he does not mean that the Spirit is acting as an efficient cause *apart from* the Father and the Son. It is impossible for any divine person to be separated from or to act apart from the others. Rather, he is designating the way that the Holy Spirit is an efficient cause (inseparably with the Father and Son in virtue of the one divine nature) *and* an exemplar cause in a mode proper to him (in virtue of his distinct procession by way of Love). In fact, Aquinas is expressing a fundamental truth of God's tri-unity: every divine action *ad extra* is an action of the three divine persons acting together, where each person has a mode of action proper to him.[37]

A further word is in order about how Aquinas understands the special mode of presence of the divine persons in the soul possessing sanctifying grace. This is the doctrine of the invisible divine missions by which the Son and Holy Spirit dwell in the hearts of the just.

In every divine mission, Aquinas teaches, there are two relations: a relation to the whole Trinity as a principle, and a relation that terminates in only one of the divine persons. This is why a divine mission is *not* said by appropriation. The Son is *not* incarnate by an appropriation, even though all three divine persons are the efficient cause of the Son's assumption of a human nature. Aquinas explains that the same logic applies to the other missions of the divine persons, and he specifically has in mind the invisible missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit to human souls in grace.

[34] *ScG* IV, c. 21: "est proprium repraesentativum Spiritus Sancti."
[35] I *Sent*., d. 17, q. 1, a. 1.
[36] I *Sent*., d. 30, q. 1, a. 2.
[37] See Emery, "Personal Mode," 48-50.

The terms "sent" [*missus*], "incarnate," and others like them, imply two relations, namely, a relation to a terminus and a relation to a principle. One of these, namely, the relation to a principle, belongs to the whole Trinity—and thus we say that the whole Trinity sends or makes incarnate. But the other relation belongs to a determinate divine person, [namely, the distinct divine person who is sent or who becomes incarnate,] which is why these terms [*i.e.*, "sent," "incarnate"] are not said of the whole Trinity.[38]

In their invisible missions to human beings, the Son and Holy Spirit are sent and are present in the graced soul *in person*, in a new way, according to what is proper to each. This is not said by appropriation. When a human person receives the gift of sanctifying grace, the essence of his soul is elevated to participate in the divine nature, and this always includes the infusion of the operative *habitus* of faith (in the intellect) and charity (in the will). These are new created effects in the person's soul. To be sure, they are efficiently caused by all three divine persons acting together, since the three are one God with one divine power by which they act. At the same time, Aquinas recognizes the distinct personal presence of the persons in the order of exemplar causality.

To speak specifically of the Holy Spirit: In the created gift of charity, the Spirit impresses in the soul a likeness of his personal property as Love (a special mode of exemplar causality), thus assimilating this soul to himself. In this way, the Holy Spirit is invisibly sent to this Christian, in whom he is personally present in a new way according to the gift of charity.[39] The whole Trinity efficiently causes the created effect (charity) by which the Holy

[38] I *Sent.*, d. 30, q. 1, a. 2, ad 3.

[39] The same can be said of the Word's personal presence in the soul. In the created gift of faith, the divine Word impresses in the soul a likeness of his personal property as Word (a special mode of exemplar causality), thus assimilating this soul to the pattern of his procession by way of intellect.

Spirit is personally present in the world in a new way.[40] As Aquinas explains:

> It is possible that the relation of a creature [to God] can be to . . . something personal . . . according to exemplarity, as . . . there is a termination in a likeness to the personal procession of the Holy Spirit in the infusion of charity.[41]

A few pages later in the same work, Aquinas puts it even more simply, again speaking of charity: "In the creature there is a real relation which is refered to the whole Trinity as to its principle, and to the Holy Spirit as to its terminus, through the mode of exemplarity."[42]

The incarnation is the visible mission of the Son, and it, too, follows these same general rules. The whole Trinity efficiently causes the created effect—Christ's human nature—to be united to the divine Son in person, so that the Son becomes personally present in the world in a new and absolutely distinctive way, as the God-man.[43] Yet because the divine persons are one God, it is inconceivable for Aquinas that there might be a visible mission of the Word in the incarnation apart from the Holy Spirit, just as it is inconceivable that there be a Father and Son without the Spirit who is the mutual Love who proceeds from them.

There is thus a Trinitarian reason why we should expect that the Holy Spirit will always necessarily be personally present and active at every moment of Christ's life. Aquinas accounts for this by holding that the Holy Spirit is at the origin of the dispensation of grace, is active in Christ's conception, and is sent invisibly to the human soul of Christ at the first moment of its existence, according to the supreme charity that he receives (a key dimension of Christ's fullness of habitual grace). Moreover, Christ's coming as man culminates in his sending of the Holy Spirit to the apostles and the Church through which the gift of

[40] This paragraph is a short summary. Elsewhere, I have carefully examined and discussed a large number of Aquinas's texts on the matter. See Legge, *Trinitarian Christology*, 17-48.

[41] I *Sent.*, d. 30, q. 1, a. 2.

[42] I *Sent.*, d. 30, q. 1, exp. textus.

[43] *STh* III, q. 3, a. 4.

salvation is given, so that we can even see the incarnation itself as aiming at the gift of the Spirit to the world.

Having clarified these larger matters, we can now return to the conception of Christ. Holy Scripture tells us that the Word takes flesh when the Holy Spirit comes upon the Blessed Virgin Mary, so that her child is conceived "of the Holy Spirit," *de Spiritu Sancto*. What does Aquinas make of this?

II. The Preparation of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit

Long before the Archangel Gabriel's announcement, the Holy Spirit had been preparing Mary to conceive the Incarnate Word. In the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas's three questions (*STh* III, qq. 27-29) on Mary's preparation are not a detour from Christology into Mariology, but a core aspect of his investigation of the Son's *ingressus*: the Word is made present in the world as man through the maternity of Mary, already sanctified and perfected by the Holy Spirit for this supreme gift.[44]

Aquinas speaks of this in many texts. His sermon *Germinet terra*, on the nativity of the Blessed Virgin, is especially

[44] Aquinas is sometimes criticized for having erroneously held that Mary was not immaculately conceived. On this point, he agreed with other great medieval theologians, such as St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Alexander of Hales, and St. Bonaventure; see Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Le Christ en ses mystères: La vie et l'oeuvre de Jésus selon saint Thomas d'Aquin*, vol. 1 (Paris: Desclée, 1999), 43. In fact, based on the erroneous embryology of his day, Aquinas thought that it required a special miracle—which he thought happened in the case of Christ but not that of Mary—for a child to be able to receive grace in the first instant of conception. See *STh* III, q. 27, a. 2.

One could argue that the theological principles that ground Aquinas's discussion of how the Blessed Virgin was prepared by the Holy Spirit's grace sound in harmony with the dogma of the Immaculate Conception as it was declared nearly six centuries after his death, even if Aquinas himself did not take them far enough. For arguments that Aquinas was not opposed to the view that Mary was immaculately conceived, see J. F. Rossi, *Quid senserit s. Thomas Aquinas de immaculata virginis conceptione* (Piacenza: Collegio Alberoni, 1955); P. Lumbreras, "St. Thomas and the Immaculate Conception," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 24 (1923): 253-63; Norbert del Prado, *Divus Thomas et bulla dogmatica "Ineffabilis Deus"* (Fribourg: Ex typis Consociationis Sancti Pauli, 1919).

evocative.[45] The sermon begins with Genesis 1:11: "Let the earth put forth the green plant that brings forth seed."[46] Aquinas compares Mary to the lowly plant made green by the "the grace of the Holy Spirit," who then brings forth seed giving new life to the earth. The Holy Spirit prepared her, even from her mother's womb, by inspiring her with "the most copious grace"[47] (or as Aquinas says in the *Summa theologiae*, "greater privileges of grace than all others").[48] Aquinas teaches not only that Mary was preserved from all actual sin, but that she received a unique grace, above that given to any other saint, by which she was cleansed even from original sin while still in her mother's womb, so that she never experienced any inordinate movement of passion or temptation to sin. This made her most beautiful and without any stain: "In the Blessed Virgin, there was nothing inordinate, neither in act nor in desire, nor did she have the first movement towards sin, and so the Canticle of Canticles says: 'You are entirely beautiful, my beloved, and there is no stain in you (Can 4:7).'"[49]

More important for our purposes, he teaches that Mary was filled with the charity of the Holy Spirit. Following a long tradition, Aquinas thinks that Mary made a vow of virginity.[50] By

[45] According to the Leonine edition, this university sermon was preached in Paris on Sept. 13, 1271. *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera omnia*, iussu Leonis XIII P.M. edita ("Leonine edition"), v. 44/1, *Sermones* (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 2014), *201, 276.

[46] This is my translation of the Latin verse set forth at the head of Aquinas's sermon: "Germinet terra herbam uirentem et proferentem semen, lignumque pomiferum faciens fructum."

[47] *Germinet terra.*

[48] *STh* III, q. 27, a 1.

[49] *Germinet terra*.

[50] *STh* III, q. 28, a. 4. He also says that Mary was inspired by an "intimate movement" of the Holy Spirit (*familiari instinctu Spiritus sancti*) to agree to be espoused to St. Joseph, "confident that by divine aid [*divino auxilio*] she would never come to have carnal intercourse" (*STh* III, q. 29, a. 1 ad 1). For a detailed defense of the traditional biblical teaching that Mary conceived Christ while remaining a virgin, see Charles W. Neumann, "The Virginal Conception and the Divine Motherhood: A Modern Reappraisal," *Marian Studies* 33 (1982): 90-120. See also Jean Galot, "La conception virginale du Christ," *Gregorianum* 49 (1968): 637-66; Raymond E. Brown, "The Problem of the Virginal Conception of Jesus," *Theological Studies* 33 (1972): 3-34; and Raymond E. Brown, *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus* (New York: Paulist Press, 1973),

this freely willed vow, Mary was prepared to conceive Christ in her womb. This was the result of God's grace acting within her human freedom, Aquinas says, inflaming her heart with heavenly love and moving her from her youth to consecrate herself entirely to God.[51] Mary's supernatural charity, which Aquinas understands to be the effect in her soul of the Holy Spirit's indwelling personal presence, was precisely what made her virginity "green" (translated literally, Aquinas says that this charity caused Mary to "become green" or "to bloom" through her virginity" [*viret per virginitatem*]), and thus to become immensely fruitful. Mary bore Christ like earth "watered by the Holy Spirit."[52]

> The Blessed Virgin excelled in virginity, nay, she was the queen of virgins, and because she had a surpassing greenness of virginity, she bore wondrous fruit. Other virgins bear spiritual fruits . . . "love, joy, and peace (Gal. 5:22)." But since the Blessed Virgin had an abundance of greenness, she even bore the fruit of the womb. . . . Saint Hugh says: "Because the love of the Holy Spirit so marvelously burned in her heart, she brought forth wonders in her flesh."[53]

In the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas goes even further, arguing that this Spirit-inspired virginity of Mary has a Trinitarian significance for the incarnation. First, it shows "the dignity of the Father who sent the Son, for since Christ was the true and natural Son of God, it would not be fitting if he had another father than God."[54] Second, the eternal Word is perfectly "conceived" in the Father's act of understanding without any corruption, and so, in time, he should be conceived in Mary's flesh according to a perfect purity of heart.[55] And third, the end of the incarnation was that men would be reborn as sons of God in the Holy Spirit, and so Mary's virginity is made fruitful by the Holy Spirit "in order to signify

29-67. On Mary's perpetual virginity, see José M. Pedrozo, "The Brothers of Jesus and his Mother's Virginity," *The Thomist* 63 (1999): 83-104.

[51] *Germinet terra*.

[52] Ibid.: "humectauit . . . Spiritus sanctus"

[53] Ibid.

[54] *STh* III, q. 28, a. 1.

[55] Ibid.

that the members [of Christ's body] would be born according to the Spirit from a virgin Church."[56] These reasons are highly evocative. They show that Aquinas grasps, in the details of Mary's preparation and sanctification by the Spirit, the deep connection between the personal properties of the divine persons and how those persons are made present and manifested in the world through the mysteries of Christ's life. In God's plan, *how* Mary becomes the Mother of God points out who the true Father of Christ is, testifies to the perfection of the Word made flesh, and signals the symmetry between Christ's conception by the Holy Spirit and our rebirth in the Spirit unto conformity to him.

Rightly, then, would the angel Gabriel later testify that "the Lord is with thee." "This phrase . . . is the most noble phrase that could be said to someone," Aquinas explains. Even before she conceived Christ, "the Blessed Virgin was so much more intimate with God than the angel, because with her are the Lord the Father, the Lord the Son, and the Lord the Holy Spirit, namely the whole Trinity."[57]

III. The Spirit's Presence and Activity in Mary at Christ's Conception

This brings us to the second major point: the Holy Spirit's special presence and activity in Mary's soul at Christ's conception. Here, Aquinas probes even further into the theological intelligibility of how and why the Holy Spirit is at work in Mary to accomplish the incarnation. The result is a series of overlapping themes rich with scriptural and Trinitarian echoes.

The first theme is Mary as "full of grace," or filled with the Holy Spirit—for Aquinas, these scriptural titles are almost equivalent: "It is customary in sacred Scripture to attribute every grace to the Holy Spirit, because what is gratuitously given seems to be bestowed from the love of the giver."[58] Aquinas thinks,

[56] Ibid.

[57] *In Salut. Angelic.*, a. 1 (Ioannes Felix Rossi, "S. Thomae Aquinatis Expositio Salutationis Angelicae," *Divus Thomas* [Piacenza] 34 [1931]: 445-79).

[58] *ScG* IV, c. 46.

therefore, that the angel Gabriel's greeting, "Hail, full of grace" (Luke 1:28), expresses an important truth about the Holy Spirit's action in Mary. Unlike other saints who are described in Scripture as filled with the Holy Spirit (there are many in the New Testament: John the Baptist, his parents—Zechariah and Elizabeth—Simeon, the apostles at Pentecost, Stephen, Paul, Barnabas, and other early Christian believers), the fact that an angel would greet a human being with this degree of honor and deference shows that Mary's fullness of grace is unique, even above all angels.[59] She had not only a fullness of grace sufficient for herself as an individual person, like other saints. She received a more extraordinary fullness, which Aquinas places in a special category: "the fullness of overflow" (*plenitudo redundantiae*), both into her flesh and even down to us. By this special fullness of grace,

> the Blessed Virgin surpassed every other saint, on account of her eminence and the abundance of her merits. . . For the Blessed Virgin overflowed grace on us, not as if she were the source of grace, but grace overflowed from her soul *into her flesh*; for through the grace of the Holy Spirit, not only was the mind of the Virgin perfectly united to God by love, but also her womb was supernaturally impregnated by the Holy Spirit.[60]

Aquinas is echoing here a famous theme of St. Augustine: Mary first conceived the Word by faith in her mind, and then in her womb.[61] Always attentive to Scripture—in this case, Luke 1:35 and Matthew 1:18—Aquinas transposes this into a truth about Mary's conception *de Spiritu Sancto*: Mary's soul and mind were

[59] *In Salut. Angel.*, a. 1.

[60] *In Ioan.*, c. 1, lect. 10 (Marietti ed., no. 201). See also *Comp. Theol.* II, c. 221.

[61] According to St. Augustine, Mary was "filled with faith . . . conceiving Christ in her mind before conceiving him in her womb" ("illa fide plena . . . et christum prius mente quam uentre concipiens") (Augustine, *Sermon* 215 [Latin edition in Patrick Verbraken, "Les sermons CCXV et LVI de saint Augustin: *De symbolo* et *De oratione dominica*," Revue Bénédictine 68 (1958): 5-40]). And again: "The angel announces, the virgin hears, believes, and conceives: faith in her mind, Christ in her womb" ("Angelus nuntiat, uirgo audit, credit, et concipit. Fides in mente, christus in uentre") (*Sermon* 196 [*PL* 38:1019]).

so filled with the Holy Spirit, and hence she was so united to God by love, that this grace overflowed from her soul into her flesh. Elsewhere, Aquinas summarizes this with the concise formula of St. Ambrose: "The Word was made flesh . . . by a mystical spiration [*mystico spiramine*]."[62] Spiration, of course, refers to the unique mode of procession of the Holy Spirit, who is "breathed forth" or "spirated" by the Father and the Son. "The Holy Spirit is . . . life-bestowing breath [*spiramen vivificum*],"[63] Aquinas explains. The human conception of the divine Word is thus the supreme grace given to the world (that God would become man is "the greatest grace,"[64] a grace that is strictly infinite,[65] says Aquinas), and it comes to us through the "mystical spiration"—in fact, the invisible mission—of the Holy Spirit to the Virgin Mary in a singular gift of grace.[66]

Aquinas also follows St. Augustine in the *Summa theologiae*, where he explains that it was fitting for Mary to receive the angel's message before she conceived Christ in her womb, "so that first her mind would be instructed about him before she conceived in the flesh. Thus Augustine says . . . 'Mary is more blessed in receiving the faith of Christ than in conceiving the flesh of Christ.'"[67] Of course, earlier in the *Summa,* we learn that living supernatural faith is the created effect according to which an invisible mission of the Son is made to the mind of wayfarers.[68]

[62] *In Hebr.* c. 11, lect. 3 (Marietti ed., no. 591). The quotation is from the Advent hymn *Veni redemptor gentium* (its original incipit is *Intende qui regis*), which scholars attribute "with certainty" to St. Ambrose. See Brian Dunkle, *Enchantment and Creed in the Hymns of Ambrose of Milan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 120-21, 225.

[63] *De Pot.*, q. 10, a. 1 (*Quaestiones Disputatae de Potentia*, in *Quaestiones Disputatae*, vol. 2, ed. P. Bazzi, M. Calcaterra, T. S. Centi, E. Odetto, and P.M. Pession [Turin and Rome: Marietti 1949]).

[64] *In Matt.*, c. 1, lect. 4 (Marietti ed., no. 112).

[65] *STh* III, q. 7, a. 11.

[66] Aquinas notes elsewhere that Mary's fullness of grace is distinct from Christ's, insofar as Christ becomes the font and author of grace for the whole world, whereas Mary receives the fullness of grace in order that she might become the Mother of God and conceive the Word of God in her womb. See, e.g., *In Ioan.*, c. 1, lect. 10 (Marietti ed., nos. 201-2); *STh* III, q. 7, a. 10, ad 1.

[67] *STh* III, q. 30, a. 1.

[68] *STh* I, q. 43, a. 5 ad 2 and ad 3; q. 43, a. 6, ad 2. In these texts, Aquinas does not use the word "faith" but speaks instead of a supernatural intellectual illumination that

This means that, as the Virgin Mary made an act of faith in believing the message of the angel, the eternal Son was personally present in her soul even before she conceived him in her womb.

We should not be surprised that Aquinas speaks about both the singular grace of charity in Mary's soul ("the mind . . . perfectly united to God by love," the effect of the personal presence of the Holy Spirit) and an extraordinary gift given to her intellect that corresponds to the Son's procession as the divine Word. Aquinas writes: "Since the mind is nearer to God than the body, it would not be fitting that the wisdom of God would dwell in [Mary's] womb unless her mind were resplendent with the knowledge of the highest wisdom."[69] The angel's message thus prompts her to make an assent of faith to this most high mystery: not only that the eternal Son of God would become man, but that she would become his mother.

IV. The Holy Spirit's Divine Causality of the Incarnate Word's Conception

This brings us to the third major heading for understanding how Christ is conceived *de Spiritu Sancto*, closely related to the

perfects man's intellectual power, for which he uses the more global term "wisdom." This does not refer to the gift of the Holy Spirit called wisdom; rather, it designates both faith (in wayfarers) and beatific vision (in the blessed) under a single heading. This is significant because Aquinas does not want to limit the Word's mission to wayfarers: he wants to include the blessed who know God by the *lumen gloriae* that grants them not faith but vision. For further explanation of this point, see Legge, *Trinitarian Christology*, 30-36; Gilles Emery, "L'inhabitation de Dieu Trinité dans les justes," *Nova et vetera* 88 (2013): 166-71; Gilles Emery, "Missions invisibles et missions visibles: Le Christ et son Esprit," *Revue Thomiste* 106 (2006): 54; Emery, "*Theologia* and *Dispensatio*," 526-27; Emery, *Trinitarian Theology*, 375-79; Gilles Emery, *La Trinité créatrice: Trinité et création dans les commentaires aux Sentences de Thomas d'Aquin et de ses précurseurs Albert le Grand et Bonaventure* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1995), 384-413. For a text where Aquinas uses the word "faith" rather than "wisdom" in discussing divine indwelling, see *In I Cor*., c. 3, lect. 3 (*Super primam epistolam ad Corinthios lectura* in *Super epistolas s. Pauli lectura*, vol. 1, ed. R. Cai [Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1953], no. 173); cf. I *Sent*., d. 37, q. 1, a. 2.

[69] III *Sent*., d. 3, q. 3, a. 1 qcla 1.

second: the Holy Spirit's role in the divine causality of the incarnate Word's conception. Here, Aquinas affirms the inseparable joint efficient causality of the three persons who are one God, while also discerning, within that causality, facets of this supernatural mystery that illuminate the distinct personal properties of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.[70]

There are several important and lengthy texts where Aquinas treats this issue. The three most notable are in his commentary on Matthew's Gospel, in book IV of the *Summa contra gentiles*, and in the *Tertia pars* of the *Summa theologiae*. In each case, his arguments are quite similar, with one notable variation that appears only in the *Summa theologiae*, making that text worthy of our special attention. We turn to it now.

A) Three Reasons of Fittingness

In question 32, article 1 of the *Tertia pars*, Aquinas asks whether we should attribute to the Holy Spirit the effecting of the conception of Christ. Scripture itself does so, as does the creed, so the answer is obviously yes. But Aquinas's justification of this affirmation of Scripture and Tradition is a gem of theological reasoning. He offers three complimentary explanations based on fittingness. Strictly speaking, we are here in the realm of Trinitarian appropriations, where something that is common to all three divine persons is attributed to one person in particular, in light of a special affinity to what is proper to that person.[71]

Aquinas's first reason views Christ's conception on the side of God who acts out of love, highlighting the Holy Spirit's personal property as Love in person:

> The whole Trinity accomplishes the conception of Christ's body; nonetheless, this is attributed to the Holy Spirit for three reasons. First, because, considered on the part of God, this befits the cause of the incarnation. For the Holy Spirit is the love of the Father and Son. . . . But this arises out of the supreme love of

[70] Joining a human nature to the Son is an undivided work of the Trinity, which, Aquinas explains, means that the Father does it, the Son does it, and also the Holy Spirit does it. See *In Matt*., c. 1, lect. 4 (Marietti ed., no. 133).

[71] See Torrell, *Le Christ en ses mystères*, 1:109-15.

God, that the Son of God would assume flesh to himself in the Virgin's womb, and thus it says in John 3[:16]: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son."[72]

Aquinas's starting point is the truth that, because all three divine persons are one God and one divine essence, with numerically one divine power, the miraculous conception of Christ's body must be efficiently caused by all three persons acting together. All the same, it is especially fitting to ascribe this to the Holy Spirit because, on the side of God, God's love for us is the cause of the sending of the Son in the lowliness of our nature. Scripture is therefore teaching us something about the Holy Spirit who proceeds as Love when it tells us that Mary conceived *de Spiritu Sancto*. Meditating on the surpassing gift of Christ makes us marvel at the supreme and eternal love that stands behind it. As Aquinas says elsewhere, "the cause leading to the incarnation of the Word could be nothing else but the immense love of God for man, whose nature he willed to join to himself in a unity of person."[73] The God-man is conceived from Love in person.

Aquinas then offers a second reason why Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit effects the incarnation, highlighting the elevation of a created nature by grace:

We are thus given to understand that human nature was assumed by the Son of God into a unity of person not from any merits, but by grace alone, which, according to 1 Cor. 12[:4], is attributed to the Holy Spirit: "there are varieties of graces, but the same Spirit."[74]

This is a remarkable sentence. Scripture highlights Christ's conception as the Spirit's work because there was nothing on the side of creatures that could merit it or call it forth. It was purely by grace that our nature was supremely elevated to a personal union

[72] *STh* III, q. 32, a. 1. See also *In Matt*., c. 1, lect. 4 (Marietti ed., no. 112); *ScG* IV, c. 46.

[73] *ScG* IV, c. 46.

[74] *STh* III, q. 32, a. 1.

with the Son. In saying this, Aquinas uses Scripture to comment on Scripture: because St. Paul identifies the Holy Spirit as the cause of grace, so we should understand Christ's conception *de Spiritu sancto* to signify that the assumption of a human nature is "by grace alone."

Aquinas then gives a third reason why Christ's conception is appropriated to the Holy Spirit, based on the terminus or end-point of the incarnation. This reason deserves special notice for its Trinitarian resonance. He uses the words of Gabriel's announcement to explain why Christ is conceived *de Spiritu Sancto*: Mary's child will be called "Holy" and "Son of God."

> For the incarnation terminates at this, that this man who was being conceived would be Holy and the Son of God. But both of these are attributed to the Holy Spirit. For through [the Holy Spirit], men are made sons of God, as Galatians 4[:6] says: "because you are sons of God, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying 'Abba, Father.'" He also is the Spirit of sanctification, as Romans 1[:4] says. Therefore, as other men are spiritually sanctified by the Holy Spirit that they would be adopted sons of God, so Christ is conceived in holiness in order that he would be the natural Son of God.[75]

This argument is striking on several levels. First, Aquinas begins with what Scripture tells us is the Holy Spirit's characteristic action in the faithful: the Spirit makes us adopted sons of God and sanctifies us. In fact, these are two facets of the same reality. The first facet, that the Spirit makes us adopted sons and daughters, is founded on the order of the Trinitarian processions: the Holy Spirit "makes those to whom he is sent, like him of whom he is the Spirit,"[76] that is, the Spirit conforms us to the eternal Son, and thus makes us children of the Father from whom the Son proceeds. This effect of the Holy Spirit's mission is proper to him.[77] Likewise, the second facet, that the Spirit

[75] Ibid.

[76] *In Ioan.*, c. 15, lect. 5 (Marietti ed., no. 2062). See also *In Ioan.*, c. 16, lect. 3 (Marietti ed., no. 2102).

[77] At *In Gal.*, c. 4, lect. 3 (*Super epistolam ad Galatas lectura* in Cai, ed., *Super epistolas s. Pauli lectura*, vol. 1, no. 212-17), Aquinas comments on Gal 4:6 ("because you are sons of God, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying 'Abba, Father'"), explaining that it is precisely the mission of the Holy Spirit that makes us adopted sons who cry out

sanctifies us, invokes a related element of Aquinas's teaching. "It belongs to the Holy Spirit, insofar as he proceeds as Love, to be the gift of sanctification," Aquinas explains in the *Prima pars*.[78] We become holy insofar as we receive in our souls the supernatural charity that is the created effect of the Holy Spirit's personal presence. In other words, Aquinas is again invoking what is proper to the Holy Spirit: his presence makes us holy by love.[79]

These two facets are revealed by Scripture as proper effects of the Spirit's presence in us. This is why, Aquinas concludes, Scripture also says that Christ is conceived by the Holy Spirit. In Christ's case, the Holy Spirit does not make him an adopted son but accomplishes a greater miracle—indeed, the greatest: that the child being conceived would be by nature the Son of God. Similarly, at the moment of his conception, his humanity is made supremely holy insofar as he receives, as man, the Holy Spirit in

"Abba, Father." It is a proper effect of the Spirit's presence to make us like the Son, from whom the Spirit proceeds, and our adoptive sonship consists in receiving this filial likeness. More generally, the principle at work here is that, when a divine person is invisibly sent to a creature, that creature is assimilated to what is proper to the divine person sent. The creature thus also receives a likeness of the principle of that divine person. (The divine persons are subsistent relations, and so they necessarily always refer to each other, even when we distinguish them by their personal properties.) Since the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son (and the Father), the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit assimilates a creature to the Spirit's eternal procession ("from the Father and the Son"), which means that that creature also receives a likeness to the Son-who-proceeds-from-the-Father, that is, the creature becomes, in the Son, an adopted son or daughter of the Father.

This is simply another way of articulating Aquinas's teaching on the divine missions in *STh* I, q. 43, where we learn that all three divine persons dwell in the soul according to sanctifying grace, and that if the Holy Spirit is present, then the Son and Father are there as well. See, e.g., *STh* I, q. 43, a. 4, ad 2; q. 43, a. 5.

[78] *STh* I, q. 43, a. 7.

[79] Of course, Aquinas does not mean that the Holy Spirit is present in the soul independently of or apart from the other divine persons—the invisible missions of the divine persons are distinct and proper to each, but just as the persons are inseparable from each other, so also the missions of the Son and Holy Spirit are always found together (*STh* I, q. 43, a. 5, ad 3). If the Holy Spirit is present, the Son is also present (with the Father as well). What Aquinas is noting here, however, is that it is proper to the Holy Spirit to make us holy by love.

full,[80] so that he possesses the most perfect charity along with every virtue, gift, and charism.[81]

B) The Spirit's Action in Christ's Conception

Up to this point, we have seen Aquinas affirming that all three divine persons are jointly the efficient cause of Christ's conception, and that this is attributed to the Holy Spirit by a special appropriation.[82] But Aquinas does not stop here. In a number of his texts, he extends his Trinitarian analysis in order to discern the personal mode of action of each divine person *within* this joint efficient causality—and in particular to underscore the unique mode (not simply an appropriation) that characterizes the Holy Spirit's action in Christ's conception.

Thus, in the article from the *Summa theologiae* that we have been examining, an objection argues that we should not attribute Christ's conception to the Holy Spirit because the Trinity's actions in the world are indivisible and belong to all three divine persons. In replying, Aquinas affirms this classical axiom about *ad extra* actions, and adds an important point.[83]

[80] *STh* I, q. 43, a. 7, ad 6; *STh* III, q. 7, a. 1, s.c.; q. 34, a. 1; *In Matt.*, c. 12, lect. 1 (Marietti ed., no. 1000); *De Verit.*, q. 29, a. 3; *In Ioan.*, c. 3, lect. 6 (Marietti ed., no. 543).

[81] *STh* III, q. 7, aa. 1-2, 5, 7, 9-11.

[82] We have also seen (in the preceding two paragraphs) that Aquinas justifies the fittingness of this appropriation by referring to the Spirit's proper effects in the faithful, but, up to now, we have focused only on how the efficient causality of Christ's conception is *appropriated* to the Holy Spirit even though, properly speaking, all three persons are a single efficient cause of Christ's conception in virtue of the unity of the divine essence. We are now turning to an examination of the Holy Spirit's *proper mode of action* in Christ's conception. In other words, we are flagging an important distinction between (a) a reason of fittingness that grounds an appropriation (something proper—either a personal property, or, as in the texts mentioned just above, a person's proper effect in the order of exemplar causality), as distinct from (b) the personal mode of action of a divine person (which is, as I explain below, the unique mode by which a distinct person acts in inseparable unity with the other two divine persons in an *ad extra* action).

[83] Despite the perspicacity of Jean-Pierre Torrell's commentary underlining the importance of *STh* III, q. 32, a. 1, ad 1, he omits to mention how it identifies the personal modes of action of the distinct divine persons within the joint efficient causality of the whole Trinity. See Torrell, *Le Christ en ses mystères*, 1:109-15.

> The work of conception is indeed common to the whole Trinity, yet according to a certain mode it is attributed to the individual persons. For authorship [*auctoritas*] is attributed to the Father with respect to the person of the Son, who assumed a human nature to himself through this conception; but the assumption of flesh is attributed to the Son.[84]

The Father's "*auctoritas*" here refers to the fact that the Father is the principle or author (the "*auctor*") of the Son. This is *not* an appropriation; it designates the Father's personal property. The Father's personal mode of action in the conception of Christ, then, is as *auctor* and principle of the Son. We grasp that there will now be a man who has the Father as his *auctor* or eternal principle. Further, insofar as the conception of Christ is the first moment of the visible mission of the Son, the Father does indeed have a proper role in this, insofar as he sends the Son into the world to assume flesh. So in Christ's conception, the Father acts inseparably with the Son and the Holy Spirit, but in the proper mode of being the eternal *auctor* and principle of the Son, and hence as being the person who sends the Son into the world. Likewise, the Son has a proper mode of action here: he "assumes" flesh. That is, the Son has a distinct mode of action as the person to whom that humanity is united (by the common action of all three persons). The Son is both a principle and cause of this action (with the other persons), and is also (uniquely) its terminus.[85]

So much for the Father and the Son. What is the proper mode of the Holy Spirit's action here? Aquinas has some important things to say in the text we have been examining (*STh* III, q. 32, a. 1, ad 1), but in order to grasp their full significance we should recall a central teaching of Aquinas's Trinitarian theology: the divine Word is the perfect conception and thus the perfect expression of the Father. "The Word in God . . . is perfect, and

[84] *STh* III, q. 32, a. 1, ad 1.
[85] See, e.g., *STh* III, q. 2, a. 8.

expressive of the whole being of the Father,"[86] he writes. This personal property of the divine Word is at center stage in the incarnation. Consider the interplay between Father, Word, and Spirit in this text from Aquinas's *Commentary on John*:

> As the Apostle says, "no one knows the [secret] things of a man except his spirit which is in him (1 Cor. 2:11)"—in other words, except insofar as he wills to manifest himself. But someone manifests his secret through his word: and hence no one can come to a man's secrets except through that man's word. Because, therefore, no one knows "the things of God except the Spirit of God," no one can come to know the Father except through his Word, which is his Son. "No one knows the Father except the Son (Matt. 11:27)." Just as a man, wanting to reveal himself by the word of his heart that he brings forth from his mouth, clothes that word, as it were, with letters or sounds, so also God, wanting to manifest himself to men, clothes his Word, conceived from all eternity, with flesh in time. And thus no one can come to a knowledge of the Father except through the Son.[87]

The incarnation is precisely the manifestation to the world of the Father's secret Word. The Father clothes that Word, not with sound, but even more richly with a complete human nature, thus expressing who the Father is with vastly greater resonance and depth—not only by human sounds and human words, but also by his actions, his love, and the whole complex of human relations that he has.

How is that exterior word produced? When we speak, our interior word is generated as a spoken word by the movement of our breath. Considering that the first sense of the Latin "*spiritus*" is breath, Aquinas remarks:

> In us there is a twofold word: the word of the heart and the word of the voice. The word of the heart is the conception itself of the understanding, which is hidden from men unless it is expressed by the voice or a vocal word. But our word of the heart is compared to the eternal Word before the incarnation, when he was "with" the Father and veiled from us; a vocal word is compared to the incarnate Word who has now appeared and is manifested to us. But the word

[86] *In Ioan.*, c. 1, lect. 1 (Marietti ed., no. 29). Likewise, see *STh* I, q. 34, a. 3: "unicum Verbum eius est expressivum . . . Patris." In *De Verit.*, q. 4, a. 3, Aquinas explicitly connects the Word's manifestation to his proper procession by way of intellect. Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 10, a. 4, ad 4.

[87] *In Ioan.*, c. 14, lect. 2 (Marietti ed., no. 1874).

of the heart is not joined to the voice except by the mediation of the *spiritus* ["breath" or "spirit"], and so rightly the incarnation of the Word, through which he visibly appeared to us, was made by the mediation of the Holy Spirit.[88]

Aquinas draws out the significance of the Trinitarian order of persons even more clearly in the *Summa contra gentiles*:

The incarnation of the Word of God is like the vocal expression of our word. But the vocal expression of our word is made through our *spiritum* [our "breath" or "spirit"], by which the sound of our word is formed. Fittingly, therefore, the flesh of the Son of God is also said to be formed by the Son's Spirit.[89]

It is hard to imagine an account of Christ's conception that would be more richly Trinitarian. The Father conceives the Son from all eternity as the Word that perfectly expresses all that he is. That Word is then spoken in time, not in sound only, but as a man, in the flesh, which is conceived and formed by the Spirit who is breathed forth as Love by the Father and the Son.

With this beautiful and evocative Trinitarian truth in mind, we can return to the text of the *Summa theologiae* in order to see the profundity of Aquinas's explanation of the Holy Spirit's proper mode of acting in Christ's conception. Aquinas's detailed explanation culminates in this key line:

the formation of the body assumed by the Son is attributed to the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son. . . . The power of God, which is the

[88] *In Matt*., c. 1, lect. 4 (Marietti ed., no. 112). Aquinas does not mean that the Holy Spirit was a "formal medium" of the incarnation, but only a "moving" medium. As he explains at *STh* III, q. 6, a. 6 ad 3, when we pronounce a verbal word, our "breath" proceeds from the "interior word" conceived in the mind. This breath is not a "formal medium [*medio formali*]" uniting an interior word to one's voice, but rather is a "moving medium [*medium movens*]." Likewise, "the Holy Spirit proceeds from the eternal Word," and, in the Word's visible mission, the Spirit formed the body of Christ, "but it does not follow from this that the grace of the Holy Spirit was a formal medium in the [hypostatic] union."

[89] *ScG* IV, c. 46. See also I *Sent*., d. 11, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4; *STh* III, q. 6, a. 6 ad 3.

Son himself (1 Cor. 1:24) . . . through [*per*] the Holy Spirit, formed the body which he assumed.[90]

There are two key aspects of this teaching. The first is purely Trinitarian: the Holy Spirit acts as the Spirit of the Son. Aquinas's Trinitarian theology teaches that the Holy Spirit is "from" the Father and the Son, and we see the consequence in this text. The Holy Spirit's personal mode of acting in Christ's conception is thus entirely relative: he is the Spirit of the Son. The Spirit acts according to his personal property, as entirely relative to the Son (and the Father) from whom he proceeds. This is not an appropriation but refers to the proper mode of the Spirit's action within the joint efficient causality of all three persons.

The second aspect flows from this, building on the interplay between the proper names of "Son" and "Spirit" and drawing on an analogy to human generation. Aquinas's explanation runs parallel to the analogy we have just seen regarding an inner word made audible by a speaker's *spiritus* or breath (which drew on the proper names of "Word" and "Spirit"). In human conception, Aquinas reasons, a man's seed is not purely material or inanimate: it has a "spirit" that imparts a certain active power that is essential to conception, a spirit which is *from* the life or power of soul of the man himself. Likewise, in Christ's conception, where there is no male seed whatsoever, there is "the power of God," who is the Son (1 Cor 1:24), acting *through* [*per*][91] the Holy Spirit to

[90] *STh* III, q. 32, a. 1, ad 1.

[91] When he treats John 1:16 ("through him all things were made") in his *Commentary on John*, Aquinas takes great care to explain how it is true in the proper sense that the Father acts "through [*per*]" his Word. The Father acts "through" the Word in the world, but not by way of efficient causality (the Father is never moved to act by the Word), nor by way of formal causality (the Word is not a formal cause of the Father's action). The Son never causes anything in the Father; rather, he receives everything from him. This leads Aquinas to conclude that "*per*" designates the Word's causality with respect to creatures. It underlines that the Word receives this causality from the Father, so that the Father and the Son act together. See *In Ioan*., c. 1, lect. 2 (Marietti ed., no. 76). See Emery, "Personal Mode of Trinitarian Action," *The Thomist* 69 (2005): 49-50; *Trinitarian Theology*, 198-99 and 349-55.

This seems to be the same logic as Aquinas's explanation in the text we are examining: "the Power of God, which is the Son himself . . . through [*per*] the Holy Spirit, formed the body which he assumed." That is, the Son acts through the Holy Spirit in forming the

"form" (or we might say "inform") the body of Christ in Mary's virginal womb.[92] Despite the errors in biology that we find in

body precisely because the Holy Spirit is from the Son. This expresses the proper relation between these two divine persons and so is designating a proper mode of causality. Likewise, the Holy Spirit acts "from the Son" (and also from the Father) in forming Christ's body, because the Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son and so receives his causality from them just as he receives (and is) the divine nature from them. For a text of Aquinas treating how the Father acts through the Holy Spirit, see I *Sent*., d. 14, q. 1, a. 1.

[92] Even though, in the details of this analogy, Aquinas draws on an understanding of the biology of human conception that needs to be corrected by our contemporary scientific knowledge, two key principles of his reasoning remain valid: (1) in every conception (including Christ's), there needs to be something intervening from outside of the mother that activates the process of human development in her womb; and (2) the Virgin Mary, truly Christ's mother, contributes everything to his conception that any mother contributes in a natural conception.

Regarding the first principle, Aquinas thought that, in natural human generation, the female supplies material that is in proximate potency to conception but is not sufficient, of itself, for conception. The male seed then communicates a "formative power" which drives and guides the developmental process of the foetus conceived from the matter from the mother; see *STh* III, q. 28, a. 1, ad 5. Such a formative power is not simply something purely material; rather, Aquinas thinks that the man's seed has this power from a formal principle intrinsically related to his human essence. Since, in Christ's conception, there is no male seed that communicates this "formative power" by which a new child begins to develop within Mary's womb, he holds that the Holy Spirit himself miraculously acted, immaterially, in place of the formative power that, in a natural conception, he assumes would have come principally from the biological father; see *In Matt*., c. 1, lect. 4 (Marietti ed., no. 132). See Richard Bauckham, "The Bishops and the Virginal Conception," *Churchman* 101 (1987): 325-27.

Regarding the second principle, Aquinas clearly teaches that Mary is also a true principle of Christ's conception. Despite his views about human conception that contemporary embryology might dispute—for example, that the active formative principle of a child's development is communicated mainly by the man's seed—Aquinas insists that "because the Blessed Virgin is truly the Mother of Christ, it is necessary to attribute to her all that belongs to a mother" (III *Sent*., d. 3, q. 2, a. 1; see also *Comp. Theol.* II, c. 223). He may be wrong about what a mother in fact contributes, but his theological principle is right: Mary contributes to the conception of Christ *whatever any other human mother contributes* in the conception of her child.

Today, we understand a mother's contribution quite differently than Aquinas did. We know that a mother's ovum provides half of her child's genetic material, and once activated and completed by male sperm, the new zygote (it is no longer only an egg)

Aquinas's detailed explanation here, he draws an important and perennially valid Trinitarian conclusion: that the Holy Spirit's action in the formation of Christ's body is *from the Son*, and ultimately from the Father as well.[93] Aquinas's text makes clear that the Spirit is not a sole or exclusive actor here: all three divine persons are the efficient cause of the formation of Christ's body. Yet we *do* see in this text the proper personal mode of the Spirit's action, which is discerned *within* the inseparably joined action of the three divine persons.

This leads Aquinas to a Trinitarian exegesis of the angel's message to Mary at the Annunciation:

> This is what the words of the Angel demonstrate: *The Holy Spirit will come over you*, as if to prepare and form the matter of the body of Christ, *and the Power of the Most High*, that is, Christ, *will overshadow you*, that is, as Gregory says, "the human body in you will receive the incorporeal light of the divinity. . . ." The "Most High" refers here to the Father, whose "Power" is the Son.[94]

It is not proper to the Holy Spirit to be the efficient cause of the formation of Christ's body—in the order of efficient causality, the three persons act inseparably together. Nonetheless, this passage is authentically Trinitarian insofar as we can discern the proper mode of acting of each divine person at Christ's conception.

The Spirit is "from" the Father and the Son and so acts from them, and they act "through [*per*]" the Spirit: this is Aquinas's ultimate Trinitarian account of what can be properly attributed

rapidly unleashes in a wondrous way the complex processes of development of a new human being.

While I think we should be cautious about claiming to know too much about the biological details of Christ's miraculous conception, it seems to me that, if we are to follow Aquinas, we would say that there was no human seed, and no new matter was introduced, in the supernatural miracle by which Christ was conceived. Instead, we might suppose that the Holy Spirit, acting in a purely immaterial way, miraculously "formed" the bodily material contributed by the Virgin Mary—her ovum—so that she conceived a child with a perfect set of complete human chromosomes—Jesus' chromosomes—half of which would be from her.

[93] *STh* III, q. 32, a. 1, ad 1.

[94] Ibid.

to the Holy Spirit in Christ's conception. To summarize: The Father is the source of the Son and the one who sends the Son to assume a human nature; the Son, acting from the Father, is the one who assumes flesh; and the Holy Spirit, who is from the Father and the Son, is the one through whom the Son acts in bringing about the miraculous conception of the Son as man.

Conclusion

The truth that Christ is conceived *de Spiritu Sancto* has important consequences for Christology. Because the Holy Spirit is an agent of infinite wisdom and power, Christ's humanity is without genetic defects and immune from the *fomes* of sin.[95] Yet neither the Trinity nor the Holy Spirit may be called the father of Christ: Christ has only one Father, God the Father. As Aquinas puts it, the Holy Spirit does not "generate" Christ as man, because generation implies sameness of substance, while Christ's humanity is *not* consubstantial with the Holy Spirit. Rather, Christ is conceived by the power of the Spirit, but *ex Maria Virgine*. Mary is truly Christ's mother, but the Spirit is not his father.[96]

Aquinas explains that the Holy Spirit has a complex set of relations to Christ. The Spirit is consubstantial with the Son as God, from whom he proceeds. Likewise, the Spirit "has the relation of efficient cause to [the Son's human] body,"[97] (although the Spirit is not an exclusive efficient cause but shares that causality with the Father and the Son). And the Spirit dwells

[95] *STh* III, q. 14, a. 4; q. 15, a. 2, s.c. On Aquinas's view of Christ's human passions in relation to his freedom from sin and human perfection, see Paul Gondreau, *The Passions of Christ's Soul in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Scranton, Pa.: University of Scranton Press, 2009); Craig Steven Titus, "Passions in Christ: Spontaneity, Development, and Virtue," *The Thomist* 73 (2009): 68-86.

[96] III *Sent*., d. 4, q. 1 a. 2 qcla. 1, ad 2. See also III *Sent*., d. 4, exp. textus and q. 1, a. 2, qcla. 1; d. 12, q. 3, a. 2, qcla. 1; *STh* III, q. 32, a. 3, corp. and ad 1; *In Matt*., c. 1, lect. 4 (Marietti ed., no. 111); *Comp. Theol*. II, c. 223.

[97] *STh* III, q. 32, a. 1.

in Christ's human soul by grace, in absolute fullness, with every perfection that grace can bestow on a human nature: Christ as man receives "the whole Spirit," without measure, from the first instant of his conception, and he is therefore holy in his humanity in a unique way.[98] The hypostatic union is the cause of this, but only indirectly; more directly, the principle of Christ's habitual grace is the Holy Spirit.[99] Moreover, the incarnate Son, both as God and as man, gives the Holy Spirit to the world; this is an aspect of Christ's capital grace. As man, therefore, Christ is conceived as the fount of the Holy Spirit for the whole world.[100]

We conclude with an evocative text from the *Summa theologiae* where Aquinas ties the Spirit's role in Christ's conception to the way Christ became the living bread that would become the perfect sacrificial offering of the New Covenant.

> [Christ] is the living bread . . . who was like formed bread after he had assumed human nature, baked in the fire, that is, formed by the Holy Spirit in the oven of the virginal womb; he was also baked in a pan, through the toils that he underwent in the world; and he was as it were burned on the cross as if on a gridiron.[101]

Having assumed a human nature, the Holy Spirit "formed" him with the fire of charity. That same flame of divine love impelled him throughout his earthly life, and reached its culmination in his self-offering for the sins of the whole world on the cross, by which he saved the world.

[98] *In Ioan.*, c. 16, lect. 2 (Marietti ed., no. 2088); *In Hebr.*, c. 1, lect. 4 (Marietti ed., no. 63); *In Psalm.* 20 (*In Psalmos Davidis expositio*, in *Opera omnia,* vol. 14 [Parma: Typis Petri Fiaccadori, 1863]).

[99] *STh* III, q. 7, a. 13. On this point, see Legge, *Trinitarian Christology*, 132-59, discussing the relation of the grace of union to the Holy Spirit's presence in Christ's humanity according to habitual grace.

[100] "Because Christ in a certain way infuses the effect of grace in all rational creatures, he is therefore in a certain manner the principle of all graces according to his humanity, as God is the principle of all being" (*De Verit.*, q. 29, a. 5). Likewise, at *STh* III, q. 8, a. 1, Aquinas explains that Christ "has the power of giving grace to all the members of the Church," by which he means that all who receive grace, receive it from Christ as their head (see also *STh* III, q. 8, a. 3). For more detail on this point, see Legge, *Trinitarian Christology*, 211-31.

[101] *STh* I-II, q. 102, a. 3, ad 12.

If, for contemporary exegetes and theologians, a robust account of the Holy Spirit in Christ's life is essential,[102] I submit that Aquinas deserves to be numbered among the theologians in the history of Western theology with a great sensitivity to this pneumatological dimension of the mystery of the incarnation.

[102] See n. 7, above.

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INTERPERSONAL COMMANDS AND THE *IMPERIUM-PRAECEPTUM* DEBATE

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THE CONCEPT OF "COMMAND" is central to the moral psychology of St. Thomas Aquinas. He has much to say, for instance, on the role of *imperium* (and related concepts, such as the *actus imperatus*) within his theory of human acts. He also describes prudence as consisting in part in an act that he calls the *praeceptum*. Yet St. Thomas never clarifies the relationship between these terms, both of which we could translate as "command."

In the second half of the twentieth century, certain Thomists, such as Odon Lottin and René Gauthier, noted this problem and entered into a debate regarding the relationship (and possible equivalence) between these two Latin terms in the thought of St. Thomas. The discussion reached considerable proportions, to the point that more recently Michael Konrad referred to it as an "old cross of the Thomists."[1] Scholars today still refer to the discussion, whether they consider it resolved[2] or wish to further the

[1] M. Konrad, *Precetti e consigli: studi sull'etica di san Tommaso d'Aquino a confronto con Lutero e Kant* (Rome: Lateran University Press, 2005), 59.

[2] See J. F. Sellés, *Conocer y amar* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2000), 361 n. 452. Sellés follows Lottin's later position, which Sellés believes is closer to that of Gauthier; cf. J. F. Sellés, *Los hábitos intelectuales según Tomás de Aquino* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2008), 80 n. 29; O. Lottin, "Psychologie de l'acte humain," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médievale* 29 (1962): 250-67, at 267.

debate,[3] and often in order to point to its nuances and its wide-ranging consequences.[4]

The problem arises from two sets of texts of St. Thomas in the *Prima secundae*, especially when read in translation. In one set of texts, the most important of which is question 17, he explains that in a human act, the act of choice (*electio*) is followed by the "command" (*imperium*) of the will.[5] That is to say, a person first chooses a course of action to be followed and then commands the different powers of the soul to begin executing the action. But later in the *Prima secundae*, he says that prudence has three distinct acts: *primus est consiliari, secundus iudicare, tertius est praecipere*. The third and most important of these, *praecipere*, is often translated as "to command."[6] The question, then, arises: What is the relationship between the "command" (*imperium*) of the will that follows choice and the "command" (*praeceptum*) of prudence, which presumably must precede choice? Although in a few texts St. Thomas actually uses the expressions *imperium vel praeceptum*[7] and *praecipere vel imperare*,[8] he never addresses this question explicitly. The semantic proximity between *praecipere*

[3] See Konrad, *Precetti e consigli*, 48-49 n. 39; 57-60. Konrad in turn (59 n. 64) cites G. Borgonovo, *Sinderesi e coscienza nel pensiero di san Tommaso d'Aquino: Contributi per un "ridimensionamento" della coscienza morale nella teologia contemporanea* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1996), 232-35. In his review of Konrad's book, Iacopo Costa focuses on refuting the view that *imperium* and *praeceptum prudentiae* are identical, relying heavily on Gauthier: see I. Costa, "Konrad, M., Precetti e consigli," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 90 (2006): 754-57. Angel Rodríguez Luño also sides with Gauthier: see A. Rodríguez Luño, *La scelta etica: Il rapporto fra libertà & virtù* (Milan: Ares, 1988).

[4] Cf. Paul Morisset, "Prudence et fin selon saint Thomas," *Sciences ecclésiastiques* 15 (1963): 73-98, 439-58; D. Westberg, *Right Practical Reason* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 5-13; 191 n. 11.

[5] Although *electio* can be correctly translated as "choice," the term has a very specific meaning in St. Thomas, which is much narrower than the meaning it has in contemporary English. He conceives *electio* as an act of the will, within the order of intention, with regard to the means whereby the end is pursued; see *STh* I-II, q. 13. The reader should keep in mind the technical connotations that this and other terms have in the context of St. Thomas's psychological analysis of the human act.

[6] *STh* II-II, q. 51, a. 2, ad 2; I-II, q. 57, a. 6; q. 58, a. 4; q. 61, a. 3; q. 65, a. 1.

[7] IV *Sent.*, d. 15, q. 4, a. 1, qcla. 1.

[8] *STh* II-II, q. 47, a. 8, obj. 3.

and *imperare* has thus led many Thomists[9] to hold that these two terms are ultimately equivalent, thus identifying the third act of prudence with the act of command of the will that follows choice.

This identification is not without its problems, however. On the basis of the first group of texts, most Thomists agree that *imperium* follows *electio*—in other words, that choosing must take place before the will can command the different powers of the soul to execute the action. But if the *praeceptum* of prudence is equivalent to the *imperium* of the will, then it would seem to follow that the third act of prudence is posterior to *electio*, rather than prior to it. This hypothesis is problematic because prudence is required for making a good choice.[10] That is to say, one would not truly be prudent if one were to defer the prudent judgment until after making a choice; far from being prudent, such a course of action would be rather reckless. Aware of this conundrum, Lottin and Gauthier questioned the identity between the *praeceptum* of prudence—which must precede choice—and the *imperium* of execution—which must follow choice. Thus began the controversy.

The discussion in the twentieth century is so extensive that an exhaustive review of the literature would require its own study. We have noticed, however, that the lengthy debates of recent decades have generally omitted references to a few texts where St. Thomas describes *imperium* and *praeceptum* within the context of interpersonal commands, that is, of one person commanding another. This is seen especially—though not exclusively—in

[9] See Rodríguez Luño, *La scelta etica*, 87: "Many Thomists—Gonet, Sertillanges, Noble, Deman, among others—affirm that the prudential precept coincides perfectly with the act of command that St. Thomas studies in the Treatise on Human Acts of the *Prima secundae*, that is, with the act of reason that is posterior to choice and prior to the active use of the will. This thesis has wide implications, but it raises many problems" ("Molto tomisti, e tra gli altri Gonet, Sertillanges, Noble, Deman, affermano che il precetto prudenziale coincide perfettamente con l'atto imperativo che san Tommaso ha studiato nel trattado delgli atti umani della *Prima secundae*, cioè con l'atto de la ragione posteriore all'elezione e anteriore all'uso attivo della voluntà. Questa tesi gode di *diffusiones* molto ampia, ma origina non pochi inconvenienti").

[10] See *STh* I-II, q. 57, a. 5.

St. Thomas's discussion of divine precepts in his *Commentary* on Psalm 18, a text that has been largely ignored in the discussion.[11] These texts which speak of interpersonal commands can shed much light on the relationship between *praeceptum* and *imperium* in St. Thomas's *corpus*. Our goal is to make a modest, yet original contribution to this great debate by placing these texts on the table for discussion.

Another original contribution to the debate is the very thesis that we wish to defend in this essay: Gauthier's reading of St. Thomas—though problematic if left the way he presented it—can be saved by incorporating into it the concept of alterity, in both interpersonal and intrapersonal contexts.[12] Previously, scholars such as Pinckaers and Deman had only argued against Gauthier,[13] without suggesting how his interpretation could be

[11] To our knowledge, the only other publication that makes reference to this important text is Teresa Enríquez, *De la decisión a la acción: Estudio sobre el* imperium *en Tomás de Aquino* (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2011), 178-80. We utilized some of the texts discussed in that book as our working material (see n. 12).

[12] Some of the material in this article has appeared in Teresa Enríquez's monograph, *De la decisión a la acción*, which broadly addresses the *praeceptum-imperium* debate (e.g., ibid., 146-47). Most of the texts we cite in this article are also cited in the book, since this material is necessary for the discussion. The similarities between the book and this article, however, are material rather than formal. For instance, since in the book it was not her aim to resolve the problem, the author merely acknowledged its existence and offered a preliminary and synoptic presentation of the debate. In this article, however, our *ex professo* aim is to contribute to the debate by putting the text of the *Commentary* on Psalm 18 on the table for discussion and to offer a solution based on that of Gauthier. We thus offer a whole section devoted to the state of the question, including a more detailed review of the positions of Lottin, Gauthier, Deman, and Pinckaers (see section I). More concretely, in her book Enríquez only briefly discussed, and in fact offered a criticism of Gauthier's position. In this article, however, we delve more deeply into Gauthier's position and present him in a much more positive light (see n. 13).

[13] This was also the case in Enríquez's *De la decisión a la acción*, where she offers a critique of Gauthier along with a brief suggestion of a possible correction of his position (see ibid., 153, 193-94). After years of work and dialogue on this issue, however, we have decided to offer in this essay, as part of our own solution, a more robust rehabilitation—and thus in a sense a defense—of Gauthier's position by reading him and St. Thomas in light of the concept of interpersonal commands. Moreover, in order to "save" Gauthier's reading, we felt the need to introduce the distinction between the order of intention and the order of execution (see especially section II.B) as a key ingredient in the solution, a distinction that is absent from the book.

corrected or rehabilitated. We, on the other hand, wish to defend Gauthier by considering him in light of texts not previously included in the debate. Admittedly, our rehabilitation of Gauthier involves modifying his position, and therefore we are not defending him *simpliciter*, but are rather developing a novel interpretation on the basis of his position.

After (I) a brief summary of the relevant discussion in the literature, we shall (II) present a couple of texts that have been hitherto underappreciated in the debate, and in which St. Thomas discusses *imperium* and *praeceptum* within the context of interpersonal commands. Then (III) we shall tie these texts together into an argument in which we hope to show that they offer a justification for Gauthier's reading of St. Thomas even within the context of "intrapersonal" commands, that is, in the psychology of the individual human act. The conclusion summarizes the argument and briefly points to its ramifications.

I. *STATUS QUAESTIONIS*

The relevant discussion began in 1949 with an observation by Lottin, who in his reading of the middle sections of the *Prima secundae*—the "Treatise on the Habits"[14]—claimed that the *praeceptum* of prudence is prior to a virtuous *electio*,[15] and therefore is distinct from the *imperium* that initiates the order of execution. Earlier in the *Prima secundae*, in his psychological analysis of the human act, St. Thomas explicitly posits *imperium* as an act that *follows* choice (*electio*). This order between *electio* and *imperium* was understood by Lottin as being independent of

[14] Specifically in *STh* I-II, q. 58, a. 4. The exact term *praeceptum prudentiae* is found in *STh* I-II, q. 58, a. 5, ad 3.

[15] Odon Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, vol. 3 (Louvain: Abbaye du Mont César, 1949), 582: "While the *imperium* is presented as subsequent to choice (I-II, q. 17, a. 3, ad 1), the act of *praecipere* is, on the contrary, assumed to be prior to the choice that it commands (I-II, q. 58, a. 4)" ("Tandis que l'*imperium* est présenté comme consécutif au choix [I-II, q. 17, a. 3, ad 1], l'acte de *praecipere* est, au contraire, supposé antérieur à ce choix qu'il commande [I-II, q. 58, a. 4])."

whether the *electio* is virtuous, given that at this point in the *Prima secundae* St. Thomas is not yet dealing with the morality of acts as such.[16] Thus Lottin noted that in St. Thomas there is first a *praeceptum* of prudence before a choice is made, then an *imperium* after the choice is made, which implies that *praeceptum* and *imperium* are not equivalent, but refer to distinct acts, or at any rate distinct stages of one human act. Nonetheless, Lottin did not wish to insist too much on this distinction, which ultimately he thought is a matter of "minimal nuances," and rather affirmed a fundamental equivalence between the proper act of governmental prudence, on the one hand, and that of individual prudence—namely, *imperium* or *praeceptum*—on the other.[17]

Gauthier, on the other hand, stressed Lottin's distinction between *praeceptum* and *imperium* and defended it deliberately and explicitly as a novel interpretation of the thought of St. Thomas.[18] Yet he also acknowledged that the term *praeceptum* is in some sense convertible with *imperium*, and that St. Thomas himself sometimes uses the terms interchangeably. Thus, Gauthier sought a synthesis: he proposed that a distinction between two types of *imperium* must be made in order to read St. Thomas's texts harmoniously. One type of *imperium* must be prior to choice, and this *imperium* is equivalent to the *praeceptum* of prudence (at least in cases where the choice is prudent), whereas the other type of *imperium* must take place after choice and is the *imperium* in the order of execution which is discussed in question 17 of the *Prima secundae*. In Gauthier's terminology, there is a "*praeceptum* or *imperium* that commands the choice" ("*praeceptum* ou *imperium* qui commande le choix") and an "*imperium* that commands the execution" ("*imperium* qui commande l'exécution)."[19] Gauthier further explained that the

[16] *STh* I-II, q. 17, a. 3, ad 1.

[17] Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, 3:582: "Mais on reconnaîtra que ce sont là de minimes nuances, qui n'entament pas l'identité foncière de la loi, l'acte propre de la prudence gouvernementale, avec l'*imperium* (ou *praeceptum*), l'acte propre de la prudence individuelle."

[18] See René Gauthier, "Compte rendu: Lottin, Odon, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles. II-III. Problèmes de morale*," *Bulletin thomiste* 8 (1951): 60-86, esp. 64-71.

[19] Ibid., 68.

difference between the two resides in their relation to *electio*. The *praeceptum* of prudence, which he identified as "the *imperium* of choice," directs the *electio* and is therefore structurally prior to it. On the other hand, there is also an "*imperium* of execution," which is subsequent to the *electio* and is, therefore, limited to ordering the execution. The two are called *imperium* analogously.[20] Gauthier knew that by defending this thesis he was opposing other Thomists, but he attributed to Cajetan—and in a sense to St. Thomas himself—the core of his proposal: an identity between *imperium* ("*imperium* of choice") and the *iudicium electionis*.[21]

Both Thomas Deman and Servais Pinckaers wrote responses to Gauthier and defended the radical equivalence between the

[20] Ibid., 68: "The *imperium* is therefore an ordination of reason imbued with a voluntary influx, and which receives from this influx the force to move efficaciously. . . . However, this is where the difficulty lies: this type-structure is concretely realized in two acts, the *praeceptum* or *imperium* which commands the choice and the *imperium* which commands the execution: two irreducibly distinct acts, because the *imperium* which commands the execution is chronologically posterior to the choice, while the *imperium* which commands the choice is chronologically simultaneous and logically prior to it; two acts, however, in which the same structure is realized analogically" ("L'*imperium* sera donc une ordination de la raison imprégnée d'un influx volontaire et tenant de cet influx la force de mouvoir efficacement. . . . Mais, et c'est en cela que réside la difficulté, cette structure-type se réalise concrètement en deux actes, le *praeceptum* ou *imperium* qui commande le choix et l'*imperium* qui commande l'exécution: deux actes irréductiblement distincts, car l'*imperium* qui commande l'exécution est chronologiquement postérieur au choix, tandis que l'*imperium* qui commande le choix lui est chronologiquement simultané et logiquement antérieur; deux actes, pourtant, dans lesquels se réalise analogiquement la même structure").

[21] Ibid., 69: "Moreover, with this account we are merely coming to the same conclusion as that found in the lucid exegesis of Cajetan . . . identifying an *imperium* within the *prudential praeceptum*, he in fact does not hesitate to identify in express terms this *imperium*, not with the imperium of execution, as modern Thomists do [Sertillanges, Noble, Deman, see p. 65], but rather with the *iudicium electionis*, as St. Thomas did" ("Nous ne faisons d'ailleurs que rejoindre par ces explications l'exégèse si lucide de Cajetan . . . reconnu dans le *praeceptum* prudentiel un *imperium*, celui-ci, en effet, n'hésite pas à identifier en termes exprès cet *imperium*, non à l'*imperium* d'exécution, comme le font les thomistes modernes [Sertillanges, Noble, Deman, see p. 65], mais bien au *iudicium electionis*, comme le faisait S. Thomas").

imperium of the will and the *praeceptum* of prudence. Deman argued that St. Thomas in his moral theology draws from historically diverse doctrinal sources, which were translated into Latin by different hands. His technical vocabulary is therefore necessarily varied, and he employs different terms for the same fundamental reality. Thus, *imperium* and *praeceptum* form a Thomistic word pair ("un doublet du vocabulaire Thomiste") in which the terms are ultimately doctrinally equivalent. The term *imperium*, which St. Thomas draws from St. Augustine and from medieval Latin translations of St. John Damascene and Avicenna, is used by him primarily to describe a peculiar psychological act within the context of the discussion of the human act. The term *praeceptum* is Aristotelian in origin (cf. *prudentia est praeceptiva*), and—these authors claim—it is used by St. Thomas to refer to the same psychological act but within the context of the discussion on the virtue of prudence, which is where Aristotle himself uses it.[22]

Pinckaers,[23] following the same line as Deman, offered a diagnosis of what he perceived as Gauthier's error: a legalistic way of understanding morality. Indeed, Gauthier saw in the prudent *praeceptum* a law-based assurance of the righteousness of our choices. Pinckaers alludes to the Aristotelian origin of St. Thomas's analysis, saying that choice is not governed by a command, but by counsel (*consilium*). And a choice is prudent, not because it obeys a precept, but because it is made according to right reason, embodied in a true practical judgment (*judicium electionis*). Thus, in Pinckaers's eyes, Gauthier's view tends to blur the true role of *praeceptum*, which is to lead the will to make a virtuous, yet nonobligatory, choice. Gauthier's identification of *imperium* with the judgment of prudence ends up "suffocating" the *electio*, as it were, in the sense that it seems to preclude the freedom of the latter.

In this article we propose that Gauthier's distinction, though admittedly problematic in itself, could become a very plausible

[22] Thomas Deman, "Le 'precepte' de la prudence chez Thomas d'Aquin," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 10 (1953): 40-59, at 58; cf. VI *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 9.

[23] Servais Pinckaers, "Compte rendu: Deman et Gauthier," *Bulletin thomiste* 9 (1955): 345-62.

interpretation if we introduce the notion of alterity to the discussion. As a first step, this would entail considering St. Thomas's doctrine of *imperium* as obtaining in the scenario of an interpersonal command. Viewed in this context, Gauthier's claim would be right: the *praeceptum* of the superior ("*praeceptum* or *imperium* that commands the choice") is prior to the *electio* of the inferior; and the *imperium* of the inferior ("an *imperium* that commands the execution") is posterior to her own *electio*. Thus far, Konrad has been the only author who has come close to suggesting the relevance of the notion of alterity to Gauthier's interpretation, but even he has not altogether defended this interpretation.[24]

II. Two Key Texts on *Imperium* and *Praeceptum*

Deman is, of course, right that St. Thomas at times uses multiple terms for the same reality. Saint Thomas himself acknowledges that an author tends to use various words (*verba multiplicat*) in order to express the same concept (*conceptum*).[25] This is certainly the case with the terms *imperium* and *praeceptum*, whose semantic proximity is undeniable: both express a

[24] Cf. Konrad, *Precetti e consigli*, 60 and n. 72: "Both the term *imperium* and the term *praeceptum* therefore refer to the act of prescribing. What changes is rather the addressee to whose act it is addressed; but for this very reason the character of the act also changes: as it is addressed to the subject himself, the *imperium* can indicate a decision, while the *praeceptum* remains an imperative exhortation insofar as it is addressed to others. [Footnote:] This distinction is certainly not valid in all cases; in fact there are also cases in which the *imperium* is addressed to others. . . . There are also passages in which the *praeceptum* is addressed to itself" ("Sia il termine *imperium* che il termine *praeceptum* si riferiscono dunque ad una prescrizione. Ciò che cambia è anziotutto il destinatario al cui atto è rivolta; ma proprio per questo motivo muta anche il caratterre dell'atto: in quanto rivolto allo stesso soggetto, l'*imperium* può indicare una decisione, mentre il *praeceptum* rimane, in quanto rivolto ad altri, una esortazione di carattere imperativo. [Footnote:] Tale distinzioni non vale certo in tutti le casi; si trovano infatti anche casi nei quali l'*imperium* è rivolto ad altri. . . . Esistono inoltre dei passi nei quali il *praeceptum* è riolto a se stesso").

[25] See *ScG* III, c. 97.

type of command or order issued by a superior to an inferior. Yet this semantic *proximity* does not imply a semantic *identity*.

A search for these terms within the *Corpus Thomisticum* shows that there are two main contexts within which St. Thomas uses them: (a) treatments of individual moral psychology, especially his "Treatise on Human Acts";[26] and (b) moral discussions, especially those regarding prudence[27] and divine law.[28] Both terms appear in both contexts, but *imperium* predominates in (a), whereas *praeceptum* predominates in (b).[29] As the respective contexts suggest, *praeceptum* has strong moral connotations and is used primarily to refer to the case of interpersonal commands. *Imperium*, on the other hand, has a premoral connotation and is used primarily to refer to individual or "intrapersonal" psychology. Yet these are simply contexts and connotations; they are not rigid categories. As we shall see, both terms can be and are used in both intrapersonal (psychological/individual) and interpersonal contexts. This versatility of the terms will be the key to our defense of Gauthier's reading.

A) Imperium: A Superior's Rational Movement of an Inferior

The psychological connotation of the term *imperium* in St. Thomas is rooted in the way it was used by his predecessors, both

[26] *STh* I-II, qq. 6-21, esp. q. 17.

[27] Esp. *STh* II-II, qq. 47-56.

[28] Esp. *STh* I-II, qq. 90-108.

[29] In (a) the "Treatise on Human Acts" (qq. 6-21), the terms *imperare* and *imperium* are used 190 times, whereas *praecipere* and *praeceptum* are used only 3 times (63:1 ratio, or 99% predominance of *imperium* over *praeceptum*). In the second group of texts (b), which we have termed "moral discussions" and which contains both the "Treatise on Habits" (qq. 49-89) and the "Treatise on Law" (qq. 90-114), we find the opposite trend. In the "Treatise on Habits" we find only 6 instances of *imperium* and related terms, whereas *praeceptum* and its variants appear 66 times (1:10 ratio, or 90% predominance of *praeceptum* over *imperium*). And in the "Treatise on Law," the terms *imperare* and *imperium* appear only 17 times, compared to 888 instances of *praecipere* and *praeceptum* (1:52 ratio, or 98% predominance of *praeceptum* over *imperium*). There are obviously other contexts outside the *Prima secundae* in which St. Thomas uses these terms, such as the many times he distinguishes between the elicited and commanded acts (*actus imperati*) of the specific virtues (e.g., of the virtue of religion; see *STh* II-II, q. 81, a. 1, ad 1). But we have omitted references to these discussions for the sake of brevity.

ancient and medieval.[30] Lottin notes that in the Latin tradition *imperium* was first used in a political or interpersonal sense involving alterity, as, for example, when a ruler gives a command to his subjects.[31] From the time of Cicero, however, the term began to be used psychologically, in relation to the individual herself, insofar as she rules or is master of herself, commanding her own powers to act according to her choices. The concept was thus understood and developed by St. Thomas's medieval Latin predecessors, including William of Auxerre, Hugh of St. Victor, Philip the Chancellor, and St. Albert the Great.[32] Among them, William of Auxerre stands out for being the first to use the term *imperium* explicitly to designate an act of reason, a practical judgment involved in a choice.[33] This psychological sense of the term is also found in some of the non-Latin sources to which St. Thomas had access in Latin translation—for example, St. John Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa*, as translated into Latin by Burgundio of Pisa, and especially the *Avicenna latinus*, in which, St. Thomas explicitly tells us, he finds a fourfold distinction between types of "movers," including he who moves by

[30] *Impero* literally means to "impose," since it is derived from the prefix *in* and the verb *paro*, which means to "set" or "put"; see J. Facciolati and E. Forcellini, *Totius latinitatis lexicon*: "*Impero*": "The original meaning is political, comes from ancient Rome, meaning supreme power of command in war in the interpretation and enforcement"; cf. S. Hornblower et al., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), s.v. "*Imperium*": "Imperium was the supreme power, involving command in war and the interpretation and execution of law . . . which belonged at Rome (from 445 to 367 BC). Viewed generally, *imperium* represents the supreme authority." In his *Etymologies*, Isidore points to the emperor's superiority over other kings; see S. Isidori Hispalensis, *Etymologiarum* 9.3: "While among the Romans, with whom the name of the first emperors, the greatest of them alone the gift of the military could not stand still . . . it is distinguished from other nations for the kings" ("Imperatorum autem nomen aput Romanos eorum tantum fuis prius apud quos summa rei militaris consisteret . . . eo quod is distingueretur a caeteris gentium regibus") (*PL* 82:343).

[31] See O. Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, vol. 1 (2d ed.; Louvain: Abbaye du Mont César, 1957), 393-424.

[32] See ibid., 396, 404-14, esp. 412 n. 2, and 416-23.

[33] See ibid., 405.

"commanding" (*imperans*).[34] Yet one must not infer that this later psychological or "intrapersonal" usage rules out alterity altogether, for even here there is an implied alterity among the soul's powers.[35]

Working with this background, St. Thomas presents *imperium* within the context of the sequence of psychological acts involved in a human (moral) act.[36] *Electio* is an act of the will in the order of intention which presupposes an act of reason (counsel, the deliberation that terminates in a practical judgment). In turn, *imperium* is an act of reason that presupposes the *electio* of the will and initiates the order of execution. Thus *imperium* is the pivotal point between the order of intention and the order of execution: "After the determination of counsel [*consilium*], which is the judgment of reason, the will chooses [*eligit*]; and after the choice, reason commands [*imperat*] that whereby what has been chosen must be done."[37]

In different texts St. Thomas attributes *imperium* both to reason and to the will. This dual nature of *imperium* is evident in the seemingly contradictory responses he gives to the question of whether *imperium* belongs to reason or to the will. In an early work, *Quodlibet* IX (1256-59), he concludes that "it is an act of the will,"[38] whereas later, in the *Summa theologiae* (1270-71), he

[34] *STh* I-II, q. 17, a. 1, obj. 1.

[35] F. Gaffiot, *Le grand Gaffiot: Dictionnaire latin-français* (Paris: Hachette, 2000), s.v. "impero": "*Impero . . . cupiditatibus*, Cicero, Laelius, 82, command one's passions; *impero sibi*, Cicero, Tusculanae Disputationes 2, 47, to be master of oneself" ("Impero . . . cupiditatibus, Cic. Lae., 82, commander à ses passions; impero . . . sibi, Cic. Tusc. 2, 47, se maîtriser soi-même").

[36] Pinckaers claims that this "sequence" of psychological acts involved in a moral (human) act is not a temporal sequence, but rather a "structural" one. See Pinckaers, "Compte rendu: Deman et Gauthier," 350. However, it is difficult to see how this claim stands up to scrutiny, given that St. Thomas explicitly says these acts are often temporally distinct: "a command is not simultaneous with the act of the thing to which the command is given: for it naturally precedes its fulfilment, sometimes, indeed, by priority of time" (*STh* I-II, q. 17, a. 3).

[37] *STh* I-II, q. 17, a. 3, ad 1. Quotations from the *Summa theologiae* are taken from the translation by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, with some modifications. Translations of other quotations from St. Thomas are our own.

[38] *Quodl.* IX, q. 5, a. 2, s.c.

states that "it is an act of reason."[39] The arguments are nuanced, but what emerges from them is that *imperium* is primarily an act of reason as it orders the execution of an act, but also an act of the will insofar as it receives from the will's *electio* the capacity to move other powers towards execution.[40] *Imperium* is essentially an act of reason, "because the commander orders the one commanded to do something, by way of intimation or declaration; and to order thus by intimating or declaring is an act of the reason."[41] Commenting on Avicenna's four ways of moving another, St. Thomas says that "to command is to move, not just in any way, but by intimating and declaring to another; and this is an act of reason."[42] But *imperium* is also attributed to the will due to the mutual influence between intellect and will: the will must move in order for reason to command.[43] That is, "the will, which has the end as its object, is said to command [*imperare*] insofar as command [*imperium*], which is an act of reason, begins in the will, to which pertains the desire of the end."[44] However, "through a certain interpretation or equivalence," the will commands due to its being the appetitive power that moves other powers immediately by its command—for example, the members of the body.[45] In fact, all appetitive powers and habits can command movement[46] insofar as they order the acts of other powers or habits to their own ends, as, for example, the virtue of religion commands acts elicited by other moral virtues.[47] In short, there are three senses of *imperium*: (a)

[39] *STh* I-II, q. 17, a. 1, s.c.

[40] See *Quodl.* IX, q. 5 a. 2; *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 12, ad 4; *STh* I-II, q. 17, a. 1.

[41] *STh* I-II, q. 17, a. 1. Cf. *Quodl.* IX, q. 5, a. 2.

[42] *STh* I-II, q. 17, a. 1, ad 1.

[43] *STh* I-II, q. 17, a. 1.

[44] IV *Sent.*, d. 15, q. 4, a. 1, qcla. 1, ad 3.

[45] Although command is primarily an act of reason, the expression "commanded acts of the will" is in fact more common in the *Summa theologiae*, and is even used in the heading of q. 17 of the *Prima secundae*.

[46] See IV *Sent.*, d. 15, q. 4, a. 1, qcla. 1, ad 3.

[47] *STh* II-II, q. 81, a. 1, ad 1. See Francisco J. Romero Carrasquillo, "Religion and the Theological Virtues as 'Commanding' in Aquinas," in H. Goris, L. Hendriks, and H. J.

in the proper sense, it is an act of reason that consists in giving an order; (b) it is also an act of the will insofar as the will moves other powers to act for an end; and (c) broadly speaking, it is an act of any appetitive power or habit insofar as it has the capacity to move other powers. In an act of *imperium*, then, the intellect sets order and the will moves to action.

The fact that *imperium* in a sense belongs to the will as the "universal mover of [the soul's] powers" has important ethical corollaries. One of these corollaries is that acts performed by powers other than the will, but which are the result of a command of the will, such as walking or fighting, are themselves voluntary. Saint Thomas calls these acts the "acts commanded by the will" (*actus imperatus a voluntate*).[48] These acts are contrasted to the "elicited acts of the will," such as intending and choosing, which are immanent to the will itself. Despite being immediately elicited by powers other than the will, the commanded acts are fully voluntary, as voluntary as the elicited acts of the will.[49] This is ultimately the reason why a physical act can be morally good or bad, praiseworthy or blameworthy: because it issues from a command of the will. Exterior acts are human acts, and thus morally good or bad, insofar as they are commanded by the will.[50]

Further, to execute the *imperium*, the powers that are subordinate to the *imperium* apply themselves to action. That "application to action" is called *usus*, an act that belongs to the will as mover, and to reason as ordering other powers to execution.[51] Through the will, the agent *uses* her own executive

M. Schoot, eds., *Faith, Hope, and Love: Thomas Aquinas on Living by the Theological Virtues* (Utrecht: Peeters, 2015), 79-90; idem, "The Moral Disadvantage of Unbelief: Natural Religion and Natural Sanctity in Aquinas," *Quaestiones Disputatae* 5 (2014): 93-104.

[48] See *STh* I-II, q. 17, *passim*. Although many authors consider the elicited-commanded distinction in this question to be equivalent to that made by St. Thomas in the very next question between interior-exterior acts, the two distinctions are not entirely equivalent; see Teresa Enríquez, *De la decisión a la acción*, 181-82.

[49] See *STh* I-II, q. 1, a. 1 ad 2; q. 17.

[50] II *Sent.*, d. 24, q. 3, a. 2, ad 2; *STh* I-II, q. 71, a. 6; q. 74, aa. 2 and 6; q. 76, a. 2, ad 3.

[51] *STh* I-II, q. 16, a. 1.

powers to carry out the commanded act. *Usus* is thus the last of the psychological acts with regard to the means in the order of execution. The progression with respect to the means is thus as follows: in the order of intention, first *consilium* and then *electio*; in the order of execution, first *imperium* and then *usus*.[52] From the foregoing is evident that, as St. Thomas presents it in the treatise on human acts, *imperium* is posterior to *electio*, as the order of execution is posterior to the order of intention. Thus far, therefore, Gauthier's claim that *imperium* can be *prior* to *electio* seems highly problematic.

However, if we turn to one example that St. Thomas uses to illustrate the distinction between "command" and "use," Gauthier's claim becomes more appealing. Saint Thomas mentions the case of interpersonal command, that is, an action involving one person commanding another:

> Because after counsel's decision, which is reason's judgment, the will chooses; and after choice, reason commands that power which has to do what was chosen; and then, last of all, someone's will begins to use, by executing the command of reason. Sometimes it is the will of another, when someone commands [*imperat*] another; sometimes the will of the one who commands [*imperans*], when he commands himself to do something.[53]

Since this case involves the wills of two distinct persons, it follows that we are dealing with not one, but two *electiones* and two *imperia*: one *electio* and one *imperium* in each person involved. The one who commands—let us call her person *A*—first chooses (*elegit*) a course of action to be followed by someone else—person *B*—and then issues a command (*imperat*) to her. Subsequently *B* must first choose to obey, then command her own members to execute the act. The two commands are different in nature: there is an interpersonal command issued by *A*, and an interior or merely psychological or intrapersonal command within person *B*. In each case, each command is posterior to its

[52] See *STh* I-II, qq. 13-16.
[53] *STh* I-II, q. 17, a. 3, ad 1.

corresponding *electio*. However, the interpersonal command of *A* is clearly prior to the *electio* of *B*, which itself is prior to *B*'s own psychological command. This fascinating text, then, shows that Gauthier's distinction between the "*imperium* that commands the choice" and the "*imperium* that commands the execution" fits at least the case of interpersonal commands.

This is not a trivial case of an interpersonal command, for St. Thomas presents it as an illustration of the order of psychological acts within an individual human act. Despite the fact that he presents his doctrine of *imperium* predominantly within the context of individual moral psychology in the *Prima secundae*, in his mind this doctrine still has a direct application to the interpersonal context. In fact, in this text in particular he seems to move seamlessly between both contexts—interpersonal and intrapersonal commands—as though the principles discussed apply equally to both. Given St. Thomas's general insistence on analogy, it should not surprise us that he finds *imperium* to take place in both interpersonal and intrapersonal contexts.[54]

Gauthier's distinction between two *imperia* therefore makes sense within the interpersonal context. But so far we have not seen sufficient evidence for his identification between *imperium* and *praeceptum*, which he evidently makes when he uses the expression "*praeceptum* or *imperium* that commands the choice." Let us now turn to another text where St. Thomas makes an explicit connection between *imperium* and *praeceptum*.

B) Praeceptum: Imperium "plus" debitum

Whereas the text presented above merely hints at the interpersonal dimension of *imperium*, many of St. Thomas's texts explicitly refer to the interpersonal implications of the term *praeceptum*.[55] We will highlight just one fascinating text that has

[54] An important feature of Gauthier's claim is that it is couched in the doctrine of analogy: he understands the *imperium* of choice and the *imperium* of execution as being called *imperia* analogously. Cf. Gauthier, "Compte rendu: Lottin, O., *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*," 68.

[55] The interpersonal dimension of *praeceptum* is evident when St. Thomas characterizes it as one of the signs of the will of the superior; see I *Sent.*, d. 45, q. 1, a. 4;

hitherto been mostly absent from the discussion in the secondary literature: *Exposition on Psalm* 18(19), v. 9, "the commandment of the Lord is lightsome, enlightening the eyes" (Vulgate: *praeceptum Domini lucidum, illuminans oculos*). Saint Thomas's remarks here are directly relevant to the issue of *imperium*/*praeceptum* because this is one of the few texts where he explicitly presents a relationship between these two terms. He in fact defines *praeceptum* in terms of the *imperium* of a superior.

> A precept [*praeceptum*] is that which is heeded according to the command of a superior [*secundum imperium superioris*], and it concerns things that are to be done, and implies an obligation to act [*debitum faciendi*] in him who has been commanded: this obligation [*debitum*] is either [a] on part of the divine rule [*regulae divinae*] that we are obliged to follow, and thus falls under an obligation without which the order of reason cannot be preserved: or [b] it is an obligation flowing from the authority of the one who commands [*ex auctoritate praecipientis*], whom we are obliged to obey: or [c] on the part of the end that we absolutely desire [*finis quem omnino volumus*], which is set forth for us; and then under the precept falls that without which we cannot preserve our subjection to the one who prescribes [*praecipientem*]; or without which we cannot attain the intended end.[56]

Note in this text the explicit relationship that St. Thomas draws between *praeceptum* and *imperium*. A *praeceptum* is fundamentally an *imperium*, but *praeceptum* involves the added note of a moral *debitum*, something that is due to another on account of an end, or on account of authority. Thus, a *praeceptum* is conceptually narrower than an *imperium*, because an *imperium* does not necessarily imply obligation or *debitum*.

De Verit., q. 23, a. 3; *STh* I, q. 19, a. 12; see also Enríquez, *De la decisión a la acción*, 205-12.

[56] *In Ps.* 18, n. 5 (Thomas Aquinas, *Opera Omnia*, t. 14, *In psalmos Davidis expositio*, [Parma: Petrus Fiaccadori, 1863]): "Praeceptum dicitur ad quod attenditur secundum imperium superioris; et est de agendis, et importat debitum faciendi in eo cui praecipitur: quod quidem debitum est vel ex parte regulae divinae quam tenemur sequi; et sic illud cadit sub debito, sine quo rationis ordo servari non potest: vel est debitum ex auctoritate praecipientis, cui obedire tenemur: vel ex parte finis, quem omnino volumus, qui est praestitutus nobis; et tunc cadit sub praecepto illud sine quo non possumus servare subjectionem ad praecipientem; vel sine quo non possumus consequi finem intentum."

An *imperium* could be a rational movement without any implied obligation, as when the will moves the executive powers—this is a case of an *imperium* that is not a *praeceptum*. But *praeceptum* says more than *imperium*: a divine precept is not simply an *imperium*, but an *imperium* that implies obligation. In short, a *praeceptum* is an *imperium* plus *debitum*.[57]

It is also noteworthy that precisely here, in one of the few texts where St. Thomas explicitly links the terms *imperium* and *praeceptum*, he is bringing alterity into play: a *praeceptum* involves a "superior" as well as someone else "who has been commanded." This explains why the concept of *praeceptum* is predominant in properly moral texts where St. Thomas wishes to discuss cases of one person obeying another, as when human beings obey the divine precepts. The act of giving a law or precept is a pristine example of an interpersonal command, one that is directly relevant to many themes in St. Thomas's moral theology.

Now, this text is, of course, not meant simply as an abstract presentation of the concept of *praeceptum*. The context is the theme of the divine law. What St. Thomas wishes to do here is to apply this general presentation to the text of the psalm, showing how God's commandments are "lucid," and so on. The alterity in play is therefore that between God and his rational creatures, who are his subjects and who have the *debitum* of obeying his commandments. Since God, as superior, both orders rational creatures to their ultimate end and reveals to them rationally the best way to achieve it, St. Thomas concludes that the divine precepts fit the description of *praeceptum* in the most perfect way. To show how this is the case, St. Thomas presents an etymology of *praeceptum* which—even if modern research were to show it is incorrect—can give us an insight into his understanding of the nuances of the concept:

> The term precept [*praeceptum*] means "taken precisely" [*praecise-ceptum*], that is, with respect to that which should be done; as if we are obliged to do that exactly: and such a precept is described as "illuminating the eyes" [Ps. 18(19):9],

[57] The text from this commentary stands out among many others that assume that *praeceptum* includes the *ratio* of *debitum*; e.g., *STh* I-II, q. 44, a. 1; q. 99, a. 5, corp. and ad 1; II-II, q. 122, a. 1; see Enríquez, *De la decisión a la acción*, 163-77.

that is, the eyes of reason, which eyes are darkened by the unrestrained desire for exterior things and by the desires of the passions within: and the precept of the Lord removes this, "illuminating the eyes."[58]

Thus, whereas *imperium* denotes a certain motion proceeding from reason though not necessarily terminating in reason (since the executive powers can be the terminus of an *imperium*), *praeceptum* here has an additional cognitive connotation in that the recipient is also rational and free. That is, unlike *imperium*, the term *praeceptum* lays stress on a *debitum* that is being cognitively revealed to the one that is to obey it. This cognitive dimension of *praeceptum* is highlighted in the moral precepts in particular:[59] divine commands instruct[60] and are light.[61]

[58] *In Ps.* 18, n. 5: "Dicitur enim praeceptum quasi praecise ceptum, scilicet ad agendum: quasi quod praecise teneamur illud agere: ideo tale praeceptum est: illuminans oculos, scilicet rationis, qui oculi tenebrescunt per cupiditatem exteriorum et concupiscentias interiorum passionum: et hoc removet praeceptum domini, et ideo illuminans oculos."

[59] Ibid.: "The moral precepts are bright and illuminating; hence he says that the commandment of the Lord is bright. It is said to be bright because it is in itself manifest and evident, such as this one, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not commit theft, and the like: which have clarity in themselves" ("Moralia vero praecepta sunt lucida et illuminativa; unde dicit, praeceptum domini lucidum. Lucidum dicitur, quia in se est manifestum et evidens, sicut hic, non occides, non moechaberis, non furtum facies, et similia: quae habent in se claritatem").

[60] *Super II Tim.*, c. 4, lect. 1 (Thomas Aquinas, *Super epistolas S. Pauli lectura*, t. 2 [8th ed., ed. R. Cai (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1953)]): "In order that he may teach the truth and remove error; and with regard to the first of these, he says 'correct,' namely errors. Tit. 2, 15: 'correct with all authority.' Or it is a matter of good morals, and to this end he must sometimes promote the good, and also his superior, and then he must calmly and kindly admonish; hence he says 'entreat'" ("Ut doceat veritatem, et removeat errorem; et quantum ad hoc primum dicit argue, scilicet errores. Tit. II, 15: argue cum omni imperio. Vel de pertinentibus ad bonos mores, et ad hoc debet inducere aliquando bonum, et superiorem, et tunc debet placide et benigne monere; unde dicit obsecra"); *Super I Tim.*, c. 4, lect. 3 (Cai, ed.): "And hence he says, 'prescribe these things'. Tit. 2, v.15: 'correct with all authority'. As for what must be believed, he says 'and teach'" ("Et ideo dicit praecipe haec. Tit. II, v.15: argue cum omni imperio. Quantum ad credenda dicit et doce").

[61] *In Ps.* 18, n. 5: "The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light" ("Mandatum lucerna, et lex lux").

From this text, then, we can see that Gauthier is to an extent justified in seeing *praeceptum* as a sort of *imperium*. That is, at least within the context of the divine law, one could speak of *praeceptum vel imperium*, since a divine precept (*praeceptum*) is also a command (*imperium*). A divine precept is indeed a rational movement of an inferior, with the additional note of a cognitive revelation of a *debitum* to someone who is rational and capable of freely obeying. A divine precept is indeed a "*praeceptum* or *imperium* that commands the choice."

III. Gauthier's Twofold *Imperium* in the Intrapersonal Context

If we combine our two sets of texts, we can easily see that at least in the case of interpersonal commands (e.g., divine precepts) Gauthier's thesis is correct. For example, in a divine precept there is not only on God's part a "*praeceptum* or *imperium* that commands the choice," but on the part of human beings who obey him there is also an internal "*imperium* which commands the execution." That there are two *imperia* involved when one person commands another should not be controversial, since St. Thomas states this explicitly in the *Prima pars*: "Sometimes it is the will of another, when someone commands [*imperat*] another; sometimes it is the will of the one who commands [*imperans*], when he commands himself to do something."[62] Moreover, that the first *imperium*, issued by God, is also a *praeceptum* should not be controversial, as St. Thomas clearly states this in his *Commentary* on Psalm 18.

It would be more controversial if we were to "reinsert," this setup into the context of individual psychology, which is what Gauthier had in mind when he made his claim. It is not so evident that within an individual human being there are two *imperia*, the first of which is also a *praeceptum* that precedes *electio*, and the second of which follows *electio*. This would be problematic, since St. Thomas teaches that *imperium* follows *electio*. Additionally, this claim of a twofold *imperium* in the individual seems to bring

[62] *STh* I-II, q. 17, a. 3, ad 1.

an undesirable complexity into the discussion of human acts, a complexity that is apparently absent from St. Thomas's own presentation of it in the *Prima pars*.

However, we wish to insist that this reinsertion of the twofold *imperium* into the intrapersonal context would fit the texts of St. Thomas, at least implicitly. What saves Gauthier's reading within the context of the divine law is the notion of alterity or otherness. Since there are two persons involved, one can issue an *imperium* that is prior to the other person's *electio*, and therefore there is no case of an *imperium* preceding *electio* within the same subject. But just as alterity saved Gauthier's claim in the interpersonal context, it can also save his claim in the intrapersonal context, given that even in the latter there is, in some sense, an alterity or otherness among the powers of the soul, enough to warrant the language of one power commanding another. This alterity allowed St. Thomas to make a seamless move between interpersonal and intrapersonal commands in the key text that we presented from the *Prima secundae*. The basic assumption is that alterity is required for any command to be issued: a command is issued by *A* and received by *B*, whether *A* and *B* are distinct powers or distinct persons. What matters is not whether they are persons or powers, but that they are distinct, that there is a superior that commands and an inferior that obeys.

As mentioned in the introduction, St. Thomas explicitly teaches that prudence has three distinct acts, the third and most important of which is *praecipere*.[63] Is this intrapersonal *praeceptum* fundamentally different from an interpersonal *praeceptum*? There seem to be undeniable parallels between the *praeceptum* of prudence and interpersonal precepts, especially divine precepts. Clearly, in an interpersonal *praeceptum* the superior presents to the inferior an action that is to be done. And in the case of the *praeceptum* of prudence, the practical intellect presents to the will an action to be done. As we saw in our discussion on the *Commentary* on Psalm 18, a *praeceptum* is fundamentally an

[63] *STh* II-II, q. 51, a. 2, ad 2; I-II, q. 57, a. 6; q. 58, a. 4; q. 61, a. 3; q. 65, a. 1.

imperium, with the added note of *debitum*. Therefore, like all *praecepta*, the *praeceptum* of prudence must be fundamentally an *imperium* as well, since it is a superior power commanding an inferior power to do something, with the added note of *debitum*. A sign that St. Thomas thinks of the *praeceptum* of prudence as a sort of *imperium* is the fact that in question 61 of the *Prima secundae* he alludes to the three acts of prudence in terms of *consilium*, *judicium*, and *imperium* (rather than *praeceptum*): "the good that consists in the act of reason is found primarily in the command of reason itself [*in ipso rationis imperio*], and not in counsel or judgment, as stated above."[64] In the margin, the Leonine editor includes a cross reference to a text from a few questions earlier, where St. Thomas offers a more detailed presentation of those same three acts. One notable difference in this earlier text is that instead of calling the third of these acts *imperium*, he calls it *praecipere*:

> We find three acts of reason concerning human things that can be done [*agibilia humana*]: of which the first is to counsel, the second is to judge, the third to command [*praecipere*]. . . . Now it is evident that in things done by man, the principal act is to command [*praecipere*], to which the others are ordered.[65]

Here we see very clearly St. Thomas's willingness to use *praeceptum* and *imperium* interchangeably in reference to the third and chief act of prudence. That is, he tacitly acknowledges a very tight semantic proximity between *imperium* and *praeceptum*, such that both can describe the third and principal act of prudence.[66]

[64] *STh* I-II, q. 61, a. 3.

[65] *STh* I-II, q. 57, a. 6.

[66] Saint Thomas draws a clear analogy between the interpersonal *praeceptum* of a person in a position of authority and the intrapersonal *praeceptum* of the virtue of prudence; see *STh* I-II, q. 19, a. 5, obj. 2: "Further, according to Augustine, the command of a lower authority does not bind if it be contrary to the command of a higher authority: for instance, if a provincial governor command something that is forbidden by the emperor. But erring reason sometimes proposes what is against the command of a higher power, namely, God Whose power is supreme. Therefore the decision of an erring reason does not bind. Consequently the will is not evil if it be at variance with erring reason" ("Praeterea, secundum Augustinum, inferioris potestatis praeceptum non obligat, si contrarietur praecepto potestatis superioris, sicut si proconsul iubeat aliquid quod

Gauthier, then, is not mistaken in saying that prudence, which resides in the intellect, issues an *imperium* to another power, that is, the will, to choose (*eligere*) a given course of action. There is a "*praeceptum* or *imperium* that commands the choice," to use Gauthier's words. This *praeceptum sive imperium* is distinct from the other command which in question 17 of the *Prima secundae* St. Thomas consistently calls *imperium* (and never *praeceptum*)[67] and which begins the order of execution. One could reasonably call the latter the "*imperium* that commands the execution," to differentiate it from the "*imperium* or *praeceptum*" of prudence. Both are *imperia*, but analogously so.[68] Gauthier's reading,

imperator prohibet. Sed ratio errans quandoque proponit aliquid quod est contra praeceptum superioris, scilicet Dei, cuius est summa potestas. Ergo dictamen rationis errantis non obligat. Non est ergo voluntas mala, si discordet a ratione errante"); ibid., ad 2: "The saying of Augustine holds good when it is known that the inferior authority prescribes something contrary to the command of the higher authority. But if a man were to believe the command of the proconsul to be the command of the emperor, in scorning the command of the proconsul he would scorn the command of the emperor. In like manner if a man were to know that human reason was dictating something contrary to God's commandment, he would not be bound to abide by reason: but then reason would not be entirely erroneous. But when erring reason proposes something as being commanded by God, then to scorn the dictate of reason is to scorn the commandment of God" ("Ad secundum dicendum quod verbum Augustini habet locum, quando cognoscitur quod inferior potestas praecipit aliquid contra praeceptum superioris potestatis. Sed si aliquis crederet quod praeceptum proconsulis esset praeceptum imperatoris, contemnendo praeceptum proconsulis, contemneret praeceptum imperatoris. Et similiter si aliquis homo cognosceret quod ratio humana dictaret aliquid contra praeceptum Dei, non teneretur rationem sequi, sed tunc ratio non totaliter esset errans. Sed quando ratio errans proponit aliquid ut praeceptum Dei, tunc idem est contemnere dictamen rationis, et Dei praeceptum").

[67] In one text, he comes close to doing so: he refers to the commanding subject as *praecipiens*, and to the command itself as *imperium*, thereby almost treating the two terms as synonymous. See *STh* I-II, q. 12, a. 1: "everyone who is in authority, by his command moves others to that which he intends" ("omnem praecipientem, movere suo imperio alios ad id quod ipse intendit").

[68] To what extent can the *imperium* of an authority or the *praeceptum* of prudence oblige or bind the will to act? A clue can be found in an article where St. Thomas asks whether the elicted act of the will is itself commanded: *STh* I-II, q. 17, a. 5, obj. 1 and ad 1. There he suggests that the will obeys an *imperium* according to the degree of perfection of the *imperium*, i.e., to the extent that the *imperium* is endowed with volitional force.

therefore, is fully justified, even in the intrapersonal or psychological context: in the order of intention, prudence commands (*praecipit*) the will to choose (*eligere*), and after this *electio* there is another *imperium* in the order of execution, the *imperium* properly so-called.

SUMMARY

We have reconsidered Gauthier's thesis on the relationship between *imperium* and *praeceptum* in light of a couple of hitherto overlooked texts of St. Thomas. In the *Prima secundae*, still within the context of individual moral psychology, St. Thomas brings up the case of a person who commands (*imperat*) another. In this case, there are two *imperia*: an interpersonal *imperium* issued by a superior, commanding the inferior to choose to execute the action, and an interior or intrapersonal *imperium* within the inferior, which commands the execution of the act. Thus, Gauthier's distinction between the "*imperium* that commands the choice" and the "*imperium* that commands the execution" fits at least this one case of interpersonal commands which St. Thomas presents to us. The first, interpersonal *imperium* is prior to the inferior's *electio*, whereas the second, internal *imperium* on the part of the inferior is posterior to her own *electio*.

We also saw in the *Commentary* on Psalm 18 a discussion that ties together *imperium* and *praeceptum*, again within the context of interpersonal commands. There St. Thomas tells us very clearly that a *praeceptum* is fundamentally an *imperium*, but an *imperium* that is issued by a superior and that implies an obligation to act. Therefore, the term *praeceptum* adds to that of *imperium* the note of a moral obligation, and thus a *praeceptum* has a cognitive, revelatory role with regard to its recipient. *Praeceptum* illuminates the subordinate by revealing to it the will of the superior, as something it must do (*debitum*). From this text, it is evident that Gauthier is also justified in seeing the superior's command as being both an *imperium* and a *praeceptum*. Ultimately, alterity "saves" Gauthier's reading within the context of the divine law.

We entered controversial ground by further giving credence to Gauthier's thesis outside of the context of interpersonal commands. We argued that (1) St. Thomas recognizes alterity even among the soul's powers, and it is this alterity that makes it possible for one power to command another, such that interpersonal and intrapersonal commands are governed by the same principles; and that (2) every *praeceptum* is fundamentally an *imperium* of a superior, even if the former term adds to the latter the note of *debitum*. Therefore, in the order of intention, the *praeceptum* of prudence is the intellect's *imperium* to the will to choose (*eligere*). After this *electio* another *imperium* takes place in the order of execution, the *imperium* properly so-called. Although Gauthier never offers this specific argument for his thesis, in light of the texts we have presented his thesis could be saved by the concept of alterity, in both interpersonal and intrapersonal contexts.

Deman observed that St. Thomas uses multiple terms for the same reality. Far from being a successful objection against Gauthier, this observation explains why it makes sense that we find in St. Thomas two different terms for closely related, yet distinct psychological acts: the *praeceptum* of prudence (*imperium* of choice) and the *imperium* of execution. In his vast treasury of sources, St. Thomas finds sufficiently nuanced terms for describing these two distinct acts, and thus avoids the potential confusion that would arise if he simply called them both *imperium*.

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"MY NAME IS LEGION": THE BIBLICAL EPISODE OF GERASENE IN THE LIGHT OF THOMAS AQUINAS'S THEORY OF ANGELIC LOCATION*

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ON THE BASIS OF various well-known scriptural passages and philosophical and theological arguments, a tradition that includes such figures as Tertullian, St. Ambrose of Milan, St. Gregory the Great, and St. John Damascene argues that the angel possesses some kind of corporeality.[1] Although St. Augustine seems to grant a degree of credibility to these arguments, he avoids a conclusive judgment.[2]

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[1] See Tertullian, *De carne Christi* 6.9, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3 (New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), 527a; Clement of Alexandria, *Exerpta ex Theodoto* 10.1-2; 14.1-2, in *Sources chrétiennes*, vol. 23 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1948), 76-79; 86-87; Ambrose of Milan, *De Abraham libri duo* 2.8.58, in *Patrologiae cursus completus*, *series latina* (hereafter *PL*), vol. 14, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier frates editores, 1882), 506; Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob* 2.3, in *Sources chrétiennes*, vol. 32 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1975), 256-60; John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa* 2.3, in *Sources chrétiennes*, vol. 535 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2010), 225-34. On the factors that disposed the Fathers to attribute to angels a certain corporality, see Serge-Thomas Bonino, *Angels and Demons: A Catholic Introduction* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 111-15.

[2] See Augustine of Hippo, *De civitate Dei*, 8.15-16, in *Corpus christianorum*, *series latina* (hereafter *CCSL*), vol. 47 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), 232-34; 21.10, in *CCSL*, vol. 48 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), 775-76; *Sermones* 362.17, in *PL*, vol. 39, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier frates editores, 1863), 1622; *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, q. 47, in *PL*, vol. 40, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: Migne editorem, 1841), 31. For historical

Pseudo-Dionysius, on the other hand, opts decidedly for the thesis of a complete angelic spirituality, but his influence on this specific question is felt only several centuries later.[3]

This hesitant attitude regarding the angelic ontological structure is perpetuated over the course of the medieval period. Although the thesis of an angelic corporeity continues to have considerable weight until the thirteenth century, authors of such standing as Peter Lombard, St. Bernard, and St. Albert the Great follow the example of the bishop of Hippo, opting to postpone a final ruling on the issue.[4] On the other hand, from the twelfth century on, thinkers such as William of Conches, Abelard, and Hugh of St. Victor openly defend angelic incorporeity, in line with that supported by Pseudo-Dionysius and anticipating, to some extent, the position Saint Thomas Aquinas will develop in the next century.[5] In parallel, a fourth hypothesis begins to gain strength in this period, especially among the friars minor, in which the imprint of the Jewish-Arab thinker Solomon Ibn Gabirol is powerfully felt.[6] According to this interpretation, the idea of incorporeity does not necessarily imply a complete

background, see Palémon Glorieux, *Autour de la spiritualité des anges: Dossier scripturaire et patristique* (Tournai: Desclée, 1959).

[3] See Pseudo-Dionysius, *Les noms divinis* 4.1, in *Patristische Texte und Studien*, vol. 36, *Corpus Dionysiacum II*, ed. G. Heil and A. M. Ritter (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991), 20; *La hiérarchie céleste* 10.2; 15.1, in *Sources chrétiennes*, vol. 58 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1958), 139-41; 163-66. For St. Thomas's quote of the first text, see *STh* I, q. 50, a. 2.

[4] See, for instance Peter Lombard, II *Sent*., d. 8, cc. 1, 2, in *PL*, vol. 192, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: Migne editorem, 1855), 667-68; Bernard, *On the Song of Songs*, Sermon 5.1-2, in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 5, ed. G. B. Winkler (Innsbruck: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1994), 90-93; Albert the Great, II *Sent*., d. 8, a. 1, in *B. Alberti Magni opera omnia*, vol. 27, *Super II Sententiarum*, ed. S. C. Borgnet (Paris: Bibliopolam editorem, 1894), 166-69.

[5] See John Marenbon, "Abelard on Angels," in *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry: Their Function and Significance*, ed. Isabel Iribarren and Martin Lenz (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 64.

[6] See Avicebron, *Fons vitae*, III-IV, in *The Font of Life*, trans. J. A. Laumakis (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2014), 106-214. For discussion, see José Ignacio Saranyana, "Sobre la inmaterialidad de las sustancias espirituales (Santo Tomas versus Avicebron)," *Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica* 70 (1978): 63-97; Tomasz Stepien, "Aquinas against Spiritual Matter," *Epekeina* 6, no. 2 (2016): 1-13; María P. Rodriguez, "Relación transcendental 'materia-forma' en el 'Fons Vitae' de Ibn Gabirol," *Mediaevalia: Textos e estudos* 5 (2015): 247-58.

immateriality, since the notion of *matter* is, in fact, broader and more generic than that of *body*. One of the most prominent exponents of this position, St. Bonaventure, will argue that the angel has no body but instead a type of matter he describes as *subtle*.[7]

As is well known, St. Thomas[8] is unequivocal and consistent in defending the thesis of the complete immateriality of the angel. The separated substance, he claims, is a substantial form that exists by itself and without the need to actualize a material co-principle. From this absolute immateriality, he derives what for the later tradition will become the classic attributes of the angel, including its incorporeity and immortality[9] and the fact that each

[7] See Bonaventure, II *Sent*., d. 3, a. 1, q. 1; d. 8, a. 1, q. 1; in *S. Bonaventurae opera omnia*, vol. 2, *In secundum librum Sententiarum*, ed. PP. Collegii a S. Bonaventura (Ad Claras Aquas: Quaracchi, 1885), 89-94, 210-12. For discussion, see José T. Alvarado, "Two Alternatives of Angelic Ontology," *Cuestiones teológicas* 41, no. 95 (2014): 75-96.

[8] References to St. Thomas's works are from the following editions: *Sancti Thomae de Aquino opera omnia* (Leonine, 1882-): vol. 2, *In octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis expositio*; vols. 4-12, *Summa theologiae*; vols. 13-15, *Summa contra gentiles*; vol. 22/1-3, *Quaestiones diputatae De veritate*; vol. 23, *Questiones disputatae De malo*; vol. 24/1, *Quaestio disputatae De anima*; vol. 24/2, *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*; vol. 25/1-2, *Quaestiones de quolibet*; vol. 40, *De substantiis separatis*; vol. 42, *Compendium theologiae*; vol. 43, *De ente et essentia*; vol. 43, *De principiis naturae*; vol. 50, *Super libros Boethii*, *De Trinitate et De hebdomadibus*; *Scriptum super libros sententiarum,* 4 vols., ed. P. Mandonnet and M. Moss (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929-47); *Quaestiones disputatae*, vol. 2, *Quaestiones disputatae De potentia*, ed. P. Pession (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1965); *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, ed. M. R. Cathala and R. M. Spiazzi (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1964); *Catena aurea, Commentary on the Four Gospels, Collected out of the Works of the Fathers*, 6 vols., (Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1874); *Latin/English Edition of the Works of St. Thomas Aquinas*: vol. 33, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, *Chapters 1-12*, ed. The Aquinas Institute (Lander, Wyo.: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2013); vol. 39, *Commentary on the Letters of Saint Paul to the Galatians and the Ephesians*, ed. J. Mortensen and E. Alarcón (Lander, Wyo.: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012). Translations of Aquinas are based upon those published by the Aquinas Institute.

[9] See *De Ente*, c. 1; *De Princ. Natur.*, c. 1; II *Sent*., d. 19, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2; *Comp. Theol.* I, c. 74; *De Verit*., q. 5, a. 2, ad 6; *De Pot*., q. 5, a. 3; I *Sent.*, d. 7, q. 1, a. 1; *ScG* II, cc. 49, 55, 91; *STh* I, q. 18, a. 2; q. 50, aa. 1, 5; q. 51, a. 1. For a historical overview of the

individual angel exhausts its own species.[10] But the simplicity of the separated substance is not absolute but relative, he adds in response to Ibn Gabirol, to the extent that the angelic essence does not identify with its *esse*, as is the case with God.[11]

This, of course, raises the question of the angel's relationship with time and place.[12] Regarding the former, St. Thomas takes up the idea—which enjoyed a certain consensus among his contemporaries—of *aevum* as a different and in some sense intermediate kind of duration between eternity and time. This aeviternity corresponds to a sort of existence that he describes as a "simultaneous totality" in which, strictly speaking, there is no before and after, but of which, however, prior and later can be predicated.[13] Although discussions on this subject were not lacking, the truth is that it was the second point—the *locus*

discussions that took place at the time of St. Thomas in relation to this issue, see Franklin T. Harkins, "The Embodiment of Angels: A Debate in Mid-Thirteenth-Century Theology," *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 78 (2011): 25-58.

[10] See *De Ente*, cc. 4, 5; *De Spir. Creat*., a. 1; *De Subst. Separat.,* c. 5; I *Sent*., d. 8, q. 5, a. 2; II *Sent*., d. 3, q. 1, a. 1; *Quodl*. III, q. 8; *Quodl*. IX, q. 4, a. 1; *ScG* II, cc. 50, 51, 95; *STh* I, q. 50, aa. 2, 4. For some historical insights on this issue, see Mark Jordan, "The Order of Lights: Aquinas on Immateriality as Hierarchy," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 52 (1958): 112-20; Rega Wood, "Angelic Individuation: According to Richard Rufus, St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas," in *Individuum und Individualität im Mittelalter*, ed. Jan A. Aertsen and Andreas Speer (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 209-29.

[11] See *De Spir. Creat*., a. 1; II *Sent*., d. 3, q. 1, a. 1; *Quodl*. II, q. 2, a. 1; *ScG* II, cc. 52-54; *STh* I, q. 50, a. 2, ad 3; *De Ente*, c. 5; *De Pot*., q. 6, a. 3, ad 9; q. 7, a. 2; *In De hebdo*., lect. 2; I *Sent*., d. 8, q. 4, a. 1; d. 24, q. 1, a. 1; *ScG* I, c. 22; *STh* I, q. 3, a. 4. For a commentary, see Gallus Manser, *La esencia del tomismo* (Madrid: CSIC, 1947).

[12] As Suárez-Nani points out, the notion of space, as we think of it today, was not familiar to the medieval mind. "Place," on the other hand, was omnipresent in theoretical discussions. See Tiziana Suárez-Nani, "Angels, Space and Place: The Location of Separate Substances According to John Duns Scotus," in Iribarren and Lenz, eds., *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry*, 89. For the Aristotelian definition of place, see below, text at note 18.

[13] "aevum est totum simul, non tamen est aeternitas, quia compatitur secum prius et posterius" (*STh* I, q. 10, a. 5, ad 2 [Leonine ed., 4:101]). See also *De Pot*., q. 3, a. 14, ad s.c. 9; I *Sent*., d. 8, q. 2, a. 2; d. 19, q. 2, a. 1; *STh* I, q. 53, aa. 1-3. Note that the observations introduced by St. Thomas in relation to the local movement of the angels have given rise to certain discussions. See, for instance J. MacIntosh, "St. Thomas on Angelic Time and Motion," *The Thomist* 59 (1995): 547-75.

angelii—that caused the fiercest disputes in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Indeed, St. Thomas's position concerning the relationship of the angel with place was subject to harsh criticism in the decades following the condemnations of 1277.[14] The focus of this article is the difficulty involved in reconciling St. Thomas's conclusion regarding the impossibility of two or more angels occupying the same place and the well-known passage of Mark 5:9, where a demoniac, interrogated by Jesus of Nazareth, replies, "My name is Legion, because we are many." Although the framework of the question is undoubtedly theological, its treatment will allow us to recapitulate and explain some aspects of the natural and metaphysical philosophical theory of St. Thomas.

I. The Relationship of the Angel with Place in the Doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas

In principle, it could be assumed that for those authors inscribed in the tradition that defended the thesis of the angel's corporality, the problem of the angelic *locus* did not allow great nuances or variants: the angel should be in a place, like any other body. But it all depends on what kind of corporality one is willing to assign to the angel. Thus, for example, St. John Damascene argues that, compared to God, angels do have bodies, although of a different sort from those of the sublunary world, and, therefore, their relationship with place is also of a different nature: the angel is there where he acts.[15] The idea was revisited some centuries later by Abelard, although selectively and within the framework of his own angelological scheme. Maintaining the

[14] For the general impact of Tempier's condemnations on the medieval speculation on angels, see Richard Cross, "The Condemnations of 1277 and Henry of Ghent on Angelic location," and Henrik Wels, "Late Mediaeval Debates on the Location of Angels after the Condemnations of 1277," in Iribarren and Lenz, eds., *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry*, 73-88, 113-27.

[15] John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa* 1.13, in *Sources chrétiennes*, vol. 535 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2010), 209-17.

thesis, still scarcely present among his contemporaries, of a complete angelic immateriality, Abelard affirms in his *Sententie Parisienses* that the angel cannot be in a place in the same way as a body, but wherever it exerts its action.[16]

Unlike other aspects of his thinking, Abelard's position in relation to angelic location went virtually unnoticed, which makes it highly unlikely that he had a direct influence on the speculations of the next century.[17] However, the general coincidence of Abelard's thesis with that which St. Thomas would develop later is striking. Following the Aristotelian guidelines set forth in book 4 of *Physics*, St. Thomas conceives of place as "the innermost motionless boundary of what contains."[18] Implicit in this characterization is the idea that the presence of a body in a certain place demands a peculiar type of contact. To explain this, St. Thomas resorts to the concept, also Aristotelian, of the dimensive quantity, which corresponds to the accident that flows from the potency of the matter of sensible substances.[19] A body, then, is in a place in a circumscribed fashion (*circumscriptive*) because its dimensional quantity is in contact with that of another body that contains it, and by which it is measured (*commensuratur*).[20] As is evident, this type of location cannot correspond to a separate and immaterial substance, which is how St. Thomas understands the entitative structure of the angel.[21] In his view, one can say that the angel is in a place but it must be admitted that, in speaking

[16] "Et secundum illas actiones dicuntur angeli circumscriptibiles. Quid est dicere circumscriptibiles? Id est, ita exercent actiones in uno loco quod non in alio" (quoted in Marenbon, "Abelard on Angels," 70).

[17] Ibid., 70-71.

[18] Aristotle, *Physica* 4.4.212a20-21. For the commentary of St. Thomas, see IV *Phys*., lect. 6.

[19] V *Metaphys*., lect. 15; *STh* I, q. 14, a. 12, ad 1. For a commentary on this point, see Juan E. Bolzán, *La continuidad de la materia: Ensayo de interpretación cósmica* (Buenos Aires: Editorial universitaria de Buenos Aires, 1973), 5.

[20] "Nam corpus est in loco circumscriptive, quia commensuratur loco" (*STh* I, q. 52, a. 2 [Leonine ed., 5:25]). See also I *Sent*., d. 37, q. 3, a. 3, s.c. 1; IV *Sent*., d. 10, q. 1, a. 3, qcla. 1, arg. 1; *STh* III, q. 52, a. 3, ad 3.

[21] "Est enim corpus in loco per contactum loci; contactus autem corporis est per quantitatem dimensivam, quae in angelo non invenitur, cum sit incorporeus" (*Quodl*. I, q. 3, a. 1 [Leonine ed., 25/2:181]).

thus, one is making an equivocal and abusive use of that expression.[22] Lacking matter and quantity, the angel is not in a place in a circumscribed fashion, nor is he measured by the place. On the contrary, it is rather the angel who contains the place where he is, according to a modality that St. Thomas, following the nomenclature in use in his time, qualifies as definitive (*definitive*). With this, he refers to the fact that the angel, unlike God, is in one place in such a manner that he is not in another.[23]

It is worth asking, however, what exactly is meant when we say that the angel is in one place and not in another. Appealing also to the authority of the Damascene, St. Thomas says that, although the angel lacks dimensive quantity, he can nevertheless be in a place by virtual contact; that is, he is there where he applies his power or *virtus*.[24] It is from this intimate connection between location and angelic causality that St. Thomas explicitly concludes that it is impossible for an angel to be in more than one place simultaneously and, furthermore, that there cannot be two or more angels in the same place. Regarding the former, he

[22] "Respondeo dicendum quod Angelo convenit esse in loco, aequivoce tamen dicitur angelus esse in loco, et corpus" (*STh* I, q. 52, a. 1 [Leonine ed., 5:20]). See also *De Subst. Separat*., c. 19.

[23] "Angelus autem non circumscriptive, cum non commensuretur loco, sed definitive: quia ita est in uno loco, quod non in alio. Deus autem neque circumscriptive neque definitive: quia est ubique" (*STh* I, q. 52, a. 2 [Leonine ed., 5:25]). See also I *Sent.*, d. 37, q. 3, a. 1, ad 5; d. 37, q. 3, a. 2, s.c. 2; d. 37, q. 3, a. 3, s.c. 1; IV *Sent.*, d. 10, q. 1, a. 3, qcla. 2. Note that the terms "circumscriptive" and "definitive" were already in use by the time of St. Thomas. They can be traced to the work *Summa naturalium* of 1245 (Albertus de Orlamunde, *Summa naturalium*, I, c. 11). This work was erroneously attributed to St. Albertus Magnus. However, Wels emphasizes that St. Albert draws an explanatory scheme highly compatible with these distinctions in his work *De causis et processu universitatis a prima causa*, II, lect. 4, c. 11. See Wels, "Late Mediaeval Debates on the Location of Angels after the Condemnations of 1277," 122-23.

[24] See *Quodl*. I, q. 3, a. 1; *De Pot*., q. 3, a. 19, ad 2; *De Subst. Separat.*, c. 18; I *Sent.*, d. 37, q. 3, a. 1; II *Sent.*, d. 6, q. 1, a. 3; *STh* I, q. 52, a. 1. In some of these texts, St. Thomas introduces the notion of virtual quantity (*quantitas virtualis*) to describe this sort of virtual contact that the angel establishes with the place where he applies his power. Here we prefer to avoid that terminology, which seems somewhat metaphorical and obscure.

explains that God, being the universal cause of all things, is not present here or there, but everywhere; the angel's power, however, is finite and therefore does not extend to all things, but to one determined thing. The oneness referred to here is not that of the indivisible, like that of the geometric point, a hypothesis that, in St. Thomas's view, is nothing but an error due to an excessive attachment to the imagination; on the contrary, that in which the angel exercises his power can be as extensive as a city (i.e., Sodom), as long as it behaves as one thing with respect to the angelic action directly applied on it.[25]

More important for the purposes of this article, however, is the second observation made by St. Thomas. As is known, he consistently holds the thesis that the same effect can be generated by several causes simultaneously, if those causes are not completely identical. Thus, nothing prevents first and second causes from acting on the same effect, and the same goes for main and instrumental causes and the various species of causes that St. Thomas recognizes, namely, formal, material, efficient, and final.[26] On the other hand, it is perfectly feasible that several causes of the same nature, which by themselves and in isolation are insufficient to produce a certain effect, can act together to achieve it. The example offered by St. Thomas himself is that of several people who cooperate to move a ship.[27] Now, the hypothesis of two (or more) separate substances acting in the same place seems not to fall into either scenario. Regarding the

[25] "Et ideo dicendum est, quod angelus est in uno loco tantum; sed ille locus potest esse divisibilis vel indivisibilis, aut magnus vel parvus, secundum quod operatio ejus immediate ad magnum vel parvum terminatur. Unde si immediate operetur circa totam domum, tota domus respondet sibi sicut unus locus, ita quod in qualibet parte erit; sicut etiam dicimus quod anima est in qualibet parte corporis. Et dico immediate, quia si Angelus moveret lapidem ex cujus motu multa alia moverentur, non oporteret quod esset nisi ubi est primum motum; sicut patet etiam in motore corporali, quem necesse est tangere solum id quod movetur ab eo inmmediate" (I *Sent.*, d. 37, q. 3, a. 2 [Mandonnet, ed., 874]). See also IV *Sent.*, d. 10, q. 1, a. 3, qcla. 2; *Q. D. De anima*, a. 10, ad 18; *STh* I, q. 52, a. 2; q. 8, a. 2, ad 2; q. 112, a. 1. For the example of Sodom, taken from Gen 19:25, see *STh* I, q. 52, a. 2, obj. 3.

[26] See *Comp. Theol.*, c. 135; *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 7; *De Verit.*, q. 27, a. 4, ad 3; *De Princ. Natur.*, c. 4; *ScG* II, c. 89; *ScG* III, cc. 67, 70; *STh* I, q. 105, a. 5.

[27] See below, n. 47.

second, St. Thomas is quite clear: an angel perfectly contains the place where he acts, and therefore, has by nature all the causal efficiency necessary to move bodies, without having to cooperate with other agents to produce such an effect. In principle, this position also seems to entail a rejection of the first situation described—that is, of causes that intervene in the same effect, although not in exactly the same way—because if two angels belong to the same ontological plane, that holds true also for their operations. And indeed, St. Thomas affirms that two angels cannot be at once in the same place, since it is impossible for two complete (*completae*) and immediate (*immediatae*) causes to coexist for the same thing or effect.[28] This second observation, however, should not be ignored, because, as we shall see below, it opens space for some relevant nuances and interpretations.

In the thirteenth century, in contrast to the century before, the angelological discussion received considerable attention, and therefore it is not surprising that the various points outlined by St. Thomas in relation to angelic location were the subject of lively debate.[29] Saint Bonaventure, argues that, in principle, it is possible for two or more angels to be in the same place, but this does not happen because it would undermine the order of the world set by God.[30] In the next century, another Franciscan, John Duns Scotus, leaves this possibility even more open, although the ambiguity of his suggestion is undeniable.[31] Be that as it may, the

[28] "Respondeo dicendum quod duo Angeli non sunt simul in eodem loco. Et ratio huius est, quia impossibile est quod duae causae completae sint immediatae unius et eiusdem rei" (*STh* I, q. 52, a. 3 [Leonine ed., 5:28]). See also *De Pot*., q. 3, a. 7, ad 11; I *Sent*., d. 37, q. 3, aa. 2, 3; IV *Sent*., d. 10, q. 1, a. 3, qcla. 2; *Quodl*. I, q. 3, a.1, ad 2; *STh* I, q. 112, a. 1.

[29] See above, n. 14.

[30] Bonaventure, II *Sent*., d. 2, p. 2, a. 2, qq. 3 and 4 (*S. Bonaventurae opera omnia*, vol. 2, *In secundum librum, Sententiarum*, ed. PP. Collegii a S. Bonaventura [Ad aquas claras: Quaracchi, 1885], 80-86).

[31] John Duns Scotus, *Ord*. II, d. 2, p. 2, q. 4 (*Opera omnia*, vol. 6, ed. C. Balic [Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1963], 276-77); *Quodl*. XI, q. 4 (in *John Duns Scotus: God and Creatures: The Quodlibetal Questions*, ed. F. Alluntis and A. B. Wolter [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975], 268); *Lect*. II, d. 2, p. 2, q. 4 (*Opera omnia*, vol. 18,

fact is that by 1325, a couple of years after St. Thomas's canonization, the articles of the condemnations of 1277 that directly affected the Thomistic doctrine about the angel's relationship with place had already been revoked. While this did not prevent these sentences from continuing to exert a restrictive effect for some time, Wels rightly observes that, by the beginning of the sixteenth century, St. Thomas's thesis was positioned as the most reasonable solution to this vexing question.[32] But of course, there were some points that deserved more attention. In the next section, I address one of them.

II. My Name is Legion: The Demoniac of Gerasa/Gadara

Chapter 4 of the Gospel of Mark narrates the famous episode in which Jesus calms the storm. The events that occur when the boat touches ground are reported in the passage of chapter 5 to which I have referred above. Briefly, it is mentioned there that, when Jesus arrives in the region of the Gerasenes, a man possessed by an unclean spirit, who lives among the tombs, comes to meet him. This man cannot be restrained by anyone, "he was always day and night in the monuments and in the mountains, crying and cutting himself with stones." When the demoniac sees the Lord, he adores him, and, with a loud voice, calls Jesus "Son of the most high God," begging not to torment him. Jesus then asks the man his name, to which he gives his famous response,

ed. L. Modric [Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1982], 177). For some commentaries, see Suárez-Nani, "Angels, Space and Place," 108; David Keck, *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 111.

[32] Wels, "Late Mediaeval Debates on the Location of Angels after the Condemnations of 1277," 126-27. In saying this, obviously, Wels does not want to suggest that St. Thomas's solution enjoyed universal acceptance. As an example, we can mention the position of the Jesuit Francisco Suárez, who, based on his notion of an *ubi intrinsecum* (understood as a real mode of being, intrinsic to both physical and spiritual beings), explicitly defends the possibility that two angels are simultaneously in one place. See *De angelis* IV, 9. For an analysis of the philosophical assumptions that underlie this thesis, see Olivier Ribordy, "Francisco Suárez and Francesco Patrizi: Metaphysical Investigations on Place and Space," in *Space, Imagination and the Cosmos from Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, ed. C. Palmerino, D. Bellis and F. Bakker (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2018), 133-56.

"Legion is my name, because we are many." Next, Mark tells how the Lord accedes to the request of the demons to take possession of two thousand pigs that lie on a nearby hill, which end up falling off a cliff and drowning in the sea.[33] Luke's narration is similar, although it adds some further details.[34] Matthew's story, meanwhile, introduces two important variations. The first relates to the location of the events, no longer described as the region of the Gerasenes, as in Mark and Luke, but of the Gadarenes, a point that does not go unnoticed by the exegetes, as we shall see. But there is a second discrepancy here, certainly more relevant to the issue at hand: In the Gospel of Matthew, there is not one demonized man, but two. The use of the plural in the conversation they have with Jesus, therefore ("What have we to do with thee, Jesus Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"), can be explained without resorting to a possession of each man by many demons, but rather to the fact that there are two men possessed.[35]

These passages have been the subject of many and varied exegeses, some of which are recorded by St. Thomas himself in his *Catena aurea*.[36] One of the aspects that has attracted attention since the time of the first commentators is the geographical

[33] Mark 5:1-13. For references to Scripture I have consulted *Biblia sacra Vulgata*, ed. R. Weber and R. Gryson (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007); translations are based upon the Revised Standard Version and the New Jerusalem Bible. For a commentary on the narrative structure of this passage, see Michael W. Newheart, *My Name Is Legion: The Story and Soul of the Gerasene Demoniac* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2004), 34-49.

[34] Luke 8:26-39. Among these details, there is the mention that the region in question was located opposite Galilee; it is also indicated from the beginning that the man was naked, a situation that changes once the demons are expelled. In Mark, clothing is mentioned only towards the end of the passage.

[35] Matt 8:28-32. Note, on the other hand, that in the exorcism in Capernaum the demoniac speaks of "us," though he has been possessed by only one unclean spirit (Mark 1:24).

[36] *Catena in Marci evangelium*, c. 5, lect. 1; *Catena in Lucae evangelium*, c. 8, lect. 6; *Catena in Matthaei evangelium*, c. 8, lect. 8.

location where the events actually happened.[37] Both accounts coincide in the fact that the land where Jesus steps after having silenced the wind and sea corresponds to a Gentile territory; this, in addition to the reaction of its inhabitants after the liberation of the demoniac(s), undoubtedly attracts the attention of the exegetes, several of whom see all this as symbolic of Christ's redemptive role in regard to Gentiles and Jews.[38] For understandable reasons, another focus of attention has been the possession and subsequent death of the pigs, in which some, including St. Thomas, see a sign of the perversity of fallen angels and a teaching about the subordination of animal life to human and spiritual life.[39]

The points indicated are part of a heritage well established for posterity. However, it is undeniable that what has made this passage famous is the fact that, in both Mark and Luke, the demoniac has given himself the name "Legion." This term designated, in the military hierarchy of Rome, a unit of around six thousand men. This, plus the expression that follows ("for we are many"), is an explicit statement that the Gerasene/Gadarene was actually possessed by a multitude of demons.[40] A tradition that goes back to the Fathers has therefore understood these biblical passages as referring to a meeting that actually occurred

[37] See Origen, *John* 6.21 (*Commentary on the Gospel according to John: Books 1–10*, vol. 80 of *The Fathers of the Church*, ed. T. P. Halton (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 226. See also the interpretations of John Chrysostom and Titus Bostrensis quoted by St. Thomas in *Catena in Marci evangelium*., c. 5, lect. 1; *Catena in Lucae evangelium*, c. 8, lect. 6.

[38] See *Super Matt*., c. 8, lect. 4. See also the interpretations of Bede, Rabanus, St. Hilary, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine cited by St. Thomas in *Catena in Marci evangelium*, c. 5, lect. 1; *Catena in Lucae evangelium*, c. 8, lect. 6; *Catena in Matthaei evangelium*, c. 8, lect. 8.

[39] *Super Matt*., c. 8, lect. 4. See also the exegeses of Bede, John Chrysostom, and Cyril mentioned by St. Thomas in *Catena in Marci evangelium*, c. 5, lect. 1; *Catena in Lucae evangelium*, c. 8, lect. 6; *Catena in Matthaei evangelium*, c. 8, lect. 8.

[40] I stress this because, as mentioned above (see n. 35), the mere fact that the demoniac uses the plural to refer to himself does not necessarily mean that this is a case of multiple possession. On the other hand, the significance of the pronominal switch in the response of the demoniac must not be ignored: "Legion is *my* name, for *we* are many." According to Willett, "the demoniac himself fades into the background, and the demons themselves charge into the foreground" (Willett, *My Name Is Legion*, 44-45).

between Jesus of Nazareth and a man (or two, as the case may be) possessed by many demons. It is an unquestionable fact that St. Thomas is inscribed in that tradition. He did not write a commentary on the Gospel of Mark, or of Luke, where the demoniac, in response to the Lord's question, declares his name to be Legion. But in his *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, St. Thomas expressly wonders why two demoniacs are mentioned here and not just one, as in the other Synoptics. His response follows the interpretation of St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom: If in some Synoptics only one possessed man is mentioned, it is because although there were two, one was a more serious and famous case.[41] Saint Thomas's conclusion—"One should say that without doubt there were two, but one was more famous"—clearly shows that his intention is to save the historicity of the events narrated by Matthew but also the fundamental veracity of the other Synoptics.[42] If he remains so faithful to the gospel narrative regarding the number of demoniacs, it is reasonable to assume that the same must apply to the multitude of demons involved, which is, after all, the most striking feature of the passage. From which it follows that, for St. Thomas, the encounter between Jesus and a man possessed by many demons is not a mere symbolic story, but something that really happened.[43]

[41] Augustine of Hippo, *De consensu evangelistarum libri quatuor* 2.24.56 (*PL* 34:1104-5); John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew* 28:2 (in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 10, ed. P. Schaff [New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886], 265). See also *Catena in Marci evangelium*, c. 5, lect. 1; *Catena in Lucae evangelium*, c. 8, lect. 6; *Catena in Matthaei evangelium*, c. 8, lect. 8.

[42] "Sed quaeritur quare alii evangelistae non faciunt mentionem nisi de uno; iste de duobus. Dicendum quod sine dubio duo fuerunt; sed unus fuit magis famosus" (*Super Matt*., c. 8, lect. 4 [Aquinas Institute ed., 269]).

[43] The possibility of a purely symbolic interpretation (whether moral, psychological, or sociological) of the episode is worth mentioning because it is certainly the most frequent reading in our day. See, e.g, Diarmuid McGann, *The Journeying Self: The Gospel of Mark Through a Jungian Perspective* (New York: Paulist, 1985), 71-80; A. J. R. Uleyn, "The Possessed Man of Gerasa (Mart D. 1–20). A Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Reader-Reactions," in *Current Issues in the Psychology of Religion: Proceedings of the*

The above raises an obvious difficulty for the Thomistic thesis of angelic location. According to St. Thomas, there can be no more than one angel in the same place at once. But as we have seen, there are passages in the Gospels, whose truthfulness St. Thomas does not doubt, that narrate the possession of a man by many demons.[44] Moreover, St. Thomas is emphatic in maintaining that, after the fall, the demons do not lose their nature, and are, therefore, still angels.[45] All this leads us to conclude that many angels can, after all, be present in what, at least *prima facie*, seems to be only one place, namely, a man's body. The relevance of this apparent contradiction can be seen from two different perspectives, not necessarily mutually exclusive. From a purely historical-systematic point of view, it can be argued that the difficulty indicated has an interest in itself to the extent that it tests the consistency of an aspect of the Thomistic doctrine—namely, its angelology—in which its author articulates and outlines cosmological, anthropological, and metaphysical notions that have become part of the Western philosophical tradition. But for the Christian, the question acquires an additional significance, not only because its author is the *Doctor communis* of the Catholic Church, but because of the very issue at hand. Certainly, the purpose of this work is not to wonder how many angels can dance on the head of a pin, but to understand a terrible

Third Symposium on the Psychology of Religion in Europe, ed. Jacob van Belzen and Jan van de Lans (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1986), 90-96; René Girard, *The Scapegoat* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), 165-83; Paul W. Hollenbach, "Jesus, Demoniacs, and Public Authorities: A Socio-Historical Study," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 49 (1981): 567-88. See also Willett, *My Name Is Legion*.

[44] The same cannot necessarily be said of the gloss of St. Thomas to Matthew 12:43-45, where, according to the Evangelist, Jesus Christ compares the spiritual state of the Pharisees with that of a man who, after being released from an impure spirit, ends up being possessed by seven devils. Although St. Thomas does not deny that this may occur, his comment makes it clear that what is discussed here is not a historical event, but a parable; see *Super Matt*., c. 12, lect. 3; *Catena in Matthaei evangelium*, c. 12, lect. 14. One might also note the passage of the Gospel of Mark that mentions the appearance of Jesus after his resurrection to Mary Magdalene, "from whom he had cast out seven devils" (Mark 16:9). The text does not, however, say whether these demons were simultaneously or consecutively present in that woman.

[45] See *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 6; *In Ephes*., c. 6, lect. 3; II *Sent.*, d. 6, q. 1, a. 4; *ScG* III, c. 108; *STh* I, q. 109, a. 1.

phenomenon whose reality is supported by the Scriptures and also by the liturgical practice of exorcism in the sphere of Christianity.[46]

III. Possible Solutions for the Proposed Difficulty

Before exploring and comparing the available alternatives to solve the difficulty outlined above, it will be useful to recapitulate succinctly the reason why St. Thomas rules out the possibility that two or more angels may be simultaneously in the same place. In his opinion, there cannot be two complete and immediate causes for the same thing or effect. Note that the causes in question must satisfy not just one but both requirements—completeness and immediacy—to fall into the situation that St. Thomas designates as impossible.

Assuming this Thomistic angelic framework, three hypotheses could be proposed to explain the phenomenon of multiple possession:

(1) There are two or more angels acting immediately in the body of the demoniac, but none, by itself, is the complete cause of the effect, i.e., of possession.
(2) The body of the demoniac, as an extended reality, is composed of many places, in each of which acts—and therefore is present—a demon. Each of these

[46] The *Rituale Romanum* of Exorcism of 1614 states that the priest must ask for the name or names of evil spirits (see René Laurentin, *El demonio, ¿símbolo o realidad?* [Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 1998], 253; Francis Young, *A History of Exorcism in Catholic Christianity* [Cambridge: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016], 116-20). The testimonies of exorcists in the tradition of the Catholic Church agree that the phenomenon of multiple possession is not mythical, but real. See José A. Fortea, *Summa daemoniaca* (Zaragoza: Editorial Dos Latidos, 2004), 155; Corrado Balducci, *La possessione diabólica* (Rome: Edizioni Mediterranée, 1988); idem, *El diablo, vivo y activo en nuestro mundo* (Bogotá: San Pablo, 1994), 273 (English trans., *The Devil, Alive and Active in Our World* [Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1990]); Gabriele Amorth, *An Exorcist Tells His Story* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999), 95-98; idem, *Memoirs of an Exorcist: My Life Fighting Satan* (Newburyport: The Mondadori Group, 2014), 34-50; 223-25; Léon Cristiani, *Evidence of Satan in the Modern World* (Rockford, Ill.: TAN Books, 1974), 68.

demons, then, is a complete and immediate cause of an effect (possession) confined to a part of the body of the demoniac.
(3) Only one angel is the complete and immediate cause for the possession of the demoniac's body. Any angel or angels that intervene additionally must act mediately in the body of the demoniac, i.e., through any influence they can exert on that angel that completely and immediately causes possession.

As is evident, each of these possibilities entails its own complexities, meriting, therefore, a separate and careful scrutiny, whose general lines I offer below.

A) First Hypothesis: Many Angels Cooperate to Achieve the Possession of the Body

This explanatory alternative involves a causal model quite close to our daily experience, which gives it a certain plausibility, at least at first glance. Indeed, it is not difficult to imagine many situations in which our own causal power is insufficient to produce some effect, forcing us to collaborate with other causal agents to remedy our ineptitude. Saint Thomas seems to notice the proximity and persuasiveness of this causal model and therefore quickly discards it in the *corpus* of question 52, article 3 of the *Prima pars*, even at the expense of continuity and rhythm in the text; reasoning about whether two or more angels may or may not share the same place, he inserts—in a somewhat abrupt and surprising way—an explicit rejection of the idea that the situation may be equated with that of, for example, several men who simultaneously push a ship:

Nor can it be objected that several individuals may row a boat, since no one of them is a perfect mover, because no one man's strength is sufficient for moving the boat; while all together are as one mover, in so far as their united strengths all combine in producing the one movement. Hence, since the angel is said to be in one place by the fact that his power touches the place immediately by way of a perfect container, as was said, there can be but one angel in one place.[47]

[47] "Nec habet instantiam de pluribus trahentibus navem: quia nullus eorum est perfectus motor, cum virtus uniuscuiusque sit insufficiens ad movendum; sed omnes simul sunt in loco unius motoris, inquantum omnes virtutes eorum aggregantur ad unum motum faciendum. Unde cum Angelus dicatur esse in loco per hoc quod virtus eius immediate contingit locum per modum continentis perfecti, ut dictum est, non potest esse nisi unus

If several individuals must cooperate to move the ship, it is because none of them is, by himself, a perfect and sufficient cause of that movement. But this does not apply to the separated substance, warns St. Thomas, because if he is in a place, it is because his causal power is exerted there and relates to that place as a perfect container. It must be admitted that this answer is somewhat enigmatic, especially with regard to the possibility of angelic virtue contacting the place as a perfect container. To clarify, it is important to delve into an issue already noted. Local or circumscriptive presence is that which results from the contact of the dimensional quantity of one body with that of another. But according to St. Thomas, the angel lacks matter and is therefore not determined by the accident of quantity that follows from it; therefore, the angel cannot be locally present in a place. But this does not preclude the angel being in a place according to another mode of presence, which St. Thomas describes as the way in which the act is present in the potency that receives it.[48] It is important, however, to guard against an interpretation too closely attached to the literal sense of the text and the spatial images it spontaneously evokes in our imagination. When we say that the potency receives an act, that expression should not be understood in the sense of the said potency being a kind of physical receptacle in which a certain content is poured, namely, the act; that would amount to a type of local presence. On the contrary, the reception alluded to by St. Thomas has a metaphysical connotation, and consists of the actualization of potency by its corresponding act, by virtue of which we can say that this potency is subjected or "contained" in the sphere of determination of that act. This is precisely what happens with a place submitted to the causal power of a separated substance, and which, in that sense, can be described as "contained" by the angelic *virtus*.

Angelus in uno loco" (*STh* I, q. 52, a. 3 [Leonine ed., 5:28]). For the rest of the passage, see above, n. 28.

[48] See the references cited above, n. 24.

With this in mind, we can return to what St. Thomas affirms in the passage cited above. By pointing out that the angel is related to the place where he exercises his power as a perfect container, St. Thomas underlines the sufficiency of angelic causality and the perfect domination that a separate substance exerts, by nature, over bodily realities. Therefore, the situation of the collaborative movement of the ship by various agents does not apply here. Angels do not need to constitute a society or union to move a body, or more specifically, to possess it; the natural power with which God has endowed each of them from the moment of their creation is more than enough to produce that effect.[49] Indeed, and as St. Thomas himself points out in another passage, if bodies can move each other, the more the angel will be able to provoke that kind of movement, since "whatever an inferior power can do, a superior power can do, not in the same way, but in a more excellent way."[50] In sum, the hypothesis that many demons must cooperate to possess a man because each one is, independently and by himself, unable to exercise control of the possessed body, is hardly reconcilable with the angelological and cosmological proposal of St. Thomas.

B) Second Hypothesis: Each Angel Possesses Only One Part of the Body

As indicated above, St. Thomas expressly discards the thesis, vigorously defended in his time, according to which the place in which the angel operates must be indivisible, in the manner of a

[49] Saint Thomas maintains that the influence the angel exerts on the body is mediated by the most perfect kind of movement recognized by Aristotelian physics, i.e., by local movement. Despite the restriction that this could imply, he insists that, by the intervention of the angel, certain effects are produced in corporal things that surpass the corporal agents themselves, just as the cook and the blacksmith, following the rules of their arts, are able to achieve, through fire, certain effects that fire does not achieve on its own. See *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 1, ad 14; q. 16, a. 10; *De Pot*., q. 6, a. 3; *Quodl*. IX, q. 4, a. 5, corp. and ad 1; *ScG* III, c. 103; *STh* I, q. 110, a. 2, ad 3; q. 110, a. 3, corp. and ad 2; *Super Iob*, c. 1.

[50] "id quod potest virtus inferior, potest superior non eodem, sed excellentiori modo" (*STh* I, q. 110, a. 2, ad 2 [Leonine ed., 5:512]). See also *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 9, ad 4; *De Pot*., q. 6, a. 3, ad 1 and 15.

geometric point. That on which the virtue of the angel is immediately applied, St. Thomas teaches instead, is for the angel a place, regardless of its divisibility or size.[51] This, he explains, is also true for the continuous body assumed or possessed by an angel—a body which is composed of parts that nonetheless constitute a single place in relation to the angel's power.[52]

Note that this last consideration does not refute the hypothesis we are now examining. What St. Thomas rejects is the idea that, if an angel assumes a continuous body, which has many parts, it can be said that the separated substance is, in that case, in many places. But this does not deny the possibility that an angel could circumscribe his virtue to a part of that body, so that such a part constitutes a single place with respect to that angel. Saint Thomas openly admits that this place can be indivisible or divisible, major or minor, large or small. Thus, this second hypothesis seems, up to this point, compatible with Thomistic angelology and the fact of multiple possession.[53] There are, however, at least three objections, of a different nature and scope, that can be raised against it.

First, it could be argued that a body possessed in the manner described would not be viable from an organic point of view. Undoubtedly, corporeal life, from its humblest manifestations, demands a sophisticated morphological and physiological integration that contemporary science describes even at the molecular level. The possession of a human body by a multitude

[51] See above, n. 25.

[52] The objection is as follows: "Praeterea, angelus est in corpore assumpto; et cum assumat corpus continuum, videtur quod sit in qualibet eius parte. Sed secundum partes eius considerantur diversa loca. Ergo angelus est simul in pluribus locis" (*STh* I, q. 52, a. 2, obj. 2 [Leonine ed., 5:25]). Saint Thomas replies: "Et per hoc patet de facili responsio ad obiecta, quia totum illud cui immediate applicatur virtus angeli, reputatur ut unus locus eius, licet sit continuum" (*STh* I, q. 52, a. 2, ad 1 [Leonine ed., 5:25]).

[53] It should be noted that this idea of the devil acting in a circumscribed part of the body is not totally alien to the Catholic liturgical tradition. See George H. Forbes and John M. Neale, *The Ancient Liturgies of the Gallican Church* (London: Pitsligo Press, 1855), 161; quoted in Jeffrey Burton, *Lucifer: El diablo en la Edad Media* (Barcelona: Laertes, 1995), 140. See also Cristiani, *Evidence of Satan in the Modern World*, 63.

of angels, each of whom exercises his power in a part of that body, could then be judged as incompatible with that vital integration and therefore with organic life. In response, it should be borne in mind that, according to St. Thomas, the demon (or demons), when taking possession of a body, does not relate to it as the soul is related to matter, but as a mover is related to the thing moved.[54] In fact, this is the reason why he sees no difficulty in admitting that an angel and a soul can be in the same body: The first can act as an efficient cause of the movement of that body, but the second is its substantial form.[55] The soul of the possessed person, therefore, remains the substantial form of the human compound, and as such, could allow continuity of the basic vegetative and sensitive functions of organic life. I use the expression "could allow" because, just as the pathological indisposition of certain body parts may end up being incompatible with life, it is also plausible that a possession worked by a legion of demons, each of whom acts in a part of that body, ends up affecting health and eventually causing the death of the individual.[56] But if this possibility cannot be ruled out, neither does it seem that it should always and necessarily occur. That is already sufficient for the object of this discussion.

A second objection, partly linked to the previous one, has to do with the operational integrity of the body possessed according to this modality. How could a body so possessed act as one—as

[54] See *Comp. Theol.*, c. 74; *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 1; *De Verit.*, q. 5, a. 2, ad 6; *De Pot.*, q. 5, a. 3; q. 6, a. 3, ad 4; q. 6, a. 6; *De Spir. Creat.*, a. 5; *De Subst. Separat.,* c. 18; I *Sent.*, d. 7, q. 1, a. 1; II *Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1; *ScG* II, cc. 49, 55, 91; *STh* I, q. 50, aa. 1 and 5; q. 51, aa. 1-3; q. 110, a. 2, ad 1. For a historical overview of the discussions that took place at the time of Aquinas in relation to this issue, see Harkins, "Embodiment of Angels," 25-58.

[55] "Ad tertium dicendum quod nec etiam daemon et anima comparantur ad corpus secundum eandem habitudinem causae; cum anima sit forma, non autem daemon. Unde ratio non sequitur" (*STh* I, q. 52, a. 3, ad 3 [Leonine ed., 5:28]).

[56] This, strictly speaking, could occur in any possession that lasts for a long time, regardless of the number of demons involved in it. An especially striking case is that of Anneliese Michel, who died at the age of 22 due to the organic deterioration caused by an anorexia that dropped her weight to 68 pounds. For a general account of the episode and an additional bibliography referring to the inexhaustible controversies generated around her exorcism, see Laurentin, *El demonio, ¿símbolo o realidad?*, 258; Young, *History of Exorcism in Catholic Christianity*, 216-19.

seems to be the case in the Gerasene/Gadarene, whose behavior, however aberrant it may appear, shows an obvious unity? This objection is more serious and understandable, although not necessarily decisive. Saint Thomas states that demons replicate in some sense the order of the celestial hierarchy, and there is undoubtedly coordination and obedience among them (in which, of course, there is nothing virtuous).[57] In principle, nothing prevents this demonic ordination from being used to move and govern the possessed body in an orderly and seemingly unitary way. In support of such a suggestion is the fact that beings of much more limited intelligence and power, such as men, can achieve surprisingly unitary effects when they work in coordination. Thus, a group of musicians—each one acting immediately and completely on his own instrument—with proper direction, can interpret the harmonious and unitary beauty of a single piece. Also, felons belonging to organized crime can act with striking coordination, a situation probably much closer to the moral tenor of the demonic phenomenon discussed here.

More difficult to counter is a third possible objection regarding the specific motivation behind such a possession. Indeed, St. Thomas and the Christian tradition teach that its purpose, on the part of the devil, is nothing other than to cause harm and suffering.[58] The question that emerges, however, is what reason the demons might have to exercise the possessive act in this particular way, that is, circumscribing their action to a certain part of that body. As just mentioned, an angel is endowed,

[57] See below, nn. 65, 72.

[58] It is striking that, in response to the imprecation of Jesus Christ, the demons beg him not to torment them (Mark) and not send them into the abyss (Luke). Several Fathers have seen in this a sign that, for demons, just being deprived of the possibility of causing direct harm or suffering to man is itself a torment. See, for example, John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, hom. 28:2 (*NPNF* 10:265-66). See also *Catena in Marci evangelium*, c. 5, lect. 1; *Catena in Lucae evangelium*, c. 8, lect. 6. Saint Thomas also assumes this interpretation. See *STh* I, q. 64, a. 4, ad 3; q. 114, a. 1; *Super Matt*., c. 12, lect. 4.

by nature, with the power to move bodies. Therefore, if angelic causality is to be exercised in a part of the possessed body, yet not in all of it, this cannot be justified by resorting to any limitation of angelic power, but must have some other reason. What could such a motive be? The discussion could, at this point, take on an excessively conjectural tone. For our purposes, it is enough to point out that, although the hypothesis investigated here cannot be ignored, its underlying intention remains somewhat obscure.

C) Third Hypothesis: A Single Angel Is the Complete and Immediate Cause of the Possession; the Other Angels Act Mediately in the Body of the Demoniac

This alternative, too, is compatible with Thomistic angelology. In this regard, it is appropriate to insist on what St. Thomas points out in question 52, article 3 of the *Prima pars*. As we saw, he expressly excludes there the possibility of two complete and immediate causes for the same thing, which he explains with respect to the formal and efficient cause. Regarding the latter, he says that there can only be one proximate mover, but that many remote movers may also exist.[59] This thesis coincides with the warning that he introduces in the body of the immediately previous article, in response to the question of whether an angel that moves the whole sky can be said to be everywhere. The power of the angel, explains St. Thomas, applies to what is first moved by him, which, in the case of the sky, would correspond to its eastern part.[60] Following these guidelines, it is plausible to maintain that it is only one fallen angel who immediately and completely applies his virtue to the body of the

[59] See above, n. 28.

[60] "Neither, if any angel moves the heavens, is it necessary for him to be everywhere. First, because his power is applied only to what is first moved by him. Now there is one part of the heavens in which there is movement first of all, namely, the part to the east: hence the Philosopher [*Physic.* 8] attributes the power of the heavenly mover to the part which is in the east. Second, because philosophers do not hold that one separate substance moves all the spheres immediately. Hence it need not be everywhere" (*STh* I, q. 52, a. 2 [Leonine ed., 5:25]).

demoniac, that demon being the proximate cause of the possession. Every angel who exercises his causality over a man so possessed will do so as a remote cause, that is, through the demon that possesses the body completely and immediately.

The proposed causal scheme is compatible both with St. Thomas's requirements regarding angelic location and with the truthfulness of the fact of multiple possession narrated in the Gerasene/Gadarene episode. In relation to the first point, we must insist that, according to this hypothesis, it is only one separate substance who acts completely and immediately in the body, and who is then present in that place *simpliciter*. The angel or angels who come to the body thus possessed will be present in that place in a relative and secondary way (*secundum quid*), which implies the mediation of the former. But it should not be forgotten that this way of being present in a place that belongs to demons that are remote causes of possession, despite being secondary and relative, is nevertheless real, or multiple possession would be a figurative or metaphorical event. While the presence of that angel who acts as a remote cause has less ontological robustness than that which corresponds to the angel who is there as a complete and immediate cause, this does not imply that the first type of presence is merely fictitious. Rather, it should be said that this is an authentic demonic presence, but one derived from and superimposed upon that other one that can be conceived as primary. Despite the differences, this situation has a certain parallel with the relationship between substance and accident; the latter is, according to St. Thomas, a real entity, although *secundum quid*, since it can exist as a determination of the substance that is *simpliciter*.[61]

The question arises, of course, about exactly what kind of causal influence one demon could exert on another in order to affect the body possessed indirectly. The instrumental causality model inevitably fails at this point. According to St. Thomas, the

[61] See *De Ente*, c. 6; *De Princ. Natur.*, c. 1; *Quodl.* IX, q. 2, a. 2; *De Verit.*, q. 27, a. 1, ad 8.

instrument has a double function. The first one belongs to the instrument according to its proper form, and this is how the ax is able to cut with the edge it has; the second function, which he qualifies as formally instrumental, consists in a participation of the agent's virtue in order to produce an effect superior to the power of the instrument itself. Now, says St. Thomas, the instrument performs this instrumental function precisely by exercising its own activity; therefore, if the ax can serve as a carpenter's instrument to make a bed, it is only because it has the power to cut.[62] Returning to the problem at hand, the separated substance is, according to St. Thomas, a perfect and sufficient cause of the movement of bodies. That means that the angel can, by its own form and virtue, produce the corresponding effect, and the intervention of another angelic agent acting as the main cause is essentially superfluous and gratuitous.

An alternative explanation appeals to what St. Thomas calls a "prelacy."[63] As we saw, he maintains the thesis that while demons have lost the order of grace in which they were created, they retain the angelic nature and perfect ordination that follow from it.[64] This natural ordination takes the form of a prelacy, whereby the action of the lower demons is subject to that of the superiors. This is not, of course, founded on the justice of the demons themselves, nor does it come from a sort of "demonic friendship" but from "their common wickedness whereby they hate men and fight against God's justice."[65] In principle, this type of influence, of which the closest image is that of the citizen submitting to his

[62] "Non autem perficit actionem instrumentalem nisi exercendo actionem propriam; scindendo enim facit lectum" (*STh* III, q. 62, a. 1, ad 2 [Leonine ed., 12:20]). See also *De Pot*., q. 3, a. 4; *De Verit*., q. 2, a. 5, s.c.; q. 24, a. 1, ad 5; *ScG* II, c. 21; *ScG* III, cc. 70, 78; *ScG* IV, c. 74. Note that this is valid both if the instrument is a free agent and if it is not. In the first case, it would be an instrument in an improper sense, in the second, in a proper sense. See *De Verit*., q. 24, a. 1, ad 5.

[63] See II *Sent*., d. 6, q. 1, a. 4. See also II *Sent*., d. 6, q. 1, a. 2; IV *Sent*., d. 47, q. 1, a. 2, qcla. 4, ad 1; *STh* I, q. 63, a. 8; q. 109, a. 2.

[64] See above, n. 45.

[65] "concordia daemonum, qua quidam aliis obediunt, non est ex amicitia quam inter se habeant; sed ex communi nequitia, qua homines odiunt, et Dei iustitiae repugnant" (*STh* I, q. 109, a. 2, ad 2 [Leonine ed., 5:507]). See also II *Sent*., d. 6, q. 1, a. 4, ad 2 and 3.

sovereign, seems to fit well with the kind of power that some angels may exert over others in the case of multiple possession. Besides preserving the natural order existing between the different demons that could participate in the possession, this demonic prelacy has in its favor the fact that, according to St. Thomas, it is exercised in the plane of action, which is what concerns us here (because the angel is present where he acts, and possession is the result of an angel's action on a body). Before accepting this idea, however, it is necessary to consider two serious difficulties.

The first has to do with the specificity of this kind of causal influence. As we saw, St. Thomas admits the fact of the demonic prelacy as a general arrangement because it is not only extensible to the whole sphere of fallen angel activity but, moreover, involves the entire demonic hierarchy. Thus, a demon's activity, by virtue of this prelacy, is subjected to that of all his superiors and dominates, in turn, the activity of demons lower in the ontological hierarchy. Therefore, if this is the causal model that explains the action of one separate substance on another in the context of a diabolical possession, it would follow that, ultimately, all possession is actually multiple and, furthermore, exhaustive, in the sense that all the fallen angels would be acting on the one possessed. Although this conjecture cannot be completely ruled out, it does not seem entirely compatible with biblical texts and would also subtract much of the meaning from the Gerasene/Gadarene episode.[66]

[66] In particular, it is remarkable that in Mark and Luke Jesus expressly asks for the name (and not the names) of the demon that has taken possession of man; see Mark 5:9; Luke 8:30. But beyond these verses, there are several scriptural passages in which it is affirmed or implied that the demon that has taken possession or has been expelled from a human person is one and not many. See, for example, 1 Sam 16:14-16; Luke 4:35; 11:14; Mark 7:24-30; 9:18-25; Matt 9:33; 17:17-18; Acts 16:16-18; 19:13-16. Although these texts, by themselves, do not conclusively refute the possibility that every demonic possession is multiple and general, they do underline the artificiality of the hypothesis, and the difficulty of harmonizing it with the biblical text. On the other hand, if it is the whole demonic hierarchy that acts in each possession, it is difficult to make much sense of the practice of exorcism, which, following the example of Jesus, specifically

The second problem posed by this model has to do with the fact that St. Thomas also admits a prelacy of the blessed angels over demons.[67] Indeed, if it is the prelacy of some demons over others that explains multiple possessions, and if the demons, in turn, are submitted to the holy angels, it would follow that each possession is operated not only by a multiplicity of fallen angels, but also of blessed ones. The solution to this objection is provided by St. Thomas himself through the distinction between *causing* and *allowing*. Just as God can tolerate certain evils in order to obtain from them a greater good without being the cause of that evil, so the blessed angels may, under divine mandate, allow the demons to perform morally evil actions, although the holy angels are not the cause of such iniquities.[68] But there is one aspect of this difficulty that still stands, and that in part links to the first objection discussed. When a demon commits a reprehensible act, such as the possession of a man, he does so with the complicit permission of the superior demon to which he is subjected according to the natural order of the prelacy. These higher demons, who not only tolerate but positively desire that evil, are therefore also morally responsible for it.[69] From an ontological perspective, however, it is not clear that this prelacy implies an active exercise of the power of the superior angel over the lower one. Using the example offered by St. Thomas to illustrate this angelic ordering, the prelacy exercised by the sovereign over the subject is first and foremost a subordination of the action of the latter with respect to the former, which does not require from the prelate—at least not always and constantly—a discreet and distinct act. This is not a mere subtlety but a very important point since, in the light of the Thomistic theory of angelic location,

asks for the name or names of demons (see above, n. 45). Names are used, no doubt, to identify individuals. For a commentary on exorcism in the Gospels, see José A. Sayés, *El Demonio: ¿Realidad o mito?* (Madrid: San Pablo, 1997), 49-52.

[67] *STh* I, q. 109, a. 4.

[68] "The holy angels are the ministers of the divine wisdom. Hence as the divine wisdom permits some evil to be done by bad angels or men, for the sake of the good that follows; so also the good angels do not entirely restrain the bad from inflicting harm" (*STh* I, q. 109, a. 4, ad 2 [Leonine ed., 5:508]).

[69] Cf. *STh* I, q. 63, a. 8; I–II, q. 79, a. 1; q. 80, a. 1.

without an active exercise of his power, it is not clear that this higher demon is actually possessing the body of the possessed, even *secundum quid*.

I know of no text in which St. Thomas explicitly confronts these issues. Within the framework of this third hypothesis, and with all the reservations that the matter demands, I suggest that the causality that some demons exert over others in the phenomenon of multiple possession presupposes the general prelacy described above, but cannot be fully subsumed in it. This would be, instead, a specific type of causal influence, exerted not on the will of the subordinate angel (for that power can never be directly moved by another creature, according to St. Thomas),[70] but in his operation. Through this influence, the superior demon would actively direct the application of the virtue of the angel submitted to him in the order of nature, an order that the latter has confirmed from the moment of his fall.[71] This angel, in turn, could replicate the action on another lower demon, and so on until the action reaches the separate substance that has, completely and immediately, taken possession of a body.

Of course, it is worth asking what purpose the infernal choirs might pursue in acting in this way. As in the second hypothesis, we cannot resort here to any kind of insufficiency on the part of angelic causation. In that sense, the idea that a second angel

[70] On the part of the object, the angel can influence the will of other angels and man, but always by way of inclination and persuasion (see *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 3; *De Verit*., q. 22 a. 9; *ScG* III, c. 88; *STh* I, q. 106, a. 2; q. 111, a. 2; I-II, q. 9, a. 6; q. 10, a. 2; 80, a. 1). The type of causality that some demons exert on others in the phenomenon of multiple possession, however, implies a type of control that far exceeds that of mere instigation. See below.

[71] "Habet enim hoc ordo divinae iustitiae, ut cuius suggestioni aliquis consentit in culpa, eius potestati subdatur in poena; secundum illud II Pet. II, a quo quis superatus est, huic servus addictus est" (*STh* I, q. 63, a. 8 [Leonine ed., 5:137]). See also *STh* I, q. 63, a. 8, ad 2; II *Sent*., d. 6, q. 1, a. 2. Interesting, in this regard, is the experience of Father Amorth, a recognized exorcist, who points out that when there is a case of multiple possession, there is always a "boss" among the demons who is the last to leave the possessed (Amorth, *Narraciones de un exorcista*, 71). For more references, see above, n. 46.

comes to "reinforce" the action of the first, and a third that of the second, is nothing more than anthropomorphism. In this case, however, one can conjecture a motivation consistent, at least, with Thomistic theology. Certainly, through the despotic control that some demons exert over others, the Prince of this world displays a disfigured and sarcastic representation of the way the true God governs the universe and respects the second causality inherent in all his creatures, including, of course, the angelic ones.[72] But the culmination of this macabre parody is embodied in the violent possession that the demonic hierarchy exercises over the human being; created in the image and likeness of God, man arouses and concentrates the hatred and envy of hell, which spares no effort to pervert him morally, and whenever possible, vex him psychologically, biologically, and physically.

Conclusion

The difficulty raised, and the hypotheses put forward to solve it, could be considered a "thought experiment," a resource well represented in contemporary academic discussion. While I have no substantive objections against anyone who wants to regard the matter in these terms, that is not the perspective I wish to adopt here. Contrary to the trend to try to "demythologize" the theological and philosophical speculations of the Middle Ages and even some passages of Sacred Scripture not easily compatible with the naturalistic criteria imposed by our culture, I have, in this article, assumed the effective and not merely symbolic truth of the action of the separated substances in the corporeal world. With this attitude, we have considered the difficulty of articulating the Thomistic theory of angelic location in the case of a famous New Testament passage in which, in response to the imprecation of Jesus Christ, a demoniac responds that his name is Legion. Certainly, if each angel is present where he acts, as St. Thomas teaches, and if there cannot be more than one angel in

[72] "Greg. Nyss. Certain evil spirits imitating the heavenly hosts and the legions of angels say that they are legions. As also their prince says that he will exalt his throne above the stars that he may be like to the Most High" (*Catena in Lucae evangelium*, c. 8, lect. 6 [J. H. Parker ed., 4:282]).

the same place at once, it is not clear how a multiple possession could occur.

Here, we have explored three causal models with the potential to explain the phenomenon of multiple demonic possession. The first implies an alleged cooperation of the angels in the movement of the body of the possessed, which St. Thomas explicitly describes as inadmissible. According to the second, several angels act in different parts of the possessed body, and therefore, each of those parts would behave as "the" place where each separate substance is. Although there are no insoluble difficulties that refute this hypothesis, the resulting picture suffers from a certain gratuitousness, especially as regards the purpose of such distribution. This judgment should be made with caution, however, because it is all too easy to fall prey to a pretentious rationalism when trying to explain, especially in the space of a brief article, the intentions that could move beings whose natural hierarchical position far exceeds ours.

With the same note of precaution, I propose a third hypothesis as the most harmonious and compatible with the whole of the doctrine of St. Thomas and with the practice of the sacramental of exorcism, as it has been practiced for centuries in the Catholic Church. According to this scheme, it is one angel who completely and immediately possesses the body, and it is that angel, therefore, that is present in that place *simpliciter*. A demon that acts additionally on that body will do so in a mediated way, that is, by applying his power in the operation of that first separate substance. If a third angel comes to that body, he will do so through the second, and so on, in an order that is not primarily chronological, but ontological, because it follows the natural angelic hierarchy preserved in demons. The model outlined, of course, raises additional questions, especially regarding the specific type of causality that a demon exerts on another and how this influence differs from the order of prelacy that also exists among fallen angels. The speculations offered here are intended as nothing more than a modest step, faithful to the spirit of the work of the Angelic Doctor.

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AQUINAS ON SHAME, VIRTUE, AND THE VIRTUOUS PERSON

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Shame is a true Christian virtue, and also a human virtue. . . . Being ashamed of oneself is a virtue of the humble, of the man or woman who is humble.[1]
Pope Francis, *Encountering Truth*

SOME SCHOLARS within the Aristotelian tradition, notably C. C. Raymond and K. Kristjánsson, have recently questioned the Stagirite's denials that shame (*aidōs*) can be a moral virtue in the proper sense of the term and that a virtuous person needs a sense of shame in addition to other moral virtues.[2] Aristotle famously claims that, although shame is the mean between bashfulness and shamelessness, shame is "more like a feeling than a state of character" and that "one is ashamed of what is voluntary, but the virtuous person will never voluntarily do base things."[3] Raymond and Kristjánsson argue that Aristotle has overlooked two interrelated distinctions: first, the distinction between an episodic or occurrent *feeling of shame* and a durable emotional disposition of a *sense of shame*, and second, the distinction between retrospective shame (which follows upon base actions) and prospective shame (which inhibits base actions).[4] Even if it be conceded that virtuous

[1] Pope Francis, *Encountering Truth* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2015), 43.

[2] C. C. Raymond, "Shame and Virtue in Aristotle," in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 53, ed. E. Caston (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 111-61; K. Kristjánsson, *Virtuous Emotions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 87-101.

[3] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1128b10-11, 28-29 (trans. T. Irwin [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999]).

[4] Raymond, "Shame and Virtue in Aristotle," 115 and 131ff.; cf. K. Kristjánsson, *Virtuous Emotions*, 92 and 96ff. By "emotional disposition" these authors refer to

persons might not need to draw upon retrospective shame, according to Kristjánsson, they will still need proper dispositional shame or prospective shame as "a deterrent voice to warn them against potentially base future courses of action." If not, Aristotle would be committed to a conception of a saintly or morally infallible virtuous person.[5] For his part, Raymond contends that, if Aristotle admits that honor and social standing constitute external goods and that virtuous persons are not indifferent to what people think of them (to such a degree that avoiding disrepute can be the goal of action), "it seems that Aristotle should allow that *aidōs* can be a 'prohairetic' mean as well," that is to say, a virtue, since "knowing when, how, and to what extent to care about the opinion of others will require practical wisdom."[6]

This article addresses these interpretations by exploring the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas,[7] given that in his treat-

an "emotional tendency" or "emotional proneness" that disposes someone to feel a given emotion "at the right times, about the right things, toward the right people, for the right end and in the right way" (cf. *Nic. Ethic.* 1106b17-35).

[5] Kristjánsson, *Virtuous Emotions*, 97. He admits that by advocating that a proper dispositional shame be understood as a full-fledged virtue he departs from the orthodox Aristotelian tradition.

[6] Raymond, "Shame and Virtue in Aristotle," 158-59.

[7] For a fuller treatment on Aquinas's account of shame, see H. Dwi Kristanto, *The Praiseworthy Passion of Shame: An Historical and Philosophical Elucidation of Aquinas's Thought on the Nature and Role of Shame in the Moral Life* (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2019). The book examines shame as a praiseworthy passion: its nature, its role in the moral life, its connection with moral growth, conscience, social rank, gender, and violence. This article focuses more on arguing why shame is, for Aquinas, not a genuine moral virtue and why, in order to be virtuous, the passion of shame needs to be sustained by humility and magnanimity. There have been very few significant treatments of Aquinas's concept of shame, a notable exception being A. Guindon, "La 'crainte honteuse' selon Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue thomiste* 69 (1969): 589-623. Guindon limits himself to a lexicographic analysis of some shame-related words in Aquinas's works. Other articles offer merely a concise and general presentation of Aquinas's views on shame, since they deal with the topic of shame in the context of providing a panoramic account of the history of emotions in the Middle Ages. Generally, they compare Aquinas's idea of shame with those of St. Augustine and Richard of St. Victor. See J. Müller, "Scham und menschlichen Natur bei Augustinus und Thomas von Aquin," in *Zur Kulturgeschichte der Scham*, ed. M. Bauks and M. Meyer (Hamburg: Meiner, 2011), 55-72; S. Knuuttila, "The Emotion of Shame in Medieval Philosophy," *Spazio filosofico* 5 (2012): 243-49; S. Vecchio, "La honte el la faute: La réflexion sur la verecundia dans la littérature théologique des XIIe et XIIIe siècles," in *Shame between Punishment and Penance : The Social Usage of Shame in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times*, ed. B. Sere and J. Wettlaufer (Florence: Sismel-Ed. del Galluzzo, 2013), 105-21;

ment of shame, especially in "De verecundia" (*STh* II-II, q. 144, aa. 1-4), he draws substantially on Aristotle's ideas about shame in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* (2.7.1108a31-36; 4.9.1128b10-35) and the *Rhetoric* (2.6.1383b11-1385a15). I shall argue in section I that since, unlike Aristotle, Aquinas does not conceive of persons with acquired virtues as morally infallible, he does not preclude the experience of (both retrospective and prospective) shame in the virtuous person's moral life. Indeed, in keeping with the Philosopher, Aquinas holds that shame is best understood as a passion of the soul (or an emotion), and yet he also claims, as I shall expound in section II, that shame's concurrence is necessary for the virtue of temperance, for shame is an integral part of this cardinal virtue. Felt in an appropriate degree with respect to a truly disgraceful action (be it one already done or one yet to be done), shame is morally praiseworthy and, as such, can be called a virtue in the loosest sense of the term.[8] Aquinas retains the idea, however, that shame is properly speaking not a moral virtue because it falls short of the perfect notion (*ratio*) of a virtue as a habit that operates from choice (*habitus electivus*) and as a habit that produces good actions (*habitus operativus*). Since, furthermore, the person who experiences shame naturally tends to shrink and to hide from others, to the extent that sometimes shame even "sends the person into despair,"[9] in section III of this paper I shall extend Aquinas's argument by suggesting that, for shame not only to be praiseworthy but also to produce a beneficial outcome in the person, it must be accompanied by the paired virtues of humility and magnanimity. In suggesting this, I go beyond what Aquinas

C. Casagrande and S. Vecchio, "La vergogna tra passione e virtù," in *Passioni dell'anima: Teorie e usi degli affetti nella cultura medievale*, ed. idem (Florence: Sismel-Ed. del Galluzzo, 2015), 263-81. Another article by T. Ryan ("Aquinas on Shame: A Contemporary Interchange," in *Aquinas, Education and the East*, ed. T. B. Mooney and M. Nowacki [Dordrecht: Springer, 2013]) focuses on demonstrating the relevance of Aquinas's ideas of shame for the contemporary practice of moral education. For this purpose, Ryan compares Aquinas's idea of shame as a moral emotion with that of E. Probyn (E. Probyn, *Blush: Faces of Shame* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005]).

[8] See *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 1.

[9] *Super I Cor.*, c. 4, lect. 3.

explicitly says, though the idea is latent in his biblical commentaries.

I. Aquinas on Shame As Fear of Disgrace

Aquinas understands shame (*verecundia*, *erubescentia*, *pudor*, or *confusio*)[10] as one of the species of the passion of fear. Shame is the fear of disgrace (*timor turpitudinis*) and, more precisely, of disgrace that damages one in the opinion of others (*turpitudo laedens opinionem*).[11] Thus, Aquinas follows Aristotle closely in conceiving of shame as essentially fear of disrepute or of dishonor (*timor ingloriationis*). What is at stake in shame is one's reputation; when one feels ashamed, one is afraid that one's worth in the eyes of others is significantly diminished, as when, for example, one becomes an object of ridicule or derision.[12]

The passion of fear, according to Aquinas, is a movement of the sensory appetite away from a future possible evil that is imminent and difficult to avoid. The sensory appetite is the power of the soul that moves animate beings toward or away from any objects apprehended—through sensory perception, imagination, and, in human beings, also through intellective cognition—under the intention of good or evil. While the movement of the sensory appetite constitutes the formal element of a passion, the bodily change that accompanies and is proportional to such a movement makes up the material element of the passion. In fear, the material element consists in a certain contraction in the appetite: "the heat and vital spirits abandon the heart instead of concentrating around it," with the result that one who is afraid becomes pale, trembling, and speechless and is inclined to run away.[13]

[10] For an extended study of these terms, see Kristanto, *Praiseworthy Passion of Shame*, 81-156. Notwithstanding some differences in nuance, all these words share a common feature of denoting the fear of disgrace (*timor de turpi*).

[11] *STh* I-II, q. 41, a. 4.

[12] See *STh* II-II, q. 75, a. 1

[13] *STh* I-II, q. 44, a. 1, ad 1 and ad 2. English translations of quotations from the *Summa theologiae* come from the translation by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Bros., 1948; rev. and repr. by The Aquinas Institute, 2012). However, whereas the revised version of this translation translates *verecundia* as "shamefacedness" (archaic), I prefer to follow the Blackfriars edition (*Summa Theologiae*, vol. 43 [2a2ae, qq. 141-154], trans. Thomas Gilby, O.P. [New

In the case of shame, its formal element is the sensory appetite's movement away from the imagined or recognized disgrace that spoils one's reputation. Shame's material element is a contraction of the appetite of the soul, depicted by Aquinas as follows: "the soul, as though contracted in itself, is free to set the vital spirits and heat in movement, so that they spread to the outward parts of the body: the result being that those who are ashamed blush."[14] In another place, commenting on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he writes, "honor and shame are reckoned among external things, and, therefore, since a man fears the loss of honor by shame, he blushes as the humors and spirits stream back to the surface."[15] No doubt, modern psychology, benefiting from today's neuroscience, can provide a better physiological explanation.[16] Yet Aquinas's most important point here is that because shame, like fear, involves the somatic phenomenon of bodily change, which pertains more to a passion than to a habit, it is evident that shame is not a virtue.[17]

The disgrace that elicits shame may derive from a variety a of sources, ranging from a fault or a sinful action (*culpa*), for which one can be held responsible, to states of affairs, such as a poor family background or physical deformities, for which one need take no responsibility at all.[18] Aquinas even notices that, though shame does not regard virtuous actions *per se*, sometimes one may *accidentally* feel ashamed of doing virtuous actions if the actions look disgraceful to others or "because he is afraid of being marked as presumptuous or hypocritical for doing virtuous deeds."[19] The actions one might consider more disgraceful are not coextensive with the

York: Cambridge University Press, 2006]) and translate *verecundia* as "feeling of shame" or "sense of shame."

[14] Ibid., ad 3.

[15] IV *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 17 (Leonine ed., 47/2:260). The English translation is from *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, vol. 1, trans. C. I. Litzinger, O.P. (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964).

[16] See for example, T. L. Gruenwald et al., "When the Social Self Is Threatened: Shame, Physiology, and Health," *Journal of Personality* 72 (2005): 1191-216. The authors link the occurrence of shame, understood as an emotional response to the acute threat to the "social self," with the increase of proinflammatory cytokine activity, cortisol, heart rate, and blood pressure.

[17] IV *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 17 (Leonine ed., 47/2:260-61).

[18] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 2.

[19] Ibid., ad 2.

more sinful actions; in fact, "sometimes a man is more ashamed of lesser sins [e.g., petty theft, carnal sins], while he glories in those which are most grievous [e.g., robbery, spiritual sins]."[20] This is because ultimately "shame is not fear of the very act of sin, but of the disgrace or ignominy which arises therefrom, and which is due to an extrinsic cause."[21] For Aquinas shame is different from repentance (*poenitentia*) precisely in that repentance directly regards the *sin* itself, whereas shame regards an *effect* of sin, that is, ignominy or dishonor.[22] A sinful action would not *per se* cause one to feel shame, unless such an action entails opprobrium and jeopardizes one's reputation. That said, following Aristotle, Aquinas affirms that one will feel more shame if the disgrace in question results from voluntary defect (*defectus voluntarius*), that is, from one's own fault or from other things of which one is the cause.[23]

Aquinas, this time drawing on John Damascene and Nemesius (attributed by Aquinas to Gregory of Nyssa), states that shame can regard fault or sinful action (*culpa*) in two distinct manners: prospectively and retrospectively.[24] In the first manner, shame, through fear of reproach, prevents one from performing a sinful action. In this case, the disgrace feared lies in an action that is yet to be done.[25] Aquinas, following the two aforementioned authors, calls this forward-looking or prospective shame *erubescentia*. In the second manner, the disgrace feared lies in an action already done or in an action that is in the course of being done.[26] In this case, shame, through fear of reproach, prompts one who has done or is doing a base action to avoid the public gaze. Aquinas names this backward-looking or retrospective shame *verecundia*. Despite this distinction, throughout his writings

[20] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 2, ad 4; q. 66, a. 9, ad 2; q. 116, a. 2, ad 3.

[21] *STh* I-II, q. 42, a. 3, ad 4: "verecundia non est timor de actu ipso peccati, sed de turpitudine vel ignominia quae consequitur ipsum, quae est a causa extrinseca."

[22] IV *Sent*., d. 17, q. 2, a. 1, qcla. 1: "pudor respicit effectum peccati, qui est ingloriatio, quia verecundia secundum philosophum est timor ingloriationis; sed dolor directe ipsum peccati respicit."

[23] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 2, corp. and ad 1. Cf. Aristotle, *Rhet*. 2.6.1384a14.

[24] *STh* I-II, q. 41, a. 4; *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 2; see John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa* 2.15 (*PG* 94:932); Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 21 (*PG* 40:689).

[25] *STh* I-II, q. 41, a. 4: "turpitudo in actu committendo."

[26] Ibid.: "de turpi iam facto"; *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 2: "in turpibus quae agit."

Aquinas often uses *erubescentia* and *verecundia* interchangeably, and he treats both prospective and retrospective shame as one and the same passion characterized by a common feature, namely, the fear of reproach (*timor vituperii*).[27] Both are forms of fear that share the same efficient cause: reproach or opprobrium. Hence, to the extent that both types of shame belong to the category of passion, the distinction in question does not imply any ontological difference, but merely a temporal one: *before* or *after* the disgraceful action.

In contrast to honor, which denotes attestation to one's excellence, especially the excellence that comes from one's virtue, reproach denotes attestation to one's defect, especially the defect consequent upon one's sin. Accordingly, as Aquinas sees it, one feels more shame before those whose attestations are weightier, either because their attestation carries more certitude of truth or because it brings about a more detrimental effect.[28] One feels more shame in front of wise and virtuous persons, not only because their judgment is more truthful but also because one actually desires more to be admired or honored by them. One is also more liable to feel shame before those to whom one is closely connected, insofar as they are better acquainted with one's conduct and one is continually around them.[29] Likewise, because tale-bearers can cause greater harm by defaming one at large, despite perhaps not knowing the details of one's conduct, one feels greater shame before tale-bearers.[30]

Aristotle states in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that shame is not appropriate to every age but only to the young, for they often go wrong through living by their feelings but can be prevented from going wrong by shame. By contrast, shame should no longer characterize older people and virtuous persons, since they should not perform any action which is a source of shame. "If some actions are really disgraceful and others are only thought to be so," Aristotle writes, "that does not matter, since neither should be done, and so the decent

[27] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 2. On this point I concur with the conclusion of Guindon in "La 'crainte honteuse' selon Thomas d' Aquin," 590-96.

[28] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 3.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

person should not feel shame."[31] For Aristotle, in sum, "the decent person will never voluntarily do disgraceful actions"—be it disgraceful according to truth (*kat' alētheian*) or only according to opinion (*kata doxan*).[32] An ancient commentator, Alexander Aphrodisias, criticizes Aristotle's failure to recognize realistically "that we ourselves, [although] we have already reached this age, feel shame [*aidōs*] at many things and frequently."[33] Alexander observes that shame is not alien to older people or to those who live a noble and respected life; in the ultimate analysis, disrepute is not only consequent upon truly disgraceful actions but also may come from misrepresentation.[34]

In general Aquinas endorses Aristotle's stance on shame, including the idea that shame is appropriate and praiseworthy for the young but not for older and virtuous persons.[35] That notwithstanding, in his commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, while agreeing with Aristotle that shame, properly speaking, regards voluntary defects for which reproach is due and that it is inconsistent with virtue, since a virtuous person will not voluntarily perform a base action, he adds a proviso that shame, just like sickness, might involuntarily occur in virtuous persons.[36] Similarly, in the *Summa* he adopts Aristotle's principal line of argument and highlights that the old and the virtuous lack a sense of shame because they apprehend disgrace as impossible to themselves or as easy to avoid.[37] Of course, shame is in the virtuous hypothetically, for "they are so disposed, that if there were anything disgraceful in them they would be ashamed of it."[38] Aquinas, however,

[31] Aristotle, *Nic. Ethic.* 4.9.1128b23-26.

[32] Aristotle, *Nic. Ethic.* 4.9.1128b28-29.

[33] A. Aphrodisias, *Ethical Problems*, Problem 21 (trans. R.W. Sharples [London, 1990], 141.26-27).

[34] Aphrodisias, *Ethical Problems*, Problem 21 (Sharples, trans., 142.5-7).

[35] *Super I Tim*., c. 2, lect. 2; *Super Tit*., c. 2, lect. 1. For the gender dimension of shame, especially shame's relationship with the body and sexuality in women, see Kristanto, *Praiseworthy Passion of Shame*, 344-51. Aquinas believes that shame is a laudable passion recommended particularly for women. See *Super I Cor.* c. 14, lect. 7; and *Super I Tim*., c. 2, lect. 2.

[36] IV *Nic. Ethic*., lect. 17 (Leonine ed., 47/2:261): "Secus autem esset si verecundia esset eorum quae involuntarie possunt accidere, sicut aegritudo involuntarie accidit homini."

[37] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 4.

[38] Ibid. Aquinas refers here to *Nic. Ethic.* 4.9.1128b29-30.

makes this last point stronger by acknowledging explicitly that virtuous persons are not immune to shame when they are slandered or suffer reproach undeservedly.[39] In other words, Aquinas recognizes that acting virtuously is not sufficient for avoiding disrepute, since one's reputation is also partly determined by luck. Despite stating that "the virtuous man despises ignominy and reproach, as being things he does not deserve," Aquinas is willing to admit the fact that "some feelings of shame, like the other passions, may forestall reason."[40]

A passage from his commentary on Psalm 43 provides another textual support for Aquinas's realistic acknowledgment that virtuous persons are not absolutely unsusceptible to shame. Commenting on verse 16 of the psalm, he offers this opinion:

> Shame is, according to the Philosopher, a fear of something disgraceful. Now, there are two kinds of disgrace. One is disgrace according to truth [*turpitudo secundum veritatem*]. This is the disgrace of sin [*turpitudo peccati*], and shame due to this kind of disgrace does not affect virtuous persons, since they do not have in themselves a consciousness of some sin that would provoke the feeling of shame. Instead, such a shame affects the wicked. . . . Second is disgrace according to opinion [*turpitudo secundum aestimationem*]. This is the disgrace that one suffers externally due to humiliation and opprobrium. And this kind of disgrace also affects perfect men [*in perfectis viris*].[41]

Hence, although perfect or virtuous persons are not affected by shame due to disgrace according to truth (i.e., disgrace consequent upon a sinful action), in Aquinas's view they are still susceptible to shame due to disgrace according to opinion (i.e., disgrace following some undeserved reproach or humiliation). In brief, just as sickness may undesirably afflict someone, shame due to undeserved reproach may accidentally strike a virtuous person.

More importantly, Aquinas believes that the person with acquired moral virtues is not morally infallible. Only God is perfect in the absolute sense (*simpliciter*). A virtuous man, as a wayfarer on earth, can be perfect only in a restricted sense

[39] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 4, obj. 4.

[40] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 4, ad 3: "Infamationes et opprobria virtuosus, ut dictum est, contemnit, quasi ea quibus ipse non est dignus. . . . Est tamen aliquis motus verecundiae praeveniens rationem, sicut et ceterarum passionum."

[41] *In Ps.* 43, no. 8.

(*secundum quid*).[42] Indeed, acquired virtuous habits incline a person to acting rightly, insofar as they give him a right judgment about the end. The inclination of the moral virtues, however, is not without choice.[43] A virtuous habit does not produce virtuous actions automatically, because "it is *not* necessary to use a habit, since it is subject to the will of the person who has that habit."[44] Aquinas stresses that a habit is "something we use when we will,"[45] and, hence, "one who has a habit may fail to use it or may act contrary to it."[46] In his revelation-informed anthropology, postlapsarian human nature is deeply marked by *fomes peccati*, that is, the corruption of the sensory appetite, which inclines the sensory appetite to what is contrary to reason and "which is never completely destroyed in this life."[47] Consequently, "those with a virtuous habit sometimes act against the inclination of their own habit, because something appears otherwise to them according to some standard, for instance, through passion or some allurement."[48] Thus, compared to Aristotle, Aquinas is more realistic in stating that "acquired virtue does cause us to avoid sin—not in every case, but for the most part."[49] If persons with acquired virtuous habits are morally fallible, inasmuch as they may sometimes backslide and commit (or desire to commit) a sinful action they know they ought not to, then it is legitimate to assume that at times they may experience shame due not only to the disgrace that is according to opinion but also to the disgrace that is according to truth.[50]

[42] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 1, ad 4; cf. *De Verit.*, q. 24, a. 9, ad 4.

[43] *STh* I-II, q. 58, a. 4, ad 1: "Sed inclinatio virtutis moralis est cum electione".

[44] *STh* I-II, q. 78, a. 2; see also q. 71, a. 4: "habitus in anima non ex necessitate producit suam operationem, sed homo utitur eo cum voluerit."

[45] *STh* I-II, q. 78, a. 2: "habitus definitur esse quo quis utitur cum voluerit"; see *De Virtut.*, a. 1.

[46] *STh* I-II, q. 52, a. 3.

[47] *STh* I-II, q. 74, a. 3, ad 2; *STh* III q. 27, a. 3.

[48] *De Caritate*, a. 12. The English translation is that of J. Hause and C. E. Murphy, *Disputed Questions on Virtue* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 2010).

[49] *De Virtut.*, a. 9, ad 5; Cf. a. 10, ad 14.

[50] In his commentary to *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 1, Cardinal Cajetan alludes to this possibility.

II. Shame: Not a Virtue Proper but an Integral Part of Temperance[51]

To say that shame is in the virtuous person, however, does not amount to affirming that shame is a virtue. For Aquinas, shame is in the virtuous person as an integral part of temperance, but not as a species of virtue or as a secondary virtue annexed to temperance. Before considering this point, let us first look at several reasons why Aquinas, similar to Aristotle, refuses to grant to shame the status of a full-fledged virtue.

A) Why Shame Is Not a Virtue Proper

In the first place, as stated earlier, for Aquinas, as for Aristotle, shame is more a passion than a habit (*habitus*), since it involves bodily change. There is an ontological difference between a passion and a habit. A passion belongs to the metaphysical category of movement (*motus*), whereas a habit belongs to the category of quality (*qualitas*). A passion is a transitory movement of the sensory appetite of those composite beings made of soul and body, in response to their evaluative apprehension of an object. A passion is thus a passivity, something that nonhuman and human animals occasionally suffer (*pati*). By contrast, a habit, to which genus belong the moral virtues, is a quality long-lasting or hard to change. It is a stable disposition whereby the possessor is well- or ill-disposed to feel and to act in a certain way. A habit is not a passivity but a principle of action. Aquinas says, "a moral virtue is not a movement, but rather a principle of the movement of the appetite, being a kind of habit."[52]

In the second place, but in relation to the first, shame is not a virtue because it is not an *elective* habit. Some critics of the Aristotelian account of shame have objected that, while the first argument above applies well to retrospective shame or to the occurrent *feeling of shame*, it does not seem to apply

[51] For a fuller treatment on Aquinas's idea of shame as an integral part of temperance, see Kristanto, *Praiseworthy Passion of Shame*, 235-57. Several arguments why shame is, for Aquinas, not a moral virtue can also be found scattered in different parts of the book (pp. 85-85, 88, 188-214, 247). Here I attempt to bring those arguments together in a more concise and systematic way.

[52] *STh* I-II, q. 59, a. 1.

to prospective shame or to what they call the "emotional disposition" of the *sense of shame*, because this latter implies that its possessor is disposed to feel shame in an appropriate way.[53] Aquinas himself never really speaks of shame as a disposition. The notion of disposition in his understanding, moreover, is different from that of habit. Habit is a perfect quality, which is not easily lost, whereas disposition is an imperfect quality, and can be easily lost. He says metaphorically, "a disposition becomes a habit, just as a boy becomes a man."[54] Even if it is granted that a sense of shame implies some disposition, Aquinas would argue that it still lacks another important requisite to count as a full-fledged virtue: it does not operate from deliberate choice. He admits that an appropriately felt shame observes the rational mean and thus fulfills one important requisite included in the definition of virtue. Yet he further argues that "observing the mean is not sufficient for the notion of virtue, but it is requisite, in addition to this, that it be an elective habit, that is to say, operating from choice [*ex electione operans*]."[55] For Aquinas, the arousal of shame is impulsive; it does not *directly* proceed from judgment of reason and choice: "shame's movement does not result from choice but from an impulse of passion."[56] Shame is not something one typically feels at will or by design; it occurs instantaneously, without one's anticipatory consent.

We recall that a moral virtue is a habit that from its very nature is related to the will, inasmuch as "a habit is that which one uses when one wills."[57] The movement of shame, by contrast, may occur against one's will, even when one knows well that one need not feel it. Aquinas gives an example of a religious mendicant who feels shame when he must go begging under the vow of poverty.[58] Though the mendicant knows that he is actually doing a virtuous action (i.e., begging because of a spiritual motive) and desires not to feel shame, nonetheless, since in public opinion begging is deemed

[53] See Kristjánsson, *Virtuous Emotions*, 96-97; Raymond, "Shame and Virtue in Aristotle," 115.

[54] *STh* I-II, q. 49, a. 2.

[55] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 1, ad 1.

[56] Ibid.

[57] *STh* I-II, q. 50, a. 5.

[58] *Contra Impug.*, p. 2, c. 6, ad 22.

disgraceful, he cannot but naturally feel ashamed. In this context, the feeling of shame is inappropriate and needs subsequently to be regulated by right reason in order not to hamper one's noble practice of religious life. Shame is clearly more a passion than a virtue, since its movement begins in the appetite and then needs to be regulated to conform to reason, whereas the movement of a virtue begins in the reason and ends in the appetite, inasmuch the latter is moved by reason.[59] Indeed, shame can observe the rational mean, but Aquinas stresses that "virtue is a mean between passions, not by reason of its essence, but on account of its effect; because, to wit, it establishes the mean between passions."[60] Virtue is not equivalent to and the same as the mean; rather, virtue is that which determines the mean.

Undeniably the arousal of a praiseworthy shame, which is felt about the right things, at the right times, and in the right manner, indicates that a person has a good will, since, for Aquinas, one is liable to shame only if one has loved what is morally good and beautiful (*honestum*) and detested what is morally evil and ugly (*turpe*).[61] Nevertheless, this praiseworthy shame, according to Aquinas, participates in reason and voluntariness only *indirectly*, that is, through a kind of overflow (*per quandam redundantiam*).[62] He explains that the disgrace of sin (i.e., one's social and moral decline) cannot be apprehended merely by the senses, but is apprehended necessarily by the intellect.[63] Following the intellective apprehension, the will or the superior appetite moves to detest the disgrace of sin, and, as the motion of the will becomes adequately intense, it overflows to the lower appetite or the sensitive appetite, moving the latter to fear of such a disgrace, that is, shame.[64] Hence, inasmuch as, through the mechanism of overflow, shame flows not directly but only indirectly from a deliberate choice, it cannot be regarded as an *elective* habit but is better understood as a passion.

[59] *STh* I-II, q. 59, a. 1.

[60] Ibid., ad 1.

[61] See IV *Sent*., d. 19, q. 2, a. 1, ad 5; *De Verit*., q. 26, a. 6, ad 16.

[62] *De Verit*., q. 26, a. 3, obj. 13 and ad 13.

[63] In a similar way, but in a converse sense, honor as respect paid by others in recognition of one's excellence is an external good that can be apprehended not by the senses, but by the mind. See *STh* I-II, q. 60, a. 5.

[64] *De Verit*., q. 26, a. 6.

In the third place, shame's only indirect participation in reason and voluntariness means that it is not a reliable guide, in the sense that it does not always lead to good action. It is true that a prospective sense of shame might inhibit one from committing a sinful action. Yet, at times it might also hamper one from confessing one's sins[65] or from performing a noble or virtuous action if the action happens to appear disgraceful to others, as is shown clearly by the example of the religious mendicant above.[66] In this sense, shame falls short of an operative habit. For Aquinas, "it is essential for human virtue to be an operative habit [*habitus operativus*]," [67] meaning that it is "a good habit, productive of good works."[68]

Following Aristotle, Aquinas holds that virtue is a perfection of a power "which makes its possessor good, and his work likewise good."[69] Now, "since shame is the fear of something base, namely, that which is disgraceful," according to Aquinas, "shame [be it prospective or retrospective] is inconsistent with perfection."[70] With regard to prospective shame, Aquinas writes, "one who is perfect as to a virtuous habit does not apprehend that which would be disgraceful and base to do [*exprobrabile et turpe ad faciendum*], as being possible and arduous, that is to say, difficult for him to avoid."[71] In other words, one who is perfect in terms of a virtuous habit would not entertain any thought of performing something base, such that he would hardly need a prospective shame to restrain himself from base action. With regard to retrospective shame, Aquinas says, "nor does one who is perfect as to a virtuous habit actually do any base action [*actu facit aliquid turpe*], so as to be in fear of disgrace."[72] To put it another way, one who has committed a base action and feels shame about it must not have reached a perfection in his virtuous habit. Thus, falling short of the perfection of virtue,

[65] See *Contra Impug.*, p. 2, c. 3 (Leonine ed., 41A:1970)

[66] See *STh* III, q. 72, a. 9. Due to shame, one might recoil from confessing the name of Christ.

[67] *STh* I-II, q. 55, a. 2.

[68] *STh* I-II, q. 55, a. 3.

[69] Aristotle, *Nic. Ethic.* 2.6.1106a16-17.

[70] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 1.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

shame cannot be considered a virtue in the proper sense of the term.

An objection may arise from this third argument, as Aquinas himself notices while drawing a comparison between shame and repentance in the *Tertia pars* (*STh* III, q. 85, a. 1). Similar to shame, repentance, too, is about base actions or sins. Thus, repentance, which consists in sorrow for past sins, seems to imply some imperfection as well. One may ask why repentance can be considered a virtue in the proper sense, whereas shame cannot be considered so. Responding to this objection, Aquinas highlights that repentance presupposes a moderated sorrow for past sins *with the intention* of removing them.[73] He writes,

> Virtue, in fact, includes a right choice on the part of the will. This, however, applies to repentance rather than to shame, because shame regards the disgraceful deed as present, whereas repentance regards the disgraceful deed as past. Now it is contrary to the perfection of virtue that one should have a disgraceful deed actually present, of which one ought to be ashamed; whereas it is not contrary to the perfection of virtue that one should have previously committed disgraceful deeds, of which it behooves one to repent, since one from being wicked becomes virtuous.[74]

Hence, repentance is not inconsistent with the perfection of virtue, because it regards disgraceful action as past, insofar as by virtue of repentance the previously wicked person has now attained perfection or has become virtuous. In repentance, one not only feels sorrow for past sin, but at the same time also willingly aims at the destruction of that sin. Hating the past sin leads one to repentance. In contrast, shame is inconsistent with perfection, since shame is a reaction to a disgraceful deed as present, meaning that at present the person still somehow desires the past sin to the extent that he has not yet reached a perfect disposition.[75]

Unlike repentance, which disposes one to amend what one has committed against others and against God,[76] shame does

[73] *STh* III, q. 85, a. 1: "poenitens assumit moderatum dolorem de peccati praeteritis, cum intentione removendi ea"; cf. q. 85, a. 3.

[74] *STh* III, q. 85, a. 1, ad 2.

[75] I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer who has helped to clarify Aquinas's point in this passage.

[76] Aquinas suggests that, insofar as it involves merely sorrowing physically for evil done (e.g., with tears), repentance can be considered as only a passion; yet insofar as

not always dispose one to perform good works. Aquinas admits that, due to shame, one may recoil from sinning and may thus follow the morally right path,[77] yet in various places he also notes that shame may drive one to cover up one's sins.[78] He observes, "The one who feels shame does not dare to speak nor to appear before other men."[79] The ashamed person tends to lower his eyes and does not dare to compare himself with others.[80] Out of a sense of shame one may also fail to follow one's right judgment and may fall instead into a superficial conformity so as not to offend others. This latter case is exemplified, according to Aquinas, by the reaction of the Twelve upon hearing Jesus' teaching that his flesh is the Bread of Life (John 6:51): they could have, out of a sense of shame, kept silent about any objections they had to Jesus' teaching.[81] Likewise, Aquinas notes that "those who are born of lower class are ashamed to recognize their siblings when they are promoted to higher social position."[82] Shame, therefore, cannot be a virtue, since it does not always incline one to produce good works and, as such, it lacks the perfection that should characterize a virtuous habit. In order to be productive of good works, as I will argue in the last section, shame needs to be accompanied by humility and magnanimity.

In the fourth place, a moral virtue (e.g., courage) is acquired through habituation, that is, by repeatedly doing good actions (e.g., courageous actions). In general, the experience of shame is painful, to such an extent that one usually wants to avoid repeating it. As noted above, shame is felt not for only for one's voluntary action but also for a wide variety of reasons, including a state of affairs that does not necessarily have a moral import. Being repeatedly shamed by

it entails the intention of amending, repentance must involve choice and thus can be considered as a virtue. *STh* III, q. 85, a. 4: "We can speak of repentance in two ways: first, insofar as it is a passion, and thus, since it is a kind of sorrow, it is in the concupiscible part as its subject; second, insofar as it is a virtue. . . . Repentance, insofar as it is a virtue, is subjected to the will, *and its proper act is the purpose of amending* what was committed against God" (emphasis added).

[77] IV *Sent*., d. 19, q. 2, a. 1.

[78] See IV *Sent*., d. 19, q. 2, a. 3, qcla. 3, exp.; *Contra Impug*., p. 2, c. 3.

[79] *Super Isaiam*, c. 47 (Leonine ed., 28:196).

[80] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 2, ad 1.

[81] *Super Ioan*., c. 6, lect. 8.

[82] *Super Hebr*., c. 2, lect. 3.

another for one's bodily defect, for instance, rather than producing a good outcome in the person, will very likely produce what psychologists call "toxic shame" that destroys one's personal well-being.[83] Indeed, shame experienced as a result of one's evil action—for example, shame a husband feels for having been unfaithful to his faithful wife—might prompt one to repent and not to repeat such a sinful and shameful action. In this case shame produces a good outcome and can thus be called "good shame" inasmuch as it helps one to control one's depraved lust and to moderate one's behavior. The experience of good shame such as this, if repeated in various circumstances, according to Aquinas, will not produce an "acquired virtue of shame"—or, to use Cajetan's terminology, *virtus verecundandi*[84]—but it will produce "an acquired virtue whereby one avoids what is shameful."[85] Cajetan rightly points out that the acquired virtue meant by Aquinas here is temperance: being frequently ashamed will not produce a disposition to feel shame (*dispositionem ad verecundandum*) but will generate the virtue of temperance.[86] "That notwithstanding," Aquinas adds, "as a consequence of this acquired virtue [i.e., temperance], one would be more ashamed, if confronted with shame-inducing matter."[87] This means that persons with the acquired virtue of temperance will not cease to be sensitive to shame, in the sense that "they are so disposed that, if there were anything disgraceful in them they would be ashamed of it."[88] Indeed, though a sense of shame is not a virtue, it constitutes an integral part of the virtue of temperance, to which topic we now turn.

[83] See J. Bradshaw, *Healing the Shame That Binds You* (Florida: Health Communications, Inc., 2005), 21.

[84] Cajetan, *In STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 1.

[85] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 1, ad 5: "ex multoties verecundari causatur habitus virtutis acquisitae per quam aliquis turpia vitet."

[86] Cajetan, *In ST*, II-II, q. 144, a. 1: "ex operibus verecundiae non verecundiae virtus, sed temperantiae virtus fit."

[87] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 1, ad 5: "Sed ex illo habitu virtutis acquisitae [i.e., temperantia] sic se habet aliquis quod magis verecundaretur si materia verecundiae adesset."

[88] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 4.

B) Shame as an Integral Part of Temperance

Acquired temperance is a cardinal virtue that enables a person to control properly or to moderate his concupiscible appetite in general and his desire for the bodily pleasures regarding food, drink, and sex—the "pleasures of touch"—in particular. Temperance directs and orders one's pursuit and enjoyment of bodily pleasures so that these latter become well-ordered, in the sense of becoming consonant with the good of reason. The desires for food, drink, and sex are common to human and nonhuman animals. Temperance, however, renders human beings capable of living such bodily desires in a distinctively human way, that is, in accordance with their dignity as rational beings. This means that a temperate man desires food and drink of a reasonable quantity and quality—that is, necessary for the preservation of his well-being, and becoming to his given circumstances. He also desires to have sexual relations only with his wife and only on appropriate occasions. His well-ordered bodily desires and pleasures reflect the dignity of rational animality. In temperance, for Aquinas, the beauty and honorability (*honestas*) proper to men as rational animals shine more brightly.

The vice of intemperance, by contrast, denotes a bad habit of indulging the desire for bodily pleasures in an excessive or unproportioned way, that is, more than as is necessary and becoming. Consequently, whereas beauty and honorability are attributes most appropriate for temperance, disgrace and shamefulness are attributes most appropriate for intemperance. This is, according to Aquinas, for two reasons. First, intemperance is "most repugnant to human excellence, since it is about pleasures common to us and the lower animals."[89] Second, intemperance is "most repugnant to man's clarity or beauty, inasmuch as the pleasures which are the matter of intemperance dim the light of reason from which all the splendor and beauty of virtue arises; wherefore these pleasures are described as being most slavish."[90] Thus, whereas temperance, which consists in a certain moderate and fitting proportion, "more than any other virtue lays claim to

[89] *STh* II-II, q. 142, a. 4.
[90] Ibid. (translation slightly modified)

a certain comeliness [*decorum*], the vices of intemperance excel others in disgrace [*turpitudinem*]."[91]

Shame (*verecundia*) together with a sense of honor (*honestas*) constitute, according to Aquinas, the integral parts of temperance. An integral part of a cardinal virtue is distinguished from its subjective parts (i.e., various species of virtues, distinct from one another according to their specific objects but not from the cardinal virtue which is present in each species according to its entire essence and operative power) and from its potential parts (i.e., other virtues connected with the cardinal virtue but that are directed to secondary acts or matters, without having the whole power of the principal virtue). The integral parts of a virtue are the conditions whose concurrence is necessary for the perfect act of the virtue: "integral parts are those by which the perfection of the whole is integrated."[92] It should be underlined, however, that "properly speaking, these integral parts are themselves *not virtues*, but only conditions for the virtue that integrates them."[93] Integral parts, according to Aquinas, belong to the constitution of the whole, as wall, roof, and foundation are constitutive parts of the whole building of a house. Yet, he says, "the integral whole is not present in every single part, neither according to its essence nor according to its power; as the whole [essence of the] house is not in its walls, so the whole virtue is not [in its parts]; and consequently, the integral whole is in no way predicated of its parts."[94] Hence, "house" is not predicated of a wall, since the essence of a house is not contained in a wall.

Shame and a sense of honor are components of the cardinal virtue of temperance, in the sense that the concurrence of both is necessary for the realization of temperance, just as the presence of wall, roof, and foundation is necessary for the construction of a house. Aquinas says that through shame "one recoils from the disgrace that is contrary to temperance," while through a sense of honor "one loves the beauty of temperance."[95] On the one hand, the sense of honor

[91] *STh* II-II, q. 143, a. 1.
[92] *STh* III, q. 90, a. 3, s.c.
[93] III *Sent*., d. 33, q. 3, a. 1, qcla. 1.
[94] Ibid., ad 1.
[95] *STh* II-II, q. 143, a. 1.

as the affection for being worthy of honor in a more positive fashion inspires one to deal with one's desire for food, drink, and sex in a decent or becoming manner. On the other hand, shame as fear of disgrace or dishonor in a more negative fashion prompts one to distance oneself from indulging one's desire for the pleasures of touch in an indecent or unbecoming manner. A person with a sense of honor has a vivid consciousness of his dignity as a rational being and aspires to conduct himself in a way that corresponds to his dignity, namely, in a way that is "well-proportioned to the spiritual clarity of reason."[96] A person with a sense of shame remains vigilant not to overstep the boundary of what is decent or becoming with regard to his pursuit and enjoyment of bodily pleasures, in order not to fall into disgrace or dishonor. In this respect, Aquinas contends that "a sense of shame fosters a sense of honor by removing that which is contrary to the latter, but not so as to attain the perfection of the sense of honor."[97]

Thus, by inspiring one with the horror of whatever is disgraceful, a prospective sense of shame is helpful in motivating one to temper one's concupiscible appetite, especially the desire for the pleasure of touch. Constituting an integral part of temperance, though, does not mean that shame enters into the essence of temperance, for temperance is more than a mere sense of shame. Drawing on St. Ambrose, Aquinas states that, filling one with the fear of dishonorableness, "shame lays the first foundation of temperance."[98] A sense of shame, which arises as an impulse of feeling rather than as an act of freedom, is only a prelude to temperance: "shame is a part of temperance, not as though it entered into its essence, but as disposing to it."[99] A temperate person will still need to make a deliberate choice as to whether following the impulse of his sense of shame is right or not, for such an impulse at times can be misleading. As the example of the religious mendicant above indicates, it can happen that an action one has judged to be right (or

[96] *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2.

[97] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 1, ad 3.

[98] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 4, ad 4. Aquinas refers to Ambrose's *De officiis ministrorum* 1.211.

[99] Ibid.

temperate, just, courageous, etc.) sometimes appears disgraceful to others, to such an extent that in order to be able to perform the action, one needs first to overcome the assault of the natural feeling of shame. Shame alone, being an impulsive passion, will not produce good works unless it is accompanied by the necessary virtues.

III. Shame, Humility, and Magnanimity

Like any other passion, shame can be good or bad depending on whether it regards the right object, whether it is felt in the right ways, and whether it ultimately leads to good acts. Aquinas, often quoting Sirach 4:21, says that there is shame that leads to glory and grace, but that there also is shame that leads to sin.[100] Shame leads to sin when it drives one to hide rather than either to confess one's fault or to confront its evil consequences, if any, for others. Shame is likewise bad when it leads one to servile conformity for the sake of appeasing certain others, for this means that shame leads one into the sins of dissimulation and hypocrisy, which are opposed to the virtue of truthfulness whereby one presents oneself to be what one is. Shame is not laudable when it sends one into despair or into violent rage. Contrariwise, shame is good when it leads one in a prospective manner to shun sinful actions, or when in a retrospective manner it leads one to repentance. Feeling ashamed for the sin done, according to Aquinas, can become the beginning of a life reform (*principium emendationis vitae*).[101]

Although opprobrium or reproach that triggers shame is "properly due to sin alone," Aquinas notes, "nevertheless, at least in human opinion, it regards any kind of defect."[102] In shame one's defect or shortcoming is revealed both to oneself and to others, which revelation can diminish both one's self-respect and the respect of others. Consequently, the ashamed person typically has no courage to appear and to speak before others; he tends to cast down his eyes as though not daring to

[100] See *In Ps* 24, n. 3; *In Ps* 34, n. 17; *In Ps* 39, n. 7; *In Matt*., c. 18, lect. 2; *Super I Cor*., c. 4, lect. 3.

[101] *In Ps*. 6, n. 7.

[102] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 2, ad 2.

compare himself with others. Contemporary psychologists describe the ashamed person as "wishing to sink through the floor and hide from the penetrating gaze of the other."[103] Shame involves feeling inferior to what one expects from oneself and to what others expect. Insofar as one desires to be loved as much as one desires to be honored,[104] shame, as the fear of dishonor, also involves the fear of becoming unworthy of others' love. A disgraceful action might cost one exclusion from or rejection by relevant others. It is understandable, therefore, that shame can lead one not only into the concealment of one's defect but also, and even worse, into despair.

Because for Aquinas shame, properly speaking, is only a passion, nowhere in his works does he speak about the gift or the infused version of shame. By contrast, repentance can be twofold: (1) a passion, insofar as it occurs in the sensitive appetite and involves bodily alteration; (2) a virtue, insofar as it occurs in the rational appetite and involves right choice on the part of the will. [105] Because repentance can be a genuine virtue, Aquinas speaks not only about the habit of repentance, but also about repentance as infused by God.[106] By means of infused repentance God turns the heart of the sinning person to himself. Whereas various acquired virtues are governed by prudence (*prudentia*) in the human pursuit of temporal good, various infused virtues are governed by divine friendship or divine love (*caritas*) in the human pursuit of supernatural good, namely, beatific union with God.[107] As said above, the passion of shame involves the fear of rejection by relevant others because one's shameful defect makes one feel unworthy of others' love. Shame can become, as E. Stump points out, "a potent source of distance between the [a]shamed person and the others, and it can also introduce

[103] E. J. Anthony, "Shame, Guilt, and the Feminine Self in Psychoanalysis," in *Object and Self: A Developmental Approach*, ed. S. Tuttman et al. (New York: International University Press, 1981), 203.

[104] *STh* II-II, q. 27, a. 1, ad 2; Cf. Aristotle, *Nic. Ethic.* 8.8.1159a12-13.

[105] *STh* III, q. 85, a. 1.

[106] *STh* III, q. 85, a. 5.

[107] C. Vogler, "Turning to Aquinas on Virtue," in *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue*, ed. N. E. Snow (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 233.

distance between [a]shamed person and God."[108] Thinking of himself as defective or ugly, the ashamed person can experience self-loathing, which is an inner division that can prevent an interpersonal union between the ashamed person and God. In this way, shame is not compatible with infused virtue, since the passion of shame arises only in the context of a betrayal of love and is thus opposed to the interpersonal virtue of *caritas* (divine friendship).[109]

Aquinas does not specifically elaborate on how shame can bring about positive outcomes in the person who experiences it, yet he provides some clues in his commentaries on the Gospels. For instance, commenting on the way Jesus died, he writes, "It was specially in keeping with His humility, that, as He chose the most disgraceful manner of death [*turpissimum genus mortis*], so likewise it was part of His humility that He did not refuse to suffer shame [*confusionem*] in so celebrated a place [Jerusalem]."[110] As Aquinas sees it, it is in virtue of humility that Jesus was able to bear shame and to go through the crucifixion for the sake of attaining a more valuable end (i.e., the salvation of humankind). Similarly, commenting in the *Catena aurea in Marcum* on the scene of a leper who kneels down and implores Jesus to heal him (Mark 1:40-45), Aquinas cites St. Bede, who says that the leper's bodily gestures manifest the latter's humility and shame, "for everyone should feel ashamed of the stains of his life."[111] The leper must be ashamed of his physical defect, and it is also reasonable to imagine that he naturally desires to hide his disgraceful stain from others. Yet, thanks to the leper's humility, Bede writes, "such a feeling of shame [*verecundia*] did not stifle confession: he showed his wound and begged for healing."[112] Again, it is by virtue of humility that the passion of shame does not cripple the person or even send

[108] E. Stump, "Guilt, Shame, and Satisfaction," in idem, *Atonement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 52.

[109] A. Pinsent, review of R. Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions*, in the *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/thomas-aquinas-on-the-passions).

[110] *STh* III, q. 46, a. 10.

[111] *In Catena aurea in Marcum* c. 1, lect. 13: "In faciem procidit, quod humilitatis est et pudoris, ut unusquisque de vitae suae maculis erubescat."

[112] Ibid.: "sed confessionem verecundia non repressit: ostendit vulnus, et remedium postulavit."

him into despair; instead, humility enables the person to react positively in spite of his disgraceful defect.

In Aquinas's account, humility is a moral virtue which deals with the movement of the appetite toward great things, so that it does not aim at them against right reason. Humility, in other words, regulates the passion of hope, "to temper and restrain the mind, lest it tend to high things immoderately."[113] In order not to let himself be carried away by craving things above him, a humble person must "know his disproportion to that which surpasses his capacity."[114] He needs to have a realistic or truthful assessment of his ability and not to think of himself as greater than he actually is. For Aquinas, "knowledge of one's own defect belongs to humility, as a rule guiding the appetite."[115] A humble person is disposed to acknowledge his own shortcomings. In the context of Aquinas's Christian commitments, a humble person is well aware of his place in the order of creation: that is, that he is dependent on God and on other human beings. Having a true self-esteem, he knows his strengths and has confidence in them, but he does not trust in them in an excessive way, since, while aiming at excellence, he puts his confidence in God's help.[116] He is willing to see and to recognize that those around him might have some good or excellence that he does not, or that he has some evil or deficiency which they do not, and so he is disposed to subject himself to others.[117] For Aquinas, humility chiefly consists in man's subjection to God; thus, when a humble person subjects himself to others he does so for God's sake, recognizing God's gifts in them.[118]

Shame can demoralize or even paralyze a person because it focuses his attention on defects that seem certain to diminish his worth in the opinion of relevant others. Shame is marked by some self-centeredness; due to shame, one can turn to navel-gazing and the avoidance of others. If humility enables one to experience shame in a positive manner, it is because by virtue of humility one embraces some other-centeredness, which allows one to see the defect in a much

[113] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 1.
[114] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 2.
[115] Ibid.
[116] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 2, ad 3.
[117] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 3.
[118] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 1, ad 5; q. 161, a. 2, ad 3; and q. 161, a. 3, ad 1.

larger perspective. A humble person sees himself as a creature of God: though he may seek to become perfect through living virtuously, "his perfection is found wanting in comparison to God."[119] He knows that he is always in need of God's assistance, for humility "makes man submissive and ever open to the influx of divine grace."[120] Humility allows the ashamed person to acknowledge his creaturely limitations and to see the prospect of redemption beyond his defective self. He does not despise the opinion of others about himself, yet he does not let himself be captive to their judgment either, since he does not measure his self-worth entirely in terms of public opinion but also in terms of his dependence on God. If the humble leper mentioned in the example above dared to present himself and to beg for a remedy for his shameful defect, presumably it is because he took God as the last and truest judge of his self-worth.

For Aquinas, however, humility is complemented by magnanimity. While humility keeps one from desiring great things that surpass one's capacity or just deserts, magnanimity reminds one of one's valuable capacity and urges one to deem oneself worthy of great things. Whereas humility enables the ashamed person to accept his defect in a realistic way, magnanimity strengthens his spirit against despair and impels him to go beyond his shameful defect by attempting to achieve excellence in accordance with right reason.[121] A magnanimous man does not fail in hope in the face of the arduous task of transforming his defect into excellence. By contrast, in a pusillanimous person who has a low opinion of himself, who ignores his own worth and capacities, and who shrinks from attempting to do great things due to excessive fear of failure,[122] shame is very unlikely to produce a positive

[119] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 1, ad 4.

[120] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 5.

[121] In arguing that, in addition to humility, shame needs the presence of magnanimity in order to produce a good outcome, I revise my argument in my above-mentioned book. The book refers to confidence (*fiducia*) rather than magnanimity. In fact, for Aquinas "confidence belongs to magnanimity." A magnanimous man has both confidence in others that can be of service to him and confidence in himself that he has enough abilities to obtain certain good. As a certain mode of hope, that is, hope strengthened by good opinion about others and about himself, confidence itself is not a virtue but a condition for the virtue of magnanimity (*ST* II-II, q. 129, a. 6).

[122] *STh* II-II, q. 133, a. 2.

outcome; instead, it will only dissuade him from attempting to amend his defect and to become a better sort of person.

As some scholars have noted,[123] Aquinas's account of magnanimity, rooted in a Christian anthropology, differs from that of Aristotle. Aquinas agrees with Aristotle that a magnanimous man "strives to do what is deserving of honor, yet not so as to think much of the honor accorded by man."[124] If a magnanimous man desires and attempts to perform great acts of virtue, he does them not because he craves recognition from others or glory, but because he considers them as appropriate expressions of the excellence that he has. More than just seeking honor qua public recognition, a magnanimous man strives, above all, to be worthy of honor by performing great acts of virtue, inasmuch as honor is the attestation to virtue. Hence, "the magnanimous man cares more for truth than for opinion. . . . He will not depart from what he ought to do according to virtue only because he is preoccupied with what others think."[125] Notwithstanding all this, Aristotle's magnanimous man still measures his worth or greatness in terms of his superiority vis-à-vis others. He exalts self-sufficiency and dislikes being indebted to others, for this would imply shameful deficiency, dependency, and inferiority. Aristotle writes, "He is the sort of person who does good but is ashamed when he receives it; for doing good is proper to the superior person, but receiving it is proper of the inferior. . . . The recipient is inferior to the giver, and the magnanimous man wishes to be superior" (*Nic. Ethic.* 4.3.1124b9-13).

By Aquinas's standards, Aristotle's magnanimous man is presumptuous, on account of his pretentious self-sufficiency, that is, his independence from both divine and human assistance. Aquinas's magnanimous man is shaped by humility and, thus, rather than feeling ashamed of being a debtor to another's favor, he feels grateful for it. "Magnanimity makes a man deem himself worthy of great things in consideration

[123] See Mary M. Keys, "Aquinas and the Challenge of Aristotelian Magnanimity," *History of Political Thought* 24 (2003): 37-65; R. Konyndyk DeYoung, "Aquinas's Virtues of Acknowledged Dependence: A New Measure of Greatness," *Faith and Philosophy* 21 (2004): 214-27.

[124] *STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 1, ad 3; Cf. Aristotle, *Nic. Ethic.* 4.3.1123b22-25.

[125] IV *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 10 (Leonine ed., 47/2:153-56).

of the gifts he holds from God."[126] In addition to gratitude for and confidence in God's help, a magnanimous man also exhibits gratitude for and confidence in others' assistance: "Insofar as he needs others, it belongs to the magnanimous man to have confidence in others, for it is also a point of excellence in a man that he should have at hand those who are able to be of service to him."[127] He recognizes his potential for performing great acts of virtue as a gift from God, and at the same time he accepts with a great heart the fact of his lack of perfection: "There is in man something great which he possesses through the gift of God and something defective which accrues to him through the weakness of nature."[128] Thus, in Aquinas's account, humility restrains the mind of Aristotle's magnanimous man from falling into the presumption that is due to excessive self-confidence.

Acknowledging his dependence on God and on others, Aquinas's magnanimous man is not ashamed to ask for help and to receive a favor from another, when that is necessary. If the leper of Mark 1:40-45 was able not only to accept his physical defect but also to appear in public in a hopeful attempt to find a remedy, that is because he was not only humble but was simultaneously also magnanimous. Likewise, if the crucified Jesus was able to bear the most shameful manner of death and to face the contemptuous gaze of the hostile onlookers without falling into despair and failing in hope for his bodily resurrection and glorification,[129] that must

[126] *STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 3, ad 4.

[127] *STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 6, ad 1.

[128] *STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 3, ad 4.

[129] In Aquinas's account humility-informed magnanimity, in some respects, can coincide with the theological virtue of hope. Both humility-informed magnanimity and the theological virtue of hope encourage and strengthen the mind of a believer for a strenuous task of attaining a possible but difficult good in the awareness of God's unfailing assistance. Yet they also differ in some respects. First, while as a moral virtue subordinate to courage magnanimity resides in the irascible part of the soul, the theological virtue of hope belongs to the will or the rational appetite. Second, magnanimity and hope differ with regard to their objects. The possible but difficult good in question for magnanimity is a great thing deserving great honor. Being confident in the gifts he has received from God, Aquinas's magnanimous man is hopeful of being capable of accomplishing great things. In the case of the theological virtue of hope, the good in question is God himself. Hope makes a believer tend to God both as the ultimate good to be obtained and as a strong helper to rely on while pursuing that ultimate good. For a fuller treatment of the theological virtue of hope see, R. Cessario, O.P., "The Theological Virtue of Hope," in *The*

be due to his humility-informed magnanimity. Magnanimity renders someone capable of performing a virtuous action even if such an action looks disgraceful in the eyes of others. The magnanimous man does take care of his good name. Yet he does great acts of virtue not for the sake of human glory, as he does not take empty pleasure in human praise. Insofar as he strives more to be *honorable* than to be *honored*, and cares more for truth than for opinion, he is able to despise any honor or disgrace that he does not actually deserve. Informed by humility, the magnanimous man is not ashamed of shame, including shame due to disgrace according to truth; he is liable to shame where there is adequate reason to feel it. Instead of paralyzing him, shame can motivate him to improve by amending the defective aspect of his self.

CONCLUSION

Unlike some Aristotelian scholars mentioned in the introduction, therefore, Aquinas does not see why the Stagirite should have recognized shame, particularly in its prospective form of a sense of shame, as a genuine moral virtue. There is no question, *pace* Raymond, that one's good name or reputation is an external good that renders an individual more trustworthy and thus guarantees him more success in his social life. Indeed, by doing virtuous acts, a virtuous person desires not only to be good but also to be reputed as good. It is in his interest to avoid anything that would bring him disrepute. Nevertheless, good reputation is not the ultimate good, and above a good reputation there are other still more valuable goods. In Aquinas's perspective, if one shuns doing what is morally more valuable only in order to avoid disrepute, then one must either be imperfect with regard to his virtuous habits—perhaps he is a young moral learner who relies heavily on his sense of shame—or be lacking in humility-informed magnanimity. Shaped by the paired virtues of humility and magnanimity, truly virtuous

Ethics of Aquinas, ed. S. J. Pope (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 232-43. In the case of shame that generates despair, the theological virtue of hope can have a significant role to play. The theological virtue of hope enables the ashamed person not to lose sight of the goal of perfect happiness and not to give up the arduous journey of reforming or reinventing one's defective self but to lean on God as the savior and friend who will help him to complete that journey.

persons are able to transcend the passion of shame and to forgo their good reputation in order to attain some higher goods (e.g., a spiritual good).

Thus, rather than relying on a sense of shame, truly virtuous persons should rely on their rational judgment and deliberate choice. This is not to say that, in Aquinas's account, retrospective shame or a prospective sense of shame play no role at all in the virtuous man's life. Since virtuous persons are not morally infallible, they might appropriately feel retrospective shame when they lapse into base actions. Additionally, inasmuch as virtuous persons are mindful of their dignity and honorability, a prospective sense of shame continues to inspire them to act temperately. On this point, Kristjánsson, who criticizes Aristotle for having undervalued the role of a sense of shame in virtuous persons, would happily agree with Aquinas. That notwithstanding, for Aquinas the temperate person cannot simply follow his sense of shame either, for at times the sense of shame can be misleading. The temperate person still needs to deliberate whether his sense of shame is rationally justifiable or not. Hence, although shame can be virtuous, that is, morally praiseworthy, especially in the humble and magnanimous person, it still falls short of the perfect notion of a moral virtue because of the very fact that it does not operate from choice and needs to be sustained by other virtues in order to produce a beneficial outcome.

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THAT ALL MAY BE SAVED

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DAVID BENTLEY HART's book *That All Shall Be Saved* has been creating quite a stir.[1] And understandably so. In it he makes an all-out case in favor of universal salvation. Dissatisfied with the efforts of Hans Urs von Balthasar and others who speak half-heartedly of our *hope* that all may be saved, that "Christians *may* be allowed to *dare* to hope for the salvation of all" (66), he states outright that all humans *will* in fact be saved. Theologians have struggled with the issue time and again, and have seldom come up with such a clear-cut answer as Hart offers. Of course, if the thesis is right, it would change the dynamic of Christian life considerably. Hart has been accused of mistranslating and misinterpreting Scripture, of presenting a dictator God who obliges everyone to keep company with him for ever and ever, of making a good God of our imagination morally superior to the God revealed in Scripture, of neglecting the power of human free will to the point of trivializing human acts, of taking it for granted that most Christians delight in the pains of the condemned, of obscuring the value of temporal life, and of being a pugnacious and determined adversary.[2] Nevertheless he argues his case cogently and with depth.

[1] *That All Shall Be Saved: Heaven, Hell and Universal Salvation*. By David Bentley Hart. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2019. Pp. 222. ISBN 978-0-300-24622-3. Page numbers within the text refer to the book.

[2] See, e.g., M. Werntz, "Making Nothing of Evil, and Everything of God," *In All Things* (August 13 and 14, 2019); P. Leithart, *Theopolis* (October 2, 2019), to which Hart responded in the same journal (October 7, 2019). See also Hart's article "Why Do People Believe in Hell?," *New York Times* (January 10, 2020). See also reviews by D. Waldow, *Journal of Moral Theology* 9, no. 2 (2020) 200-202; S. F. Gaine, *New Blackfriars* 101 (2020) 628-30; D. King, *Religious Studies* (2019) 1-4; as well as J. P.

I. Four Meditations

Hart presents his position through four meditations, preceded by an ample introduction and with a final conclusion.

The *first meditation* goes to the core of the matter, which Hart considers to be the *goodness of God* who creates the world *ex nihilo* (65-91). If God created the world without presuppositions of any kind—every last thing, every single atom, every last person, and so on—then how can we say that even one such person or creature could be lost forever? To do so, Hart says, we would have to deny God's ultimate attribute, which is his goodness. Yet Scripture teaches unequivocally that God is good, indeed that God is Love. Christ proved this beyond all doubt by dying on the Cross, as did the Father by raising him from the dead. Hart notes that according to Gregory of Nyssa creation *ex nihilo* is not merely a protological issue (referring to the beginning), but also an eschatological one, for God creates the world with an end, a purpose, a design. If the end is defective, so too must be the beginning. For Gregory (as well as Maximus the Confessor), "protology and eschatology are a single science" (68). God is "the beginning and end of all things" (69). Ultimately, "all causes are logically reducible to their first cause" (70).

If God has made everything, then evil can never be considered as "something" that might oppose God autonomously, especially if it endures forever. Rather evil is always and only a *privatio boni*, the privation of the good in a particular being, which can always be supplemented or overcome by God's creative or saving action. This was the consistent position of Christian theologians as they opposed different kinds of Gnosticism, dualism, and spiritualism. God is involved in no "dialectical struggle with some recalcitrant exteriority" (71). God acts in "an inexhaustible power wholly possessed by the divine in peaceful liberty in eternity" (ibid.). "God does not determine himself in creation" (72), as Hegel had suggested he did. Hart recognizes that for some people divine "goodness" obeys a logic different from what we find in created goodness, and so they propose that eternal

Manoussakis, "Salvation à la Hart: A Review Essay of David Bentley Hart's *That All Shall Be Saved* (unpublished manuscript, College of the Holy Cross).

condemnation might be the fruit of God's "goodness." Hart insists however that a certain analogy, or mutual recognizability, between the two should be possible (74).

Hart concludes in this first meditation that

> if both the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* and that of eternal damnation are true, that very evil is indeed already comprised within the *positive* intentions and dispositions of God. . . . He has willed a tragedy, not just a transient dissonance within creation's goodness . . . but as that irreducible quantum of eternal loss that . . . still reduces all else to a merely relative value. (82f.)

The temporal punishment that leads to the soul's correction (what Catholics call "purgatory") is quite different from "*eternal* torments, *final* dereliction" (84). This is not just a human problem, but a divine one, Hart says; the condemned would be "still the price that God has contracted from everlasting . . . for the sake of his Kingdom" (87). The apocalyptic work 4 Ezra (7:7) puts it admirably: "When the Most High made the world . . . the first thing he prepared was judgment, and everything that relates to it." This is Hart's position: "if God creates freely . . . his final judgment shall reveal him for who he is. . . . If God is the good creator of all, he must also be the savior of all, without fail" (90f.)[3].

The *second meditation* is biblical in character (92-129). In it Hart draws on his own recent translation of the New Testament.[4] He holds that Scripture does not contain a clear doctrine on an everlasting hell. It is absent, he says, in the letters of Paul (93). Judgment is understood in salvific terms. Words normally translated as "eternity" or "eternal" or "forever" should be understood in a temporal way (120-29), for in the original they refer to the term "age," *aîon,* which is usually finite in character in New Testament usage, as Ramelli and Konstan have proposed.[5] Likewise, Hart recognizes the impropriety of identifying hell with the biblical *Gehenna*

[3] Hart presents the same position in D. B. Hart, "The Devil's March: *Creatio ex nihilo*, the Problem of Evil, and a Few Dostoyevskian Meditations," in *Creation ex nihilo: Origins, Development, Contemporary Challenges*, ed. G. A. Anderson and M. Bockmuehl (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018), 297-318.

[4] D. B. Hart, *The New Testament: A Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

[5] I. A. Ramelli and D. Konstan, *Terms for Eternity: Aiônios and Aïdios in Classical and Christian Texts* (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2013).

(112-19), which "was a place of neither annihilation nor purification" (117).

The principal biblical texts Hart refers to in this meditation are those which speak of the salvation of "all": thus Rom 5:18f.; 1 Cor 15:22-28 ("so that God may be all in all"); 2 Cor 5:14, 19; Rom 11:32; 1 Tim 2:3-6; Titus 2:11; Eph 1:9f.; Col 1:27f.; John 12:32; Heb 2:9; John 17:2 with John 4:42, 12:47 and 1 John 4:14; 2 Pet 3:9; Matt 18:14; Phil 2:9-11; Col 1:19f.; 1 John 2:2; and so on (95-102). He quotes many of them at length. He also mentions 1 Tim 4:10, "we have hoped in a living God who is the savior of all human beings, especially (*malista*) those who have faith." Texts such as the last do raise the issue or whether or not salvation is automatic and universal, since personal faith is involved somewhere. Still, Hart holds that the texts in question teach that God will save each and every one.

Hart is of the opinion that the Book of Revelation, which to all appearances is deeply eschatological in character, is not "about the end of time" (107). It is, rather,

> an extravagantly allegorical "prophecy" not about the end of history as such, but about the inauguration of a new historical epoch in which Rome will have fallen, Jerusalem will have been restored, and the Messiah will have been given power. (108)

The expression "for ever and ever" occurs frequently in this book, and is applied on several occasions to the condemned (Rev 14:11; 19:3; 20:10). Hart, however, translates it as "unto the ages of the ages." He holds that "it is absurd to treat any of the New Testament's eschatological language as containing, even *in nuce*, some sort of exact dogmatic definition of the literal conditions of the world to come" (119). He is wary of what could easily become fundamentalistic interpretations of single texts taken out of context.[6] He does not deny that there is a "hell," but he regards it as temporal and medicinal, what he calls a "transient dissonance" (89).

> Hell exists, so long as it exists, only as the last terrible residue of a fallen creation's enmity to God, the lingering effects of a condition of slavery that God has conquered universally in Christ and will ultimately conquer individually in every soul. (129)

[6] See D. B. Hart, *Theopolis* (October 7, 2019).

The *third mediation* considers the issue of universal salvation from an anthropological angle. Hart asks how realistic it is for a particular human being actually to close in on himself forever, permanently, totally closed to change (130-58). An eternal hell would convert "the 'good tidings' of God's love in Christ into something dreadful, irrational, and morally horrid" (131). For there is no proportion between the sinful act of the human being (any sinful act is finite in commission and effects), and the resultant wrenching, tormented, eternal punishment it gives rise to simply on account of the infinite dignity of the one offended, God (132).

Hart offers an extensive, favorable explanation of Gregory of Nyssa's defense of the *apokatastasis*, or final, universal reconciliation (138-44). Unlike Augustine, Gregory did not see

> some everlasting division between the two cities of the redeemed and the reprobate, but only a provisional division between two moments within a single economy of a universal salvation . . . two distinct eschatological horizons, one wholly enclosed within the other. (139)

God conceives humanity in terms of an eternal, unitary archetype, made in God's image. "It is only in the purity of the divine wisdom that this human totality subsists 'altogether' in its own fullness" (140), which is fully assumed by Christ. "Humanity, understood as the *plērōma* of God's election, never ceases to possess that deathless beauty that humanity, understood as an historical community, has largely lost" (141). Christ, who fully assumes humanity within himself, brings all things back to the Father who at the end of time will be "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28).

Besides, Hart insists (on many occasions throughout the book) that should only one human being be lost, all would suffer, and none would be truly saved.

> Each person, as God elects him or her from before the ages, is indispensable, for the humanity God eternally wills could never come to fruition in the absence of any member of that body, any facet of that beauty. . . . The loss of even one would leave the body of the Logos incomplete, and God's purpose in creation unaccomplished. (144)

He insists that we are not "persons" as mere individuals of the human race, but in our multiple and complex relationship with others.

> There is no way in which persons can be saved *as persons* except in and with all other persons. . . . No soul is who or what it is in isolation; and no soul's sufferings can be ignored without the sufferings of a potentially limitless number of other souls being ignored as well. . . . Finite persons are not self-enclosed individual substances; they are dynamic events of relation to what is other than themselves. . . . If not subsistent relations [this refers to the divine persons], we are . . . subsistences of relationality; each of us is an entire history of attachments and affinities, and none of those attachments and affinities is merely accidental to some more essential self. (146, 149, 151, 154)

Hart takes particular exception to those authors (he mentions Tertullian, Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas [see also 78, 167, 169]) who hold that "the knowledge of the torments of the damned will increase the felicity of the blessed in heaven" (146). He concludes that "either all persons *must* be saved, or none *can* be" (155). He quotes Kierkegaard, who writes: "If others go to hell, then I will too" (198).

The *fourth mediation* deals with the notion of human freedom (159-95). Hart returns to Gregory of Nyssa's position on universalism (164f.), pointing out specifically Gregory's "metaphysical and biblical conviction regarding the inherent finitude of evil, the infinite fullness of God's goodness, and the irrepressible dynamism of the moral life of rational spirits." Thus "no rational will could ever be fixed forever in the embrace of evil" (165). Hart's understanding of freedom is very classical, rooted doubtless in both Augustine and Aquinas. He eschews the libertarian or modern view of freedom as mere *choice*, by which people define themselves and construct their own life and spirit (172). Rather, freedom is based on rationality. "There is such a thing as an intrinsic nature in rational spirits. . . . Freedom is a being's power to flourish as what it naturally is, to become ever more fully what it is" (ibid.). Hence "to be fully free is to be joined to that end for which our natures were originally framed. . . . We are free not because we can choose, but only when we have chosen well" (173).

Humans, Hart says, are simply incapable of deciding upon an end and then pursuing it "out of pure unreasoning per-

versity" (174). In fact, "true freedom is contingent upon true knowledge and true sanity of mind" (177). This, Hart holds, does not amount to a kind of metaphysical determinism, as it leaves "considerable room for deliberative liberty with regard to differing finite options (what Maximus the Confessor calls the 'gnomic will')" (179). In effect, Hart accepts Maximus's distinction between "natural" and "gnomic" will (36, 185, 189)—and he notes, "however the 'gnomic' will may wander, the 'natural' will animating it seeks only one ultimate end" (185).

With a graphic translation of John 12:32, Hart speaks of God freeing souls by "dragging" (most translations have "drawing") them to himself (179; see also 27, 98, 129), an idea that evokes Augustine's *suavitas amoris*, the way in which God's grace gently draws and seduces the soul to himself. Or perhaps it evokes Seneca's *Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt* ("Destiny leads whoever is willing, and drags whoever is not").[7] Hart speaks of "the will's constant and consuming preoccupation with God" (186). As a result, he concludes, Gregory's "reasoning is unassailable" (190). "Evil itself must disappear in every intellect and will, and hell must be no more" (195).

II. Critique

A) First Impressions

Some observations are in order in respect of Hart's tour de force, or perhaps, should we say, his *cri de cœur*. The book is written with verve. Explanations are often graphic though sometimes dismissive of positions with which the author disagrees. At an intellectual level, the fundamental thrust of the work is philosophically serious and classical, rooted in Scripture and the Church Fathers. At a more human level I was glad to have spent pleasant hours sharing the insights of someone who is convinced that I am going to be saved at some stage! I don't know if I could say the same about Aquinas, who does state "pauciores sunt qui salvantur" ("those who are saved are a minority" [*STh* I, q. 23, a. 7, ad 3]). Aquinas was not the only one to have done so. It may be

[7] Seneca, *Epist*. 107:10.

noted in passing, however, that his references to the image of the blessed savoring the hellish torture of others are always measured and nuanced. He attempts to understand the existence of perpetual condemnation in terms of the repristination of order in the universe.

> God inflicts punishments, not for his own sake, as though he took pleasure in them, but for the sake of something else: namely on account of the order that must be imposed on creatures, in which order the good of the universe consists. (*ScG* III, c. 144)

Hart's book rings true with what the historian Tom Holland, in his recent work, *Dominion*, [8] has shown: Christians over the centuries have learned to be more and more compassionate with their fellow creatures to a degree unthinkable in ancient Athens or Rome. And they have spread the word successfully: to enjoy the suffering of other people, indeed of other living beings, is unthinkable for a believer. While this substantial contribution to civilization should not be taken for granted, it does help us appreciate the impropriety of representing a divinity who is not powerful nor loving enough to save those whom he created and destined to live forever in communion with him.

That said, some observations may be made in respect of the four meditations. I have attempted elsewhere to deal with many of the issues that arise here.[9]

B) The Bond between Creation and Eschatology

As regards the first meditation, we may say that the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* involves two things.[10] First is the notion of complete divine responsibility. That the world exists, and exists as it is, is because God made it so. This is the principal support Hart provides for justifying universal reconciliation. God made the world and must take full

[8] T. Holland, *Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind* (London: Little, Brown & Co., 2019).

[9] See Paul O'Callaghan, *Christ our Hope: An Introduction to Eschatology* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 189-221.

[10] I deal with the history and doctrine of creation extensively in *God's Gift of Creation* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, forthcoming in 2021).

responsibility for it, at the beginning and the end. But creation *ex nihilo* also means that the created world *is not God*. Hart speaks clearly about the transcendence of God and of the complete distinction between the Creator and creation on several occasions (56-58). Yet this distinction is what makes it *metaphysically* possible for free, rational creatures to separate themselves from God, even forever, without compromising the divinity or transcendence of the divinity. God's immanence in creatures does not involve any loss of transcendence. The reality of being truly *created* persons gives them the opportunity of freely configuring their lives far from God, as Eleonore Stump explains in a dense yet important article cited by Hart (182, 214).[11] That some part of the cosmos would separate off forever would be a problem for a Greek ontology, structured out of a single, continuous hierarchy, a single metaphysical world, but not so much perhaps for a Christian one, which in reality involves two, entirely distinguishable, ontologies, that of God and that of (all) creatures.

Another important area that needs further discussion is the weight Hart places on the testimony of Gregory of Nyssa in defending *apokatastasis*, or universal reconciliation. Gregory uses the term forty times. Hart's reading is shared by several contemporary students of Gregory's, among them von Balthasar, S. Lilla, J. Gaïth, M. Pellegrino, M. Ludlow, and G. Maturi.[12] However, more recently, other authors, following Jean Daniélou, have opposed this reading, for example M. Azkoul, A. A. Mosshammer, J. Zachhuber, C. N. Tsirpanlis, and G. Maspero.[13] Interestingly, Gregory does

[11] E. S. Stump, "Dante's Hell, Aquinas's Moral Theory, and the Love of God," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 16 (1986): 181-98.

[12] H. U. von Balthasar, *Présence et pensée: Essai sur la philosophie religieuse de Grégoire de Nysse* (Paris: Beauchesne 1942), 40; S. R. Lilla, *Gregorio di Nissa, L'anima e la resurrezione* (Rome: Città Nuova, 1981), 31; J. Gaïth, *La conception de la liberté chez Grégoire de Nysse* (Paris: Vrin, 1953), 187-95; M. Pellegrino, "Il platonismo di S. Gregorio Nisseno nel dialogo 'Intorno all'anima e alla resurrezione'," *Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica* 30 (1938): 437-74; M. Ludlow, *Universal Salvation: Eschatology in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa and Karl Rahner* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000); G. Maturi, "'Αποκατάστασις e'ανάστασις in Gregorio di Nissa," *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni* 66 (2000): 227-41.

[13] Daniélou says of Gregory: "One cannot even say that he holds the thesis of universal salvation" (*L'être et le temps chez Grégoire de Nisse* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970], 224); see his earlier work "L'apocatastase chez Saint Grégoire de Nysse,"

not speak of *apokatastasis* when dealing with soteriology, though he does use it when speaking of both creation and eschatology. He certainly rejects Origen's doctrine of the preexistence of souls, though in some texts he shares Origin's conviction as regards universal reconciliation. The basic reason for this is that he is convinced evil cannot endure forever, not being a substance in its own right. Still, universal reconciliation according to Gregory is applicable to human and cosmic nature as a whole, but not to each and every individual.[14] For this reason Daniélou says that Gregory's *apokatastasis* is equivalent to resurrection, which is common to all, but not to eternal life which is personal and faith-dependent.[15] And, of course, Scripture distinguishes resurrection from eternal life (John 6:40); the classical texts that speak of resurrection (Dan 12:1f.; John 5:28f.) make it clear that, while all will rise up, not all will be saved.

Gregory explains the *apokatastasis* as the moment when God will establish absolute sovereignty over all things, and all will know that he is the Lord (Ps 59:14). In his commentary on verse 15 of this psalm, which refers to those who return at night and move about the city, like hungry dogs (v. 7), Gregory writes:

> I think that in repeating the expression is revealed that men, even after this life, will be in one state and the other, that is, in the same good and evil in which they now find themselves. For he who moves about outside now and does not live in the city will conserve the human character of his life, but, having willfully made themselves beasts and having become dogs, those then too, thrown out of the heavenly city, will be punished with the hunger for goods. The victor of the adversaries will instead, advancing "from beginning to beginning"—as the Psalmist says in another passage (Ps

Revue des sciences religieuses 30 (1940): 328-47. Cf. also M. Azkoul, *St. Gregory of Nyssa and the Tradition of the Fathers* (Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Messen Press, 1995), 141-48; A. A. Mosshammer, "Historical Time and the Apokatastasis according to Gregory of Nyssa," *Studia Patristica* 27 (1991): 70-93; J. Zachhuber, *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa: Philosophical Background and Theological Significance* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000); C. N. Tsirpanlis, "The Concept of Universal Salvation in Saint Gregory of Nyssa," *Studia Patristica* 17 (1982): 1139-40; G. Maspero, *Trinity and Man: Gregory of Nyssa's 'Ad Ablabium'* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2007), 76-94; G. Maspero, "Apokatastasis," in L. F. Mateo-Seco and G. Maspero, eds., *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2010), 55-64.

[14] This position is carefully documented in Maspero, *Trinity and Man*, 76-94.

[15] See Daniélou, *L'être et le temps,* 224f.

83:7)—and passing from victory to victory, say: "But I will sing your power, in the morning I will exalt your grace."[16]

The point is an important one: God saves the whole of nature, but not necessarily each and every human being. People are relational indeed, and their lives are intertwined with those of others, but, as Hart himself says, they are not subsistent relationships (154).

Gregory speaks in this text of those who have willfully made themselves beasts, those who live on "with the hunger for goods." Perhaps this can give us some idea of what eternal punishment might look like through the eyes of Gregory: perpetual hunger for good things, unrealized humanity, an impoverished, animal-like existence. Does this involve unmitigated torment? Perhaps not. Unimaginable agony? Not necessarily. But the objective loss of God, yes. The condemned are more dead than alive, they are incapable of loving. Dostoevsky, C. S. Lewis, and Bernanos all coincide in saying that that "Hell is not to love any more." Indeed, Bernanos once said that

> the error common to us all is to invest those damned with something still inherently alive, something of our own inherent mobility, whereas in truth time and movement have ceased for them: they are fixed for ever. . . . The sorrow, the unutterable loss of those charred stones which once were human beings, is that they have nothing more to be shared.[17]

"Charred stones": what is left over at the bottom of the pile. Above and beyond them are an enormous variety of human beings, some closer to God, others less so; some in perpetual growth (*epektasis* in Gregory), some riveted to immobility forever. All equally loved into existence, but not all equally loving.

Hart's insistence on the parallelism between beginning and end, between protology and eschatology, is fundamentally valid of course, and deeply patristic. But an *eschaton* that just replicates the *proton* tells us that all the tears and the sighs, all the love and the pain, all the joy and the hope, all the strivings of humans and nature, were just so much wasted time and effort, a sterile, useless struggle and rebellion. To

[16] Gregory of Nyssa, *In Inscr. Ps.* (GNO 5:175, ll. 12-23).

[17] G. Bernanos, *Diary of a Country Priest* (London: Fount, 1977), 177.

borrow a line from Thomas Gray, we were wasting our sweetness on the desert air. Besides, identification between the *proton* and the *eschaton* is the deepest theological root of conservatism.[18]

Of course if, as Daniélou suggested, Gregory identifies *apokatastasis* with resurrection, then so does Maximus, who endorses Gregory, besides making it quite clear that the final divinization of rational creatures will only be realized in those who have shown themselves to be worthy of God's gift.[19] Origen's understanding of the *apokatastasis* may end up being shared by Isaac of Nineveh, Didymus the Blind, and Diodore of Tarsus, but few others.

C) Eschatology and Scripture

Hart's second meditation, as we saw, deals with biblical issues. An observation of Joseph Ratzinger's is to the point here: the notion of universal reconciliation may well be "derived from the system rather than from the biblical witness."[20] Scripture is not meant to be domesticated; rather, we must allow it challenge us. Speaking of perpetual condemnation, Augustine says, "Scripture does not deceive anyone!"[21] One might also mention Pierre Grelot, who says of the doctrine of *apokatastasis* that "no text from Scripture offers the slightest basis for it."[22]

Many of Hart's scriptural observations are perfectly valid. Still, it is questionable whether the New Testament texts he cites speaking of the salvation of "all" can be used to justify the salvation of each and every person. Hart himself recognizes this in saying that they have "been explained away . . . again and again down the centuries of Christian history" (162f.). Of course God saves only those who believe; on no account may salvation be considered an automatic or

[18] See my study "Is the Christian Believer Conservative or Liberal?", *Church, Communication and Culture*, 4 (2019): 137-51; available at doi.org/10.1080/23753234.2019.1616580.

[19] See B. E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 202.

[20] J. Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 217.

[21] Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 21.23.

[22] P. Grelot, *Le monde à venir* (Paris: Le Centurion, 1974), 120.

unconscious process. Augustine put it in the following succinct way: "Omnis autem homo Adam; sicut in his qui crediderunt, omnis homo Christus, quia membra sunt Christi,"[23] a position later assumed by Aquinas.[24] All are born of Adam, Augustine says, all without exception are born with original sin (Hart refers to inherited sin somewhat negatively [24, 75, 145]). And all are justified by Christ, the New Adam, *as long as* they believe in him, one by one. Of course, this is an essential proviso. Being born in sin is automatic (Eph 2:3); salvation is not (Luke 13:23f.).

On the whole it may be incorrect to say that the doctrine of eternal condemnation is absent in the Pauline corpus (93). Paul does speak on repeated occasions of sinners being excluded from "eternal life" or from the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-26; Eph 5:5).

We have already referred to Hart's interpretation of *aiōn* and *aiōnios* in more a literal, finite, sense, as "an age," in the sense of an epoch: an extended, undefined, unitary but finite period. This is a valid option from the literary point of view, although the history of translation, in all languages, has held on to the terms "eternal," "everlasting," or their equivalents. Matt 25:46, situated solemnly at the end of the final judgment discourse, is usually rendered as follows: "And they [sinners] will go away to eternal [*aiōnios*] punishment, but the righteous into eternal [*aiōnios*] life." Hart offers the following translation: "And these will go to the chastening of that Age, but the just to the life of that Age."[25] The problem here is that if punishment (or "chastening") is temporary, then the reward would likewise have to be temporary. This seems out of keeping with John's understanding of "eternal life" in terms of permanent communion with the divinity. Of course, it is easier to explain the eternity of heaven in which God fills us with his light and draws us to himself[26] than to account for the permanence of hell where the will has nothing permanent to latch on to.[27] Aquinas distinguishes clearly between eternal life and eternal death, but the use of a common term, *aiônios*,

[23] Augustine, *Enn. in Ps.* 70, 2.1.

[24] See *STh* III, q. 8, a. 5, ad 1.

[25] Hart, *The New Testament*, 68.

[26] See Aquinas, *ScG* IV, c. 92; cf. John 12:32.

[27] See *ScG* IV, cc. 93, 95.

in a particularly important, solemn text spoken by Jesus, makes it difficult to justify two different interpretations.

A significant part of this meditation is taken up by a reflection on the hermeneutics of eschatological texts—a complex issue, no doubt, that requires closer attention.[28]

D) The Anthropological Outworkings of Eternal Condemnation

The third meditation deals with anthropological issues that arise from our understanding of "hell." Here Hart goes back to the central role played in this question by Gregory of Nyssa, while distancing himself from Augustine. We have already seen that Gregory's position quite probably does not involve strict universal salvation, but rather reconciliation of the cosmos as a whole. But Hart is right in saying that the intrinsically relational aspect of human persons and life would put Christian teaching on hell under considerable strain. In fact, St. Catherine of Siena protested confidingly to the effect that she would never be happy as long as even one of those united to her in nature or in grace had been condemned. She implored God that, if at all possible, hell should simply be destroyed. "I do not wish any of my brothers, who are united with me in nature and grace, to be lost," she said.[29] This is a prayer, of course, but so is the title of Hart's book: "that all shall be saved." Doubtless the point is a valid one.

Still, the individuality of the human person and his distinction from others is also an essential aspect of anthropology. Leibniz with his theory of the monads set the scene for a clearly individualistic view of human existence, which has left a powerful mark on modernity. Yet the notion that the human person is metaphysically *incommunicabilis* may be found during the Middle Ages in Richard of St. Victor, Aquinas, and Scotus. Without this indissoluble individuality there would be little space for meaningful liberty, true responsibility, and cordial openness to others.

[28] For two different approaches, cf. A. Nitrola, *Trattato di escatologia,* vol. 1 (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2001); and my work *The Christological Assimilation of the Apocalypse* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2004), esp. 103-36, 232-56.

[29] *Vita del B. Raimundo di Capua* (Siena: Cantagalli, 1982), 27.

Otherwise the *fact* of manipulation of others might be seen as a *duty* of manipulation.

I find myself in substantial agreement with Hart's fourth meditation on the dynamics of human freedom. Following from what he said in an 2003 essay, as well as in his work *Atheist Delusions*,[30] he has shown clearly that the libertarian or modern view of free will has no place in the Christian understanding. But we need to be attentive so that the Christian view of freedom, based on rationality, is not interpreted in a "necessitarian" way, as if humans could only choose the good. As an aside, we might mention that the modern libertarian view of pure choice, which would seem to be fully compatible with the existence of hell, in practice has tended to deny it.

Throughout history, many philosophers and theologians have held that we are free in respect of created goods, but not in relation to God (or Destiny, etc.). This is so with Seneca (the *fata nolentem trahunt*); it is also suggested by Maximus with his distinction between "gnomic" and "natural" will, the first directed towards creatures, the second towards God; and it is implied also by Luther in his *De servo arbitrio* (we are free before creatures, but not before God). Hart cites Maximus's distinction approvingly (36, 179, 185, 188). The upshot would seem to be that we can do what we wish in the created sphere, but not *coram Deo*, for God will save us anyway (he will "drag all to himself").

Perhaps the distinction established by Silvester of Ferrara and Francisco Suárez between an "innate desire" and an "elicited desire" for God focuses things in a different way. The former refers to the natural attraction created things have for one another. But this cannot be applied to our desire for God, because it would involve a necessary union with the divinity. The "elicited desire" derives from the knowledge either of the works of God or of the limits of the created human condition. In effect, humans, in recognizing created limits, can desire to transcend them and so direct their lives to the one who has created them. In other words, the "elicited desire" is occasioned by the indirect knowledge we have of

[30] See D. B. Hart, "Christ and Nothing," *First Things* (October 2003); idem, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and its Fashionable Enemies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

God through creatures. Whether the distinction, which is presented by Silvester, Suárez, and other authors as an interpretation of Aquinas, can hold up will depend on the epistemology involved in desire, and the degree to which we are allowed to look at Aquinas with Platonic-Augustinian-Dionysian glasses.[31] But the distinction between "natural" and "elicited" desire would leave the door open for the possibility of eternal condemnation.

Conclusion

Speaking of the possibility of perpetual condemnation, Joseph Ratzinger counters that what is peculiar to Christianity "is this conviction of the greatness of man. Human life is fully serious."[32] Thus it may just be possible for someone to reject God outright. When asked by the disciples how many would be saved, Jesus avoided giving a yes or no answer. He simply said, "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able" (Luke 13:23f.). Maybe not much more can be said.

All in all, Hart has offered an important and challenging work that proposes anew a central issue in the history of theology, and invites us to further theological study.

[31] I have dealt with this issue in my book *Children of God in the World: An Introduction to Theological Anthropology* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 387-405, especially 402f.

[32] Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 217.

BOOK REVIEWS

Dogma and Ecumenism: Vatican II and Karl Barth's "Ad Limina Apostolorum." Edited by MATTHEW LEVERING, BRUCE L. MCCORMACK, and THOMAS JOSEPH WHITE, O.P. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2020. Pp. ix + 369. $34.95 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-8132-3240-9.

Why should a bunch of Roman Catholic theologians meet to compare and contrast the teaching of an ecumenical council with the private judgment of a Protestant theologian? First, quite simply, because they can thereby enjoy the company of many distinguished students and heirs of the thought of this theologian. Second, the theologian in question is Karl Barth. Third, the ecumenicity of Vatican II is open to the future, and the tradition of its reception should most of all engage a thinker whose chief criticism of the council pertained to the chapter on tradition in *Dei Verbum*.

This criticism is contained in Barth's *Ad Limina Apostolorum*, the account of his visit to Rome in 1966 at the invitation of the Secretariat for Christian Unity. His preparatory study of the conciliar constitutions and decrees included composing questions both clarifying and critical. It is around these questions that the essays of *Dogma and Ecumenism* are organized, products of a 2016 symposium sponsored by the Barth Center at Princeton University and the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. The symposium engages Barth's questions touching on *Dei Verbum*, *Lumen Gentium*, *Nostra Aetate* (the Decree on Non-Christian Religions), *Gaudium et Spes*, and *Unitatis Redintegratio* (Decree on Ecumenism), lining up a Protestant and a Catholic interlocutor for each of these documents. Matthew Levering contributes an opening, framing essay, and Richard Schenk bats last, looking to the future after a consideration of the uses of history for Church and theology.

In "Holy Scripture as a Mirror for God," Katherine Sonderegger addresses the question of the inerrancy of Scripture using the council's image of Scripture as a "mirror" in which God is to be beheld (*DV* 7). Just as the material of the mirror may produce a flawed image of what is mirrored, so the human form of the word of God may also state errors. Sonderegger thus puts Scripture under the same eschatological proviso that Barth puts Church doctrine. In "A

Theology of Tradition in Light of *Dei Verbum*," Lewis Ayres undertakes to show the sacramental quality of the act of tradition, arguing by analogy from *Lumen Gentium*. The perceived ecclesial acts of interpretation in the teaching of the gospel manifest to the eyes of faith the agency of the Spirit.

Christoph Schwöbel and Thomas Joseph White provide model essays in bringing *Lumen Gentium* and Karl Barth in close proximity to one another. They agree that the chief issue is the relation between the divine agency and the agency of the Church in maintaining access to God's revelation and participation in salvation. They agree also in finding in Barth's Christology guides to the solution of ecclesiological problems. Schwöbel points out that just as God's Word becomes visible flesh in Christ, so the invisible Church of those who live by the Spirit in faith is located in history in the visible Church. Nor are these two Churches, but two aspects of only one Church (102-4), as *Lumen Gentium* 8 says. If in Christ the humanity of Jesus is the organ or instrument of his divinity, as Barth recognizes, why, White asks, cannot other created realities similarly be taken up by God as reliable instruments? So, for Catholics the magisterium is the stable and trustworthy instrument by which God maintains the truth of his revelation in the world of many sometimes conflicting interpretations of Scripture; habitual grace that justifies the sinner is intrinsic to the justified, a reliable foundation used by the Spirit to elicit the Christian's real cooperation in sanctification; and minsters can be used by God infallibly to offer this grace when the sacraments are rightly administered. Schwöbel draws attention to the fact that, for Barth, the word of God is prior to any word spoken from out of the quite posterior Christian experience that word evokes, informs, judges (102). But if revelation and reconciliation are exclusively God's work (132), why, White asks, should this exclude the divine use of created instruments unto the accomplishment of this same work, even as the created humanity is an instrument of the Word? Schwöbel argues that ecumenical discussion should proceed by linking individual issues to the *fundamentum* of the self-revelation of God, and White's careful arguments of fittingness unto ecclesiological echoes or repetitions of the relation of Christ's humanity to his divinity is a sort of instantiation of Schwöbel's recommendation.

Bruce McCormack and Bruce Marshall take up *Nostra Aetate*. McCormack asks whether Muslims and Christians worship the same God. The text of *Nostra Aetate*, he thinks, as well as the classical metaphysics that informs much Catholic magisterial teaching, incline to an affirmative answer. Recapitulating Barth's account of how Christians receive God's revelation of himself, which is the only path to the knowledge of God, McCormack constructs an argument that inclines to a negative answer. On Barth's showing, the very way we come to the knowledge of the distinction of divine persons is built in to the object known, the ontology of the persons themselves, such that the human obedience of the Son tells us of his eternal obedience and thus of a God eternally constituted by the temporal display of the persons in the economy. If Muslims do not share

this faith in the gospel, it would seem impossible for them to have the "same" God as Christians. McCormack notes, however, that the New Testament does not evidently give us adequate ground for adjudicating this question. It must, then, remain open, perhaps unto the Second Coming. How Christians answer this question in no way prejudices their duty in charity to all men, coreligionists or not.

With the help of Charles Journet, Bruce Marshall seeks a way beyond the common postconciliar recognition of all religions as ways of salvation, all equally providentially willed by God to play a similar role in the economy of salvation (e.g., Hick's pluralism) or the idea that Christianity includes in a better form all that is true and good in non-Christian religions (Rahnerian inclusivism). Non-Christian religions can in fact mediate salvation, according to Marshall, but they do so only by letting Christ work "at a distance," in which the Spirit does more to elicit desire than to produce anything that can substitute for the explicit word of the gospel about Christ. Marshall argues at length for the impossibility of a "wordless" encounter with Christ, and non-Christian religions do not, therefore, work "by contact," where one is knowingly and intentionally and voluntarily joined to Christ by faith and baptism. Thus, notwithstanding what we may style the *provisionally* providential role of non-Christian religions, especially as a possible preparation for the gospel, the universal missionary activity of the Church is by no means made accidental to the salvation of all those whom God elects. Marshall does not engage Barth himself, except by raising the question whether Barthian Christology and soteriology unstring the bow of missionary fervor quite as much as the anonymous Christianity of Rahner (41).

John Bowlin and Francesca Aran Murphy give themselves over to a consideration of *Gaudium et Spes*. Murphy tracks its reception by George Lindbeck, for whom the eschatological viewpoint of the constitution relativized and even overcame the divisions of the sixteenth century. She thinks Lindbeck missed the Christological center and classical apologetic concerns of the constitution. John Bowlin brings *Gaudium et Spes* into conversation with the Barthian-inspired *Confession of 1967* of the United Presbyterian Church. This is a good conversation, where Bowlin thinks *Gaudium et Spes* speaks a word that can allay Barthian fears about Christians claiming subjective rights, and where Barth's insistence on the priority of covenant to creation finds expression in the constitution (221).

Hans Boersma rightly perceives that Catholics think that the unity of the Church such as Christ desired it from the foundation is something that cannot be lost and is a good that the Catholic Church alone enjoys. This makes it difficult for Catholic ecumenical interlocutors really to meet their Protestant counterparts "on an equal footing," Boersma thinks, if we are speaking of an equal institutional footing. Boersma also thinks that the famous acknowledgment of a "hierarchy of truths" by the Decree on Ecumenism provides little hope for the restoration of unity with Protestantism, in as much as all Catholic

truths are held by Catholics to be taught with the same formal authority. This, too, is right. He thinks there may be hope in the distinction John XXIII made between the substance and the form of expression of dogmas, which Boersma understands to be roughly the same distinction Henri Bouillard made in 1946 between the absolute "affirmation" of dogmas and the "representations" in which the affirmation is expressed. Writ large, I think such hope as Boersma evinces here would commit the Church to some kind of historicism, since it is hard to see how doctrine could remain "irreformable." Like many Protestants, Boersma urges us to remember that the unity of the Church is something eschatological. But again, in an extreme form, this can too much eschatologize the very truth of revelation, such that it, too, is something we look forward to but do not possess. It is indeed just in virtue of the eschatological nature of revelation that doctrine, for Barth, must remain always reformable. For Catholics this would mean that it has never really been delivered, never really been heard by the Church, and so never been spoken by God. Boersma thus puts his finger on a most difficult issue.

Reinhard Hütter treats in detail Barth's questions concerning the Decree on Ecumenism. Within his carefully reasoned response to Barth, he includes a demonstration that the teaching of the Decree is itself an evident instance of the development of doctrine, and he argues this at length from John Henry Newman's seven notes of genuine developments. This invocation of Newman, moreover, allows Hütter to explain why Catholic engagement in ecumenism should be "late." More importantly, it gives him occasion to rebuke Barth for conceiving of the relation of revelation to history episodically: if for Catholics divinely revealed truth is above history and presides over the community of the Church it evokes, it is also thoroughly *in* history, since it is truly addressed to and received by hearers whose historicity cannot be escaped or laid aside. Hence we can observe an historical passage of the received Word, in which that Word is recast, analyzed, recapitulated, related to philosophical truths and so *develops*. This very historicity of the Word is precisely what Catholics mean by tradition, and precisely because of the nature of the hearer of the Word, it is something prior to the written word, because more foundational. An episodically sounding Word, moreover, suggests an episodically faithful Church, which is a key point in distinguishing Catholic and Barthian ecclesiologies.

In his introduction to the volume, White observes that man is a "doctrinal being"—we constitute the world around us via the reception of teaching, and we constitute the Catholic world we inhabit by way of the tradition of apostolic teaching. Matthew Levering, for his part, insists on the cognitive character of Scripture, of tradition, and of doctrine. Together with Hütter, they take most seriously the turn to historicism and doctrinal relativism after the council on the part of many Catholic theologians. Barth himself, whose first passage of arms was with Protestant Liberalism, issued the same warning after the council. If Catholic encounter with him does nothing more than to remind us of this

danger, we will have been well served. But of course it does much more, and we should thank the contributors of the volume for this very generous "more."

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A Poetic Christ: Thomist Reflections on Scripture, Language and Reality. By OLIVIER-THOMAS VENARD. London: T&T Clark, 2019. Pp. 496. $35.96 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-5676-8470-7.

This book is an anthology of the author's doctoral dissertation at l'Université de la Sorbonne-Paris-IV, as it has appeared in the trilogy *Thomas d'Aquin, poète et théologien*, I: *Littérature et théologie: Une saison en enfer* (Geneva: Ad Solem, 2002); II: *La langue de l'ineffable: Essai sur le fondement théologique de la métaphysique* (Geneva: Ad Solem, 2004); III: *Pagina sacra: le passage de l'Écriture sainte à l'écriture théologique* (Paris: Cerf/Ad Solem, 2009). Professor of the New Testament at the École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem, Olivier-Thomas Venard is a graduate of the École normale supérieure de Saint-Cloud, and a Dominican of the Province of Toulouse.

Translated and edited by Francesca Murphy and Kenneth Oakes, and comprising five main sections, it introduces Venard's prodigious scholarship to an English-speaking audience. The first section, drawn from *Pagina sacra*, begins with a presentation of the Gospels as conveying not merely an ensemble of performances, but a capacity for encountering and living with Christ in faith. It then examines, among other matters, human understanding and language as originating in and participating in God's Word. The second section, from *Littérature et théologie*, begins with a consideration of the literary vocation, described as prone to two opposite pitfalls. One is the tendency to present pure ideas by way of literary language, removed from lived experience and ordinary speech. The other is the crass trivialization by which literature is reduced to the demands of consumerism. As a third way the author proposes the literary vocation understood as engagement with symbolic experience, made possible by a theology of the Word. To illustrate art of this kind Venard presents Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*, noting that it was written with a view to meeting the concrete practical requirements of instructing Dominican students, yet in its every detail is animated by and ordered to a unique transcendent end, God's Word. The third section, from *La langue de l'ineffable*, undertakes a theological

examination of language and its origin, God's Word, again with reference to Aquinas, as well as several of his twentieth-century commentators. Here the author whom Venard has in mind is God, who has left us two books, one of nature, the other of Scripture. Mutually interpretative, the two are engaged in an ongoing dialectic which culminates in discourse on God. Aquinas is once again taken as a model in the fourth section, drawn from *Pagina sacra*, which studies the centrality in Christian culture, especially in theological culture, of devotion to the cross, considered as an efficacious sign, at once the summit and source of speech about God. After discussing the cross as the means by which the incarnate Word speaks his love by the language of the body, and which becomes a true word, the author then turns his attention to the Eucharist, reflection on which, he endeavors to show, sheds light on our experience of signs and language. In the final section, also from *Pagina sacra*, Venard reflects on the epistemic force of Christian speech about God in a disenchanted, de-Christianized world, and considers the prospects for dialogue between the believer and the nonbeliever. After mentioning a few paradoxes inherent in rationalistic historical criticism, he points to the persuasiveness of the metaphysics of participation implied by the Christian doctrine of creation and to the enduring beauty of Scripture and the Church's sacraments as reasons for confidence. Against the symmetrical intolerances of rationalism and fundamentalism, the author optimistically proposes the aforesaid symbolic communication at the service of the Word made flesh (449).

It is symbolic communication of this sort that is suggested by the book's title. As Venard indicates, poetics here is less a matter of rhyme or meter than of literary aesthetics: "We intend to sketch a poetics of the Gospel: we want to envisage the word of the Gospel as the result of an art of using words and phrases within a conception of language" (21). This may seem strange to those who recall that towards the beginning of his *Summa theologiae* (I, q. 1, a. 9, ad 1), Aquinas put clear blue water between poetry and sacred doctrine, precisely on the basis of aesthetics—whereas the first makes use of metaphor because such representation is naturally pleasing (*naturaliter homini delectabilis est*), the second does so out of necessity and for the sake of utility (*propter necessitatem et utilitatem*). All the same, the author surely does well to draw attention to the fineness of Aquinas's style, which has too often been written off as lifeless. His ideal poet, of course, is Christ, who, in turn, makes poets of all believers. But some are better than others, and the one whom Venard offers for the reader's edification and instruction is Aquinas. It is from him that Venard draws the understanding of *ars* at work throughout the book—knowledge or skill, speculative or practical, for acting or making well. What must be done well here is speech about God.

Without pointing too many fingers, the author suggests that much of what has passed for biblical scholarship and theology fails as Christian speech for lack of engagement with Christ's own poetic speech. He goes on to propose an

examination of the conditions for the possibility of Christian poetics. Merely descriptive language will not do: "The *signification* of the Gospel is performed not only by the weave of the story and the thematics of its discourse, but also by the inscription of the reader herself into the text by the text" (79). By extension, the interpreter's work is truly Christic and Christian to the extent that it draws readers into Christ's speech.

At the heart of Venard's project is exposing as fatally reductionist an implied premise of much New Testament scholarship: "the relationship of Jesus to the Gospels cannot be reduced to the relationship between the subject of a book and a book which speaks about him" (81). Even if few commentators on the Gospels would like to be called biographers, Venard's arguments for differentiating between the two disciplines—presented on literary, metaphysical and historical grounds—will be of interest to specialists and nonspecialists alike.

Since the book's interests are too many and varied for consideration here, with what follows I will confine my attention to part 3, "Language as a Theological Question." In a chapter entitled "Little Thomasian Semiology," Venard presents the case for a realist understanding of language, particularly for coming to terms with divine revelation. To some readers the lines of dependence connecting revelation and language may come as a surprise. For the author, it is not the case that a realist theoretical framework for speech secures our access to revelation, but the other way around: "Our hypothesis is that only the revelation of the creation of the world by an intelligent and loving God enables us to enter into the fundamental symbolic experience of the realist intentionality of speech, and to the extent that this idea is expressed, metaphysics depends on the biblical text" (236-37). Here, too, by extension the theologian's vocation is to employ language that participates in the divine Word, so drawing readers into this same participation. It is just such realism that Venard has previously found poetic in Aquinas's writing: "In the final analysis the theology of the Word has to establish the *dicere* of the *Summa* through adding the reality of participation of human speech in the *Logos* of truth to formal or propositional analogy. Without such an addition, how could we reconcile confidence in the word with a realist position?" (134). Put another way, it is Aquinas's faith in God's creative and incarnate Word that grounds his confidence in speaking of the real.

Venard then turns his attention to the deconstructionist critique, which would denounce any such realism as illusory. As the deconstructionists would have it, our need to use words to talk about words leaves all such language irreducibly locked within the confines of tautology. Precluding any prospect of linguistic realism, deconstructionism would force us to abandon all hope of finding poetry in Scripture, exegesis, theology, or anywhere else. It is this irreducibility which Venard proposes to ground on Thomistic terms (275), all the while acknowledging that Aquinas himself neither raised nor responded to the deconstructionists' problem. It is mainly Roland Barthes and Jacques

Derrida whom Venard has in mind, and the list of concepts and genres he finds them setting aside as unfounded is considerable—truth, consciousness, doctrine, kergyma (304). On his reading of Aquinas, the created order itself is language, representing God not as his inner word (*verbum*), but as the inner word's exterior or oral expression, its voice, functioning in the fashion of a *mysterium/signum*. Such is the representation that differentiates the theology of language implicit in Christianity from mythology or "mytho-graphy," the embrace of which would require a leap into the absurd (328).

In this remarkably original work, Venard very ably introduces his readers to a few of the paradoxes lying in store for anyone inquiring about the functioning of language in divine revelation. This study is learned, drawing support as it does from an impressive array of sources, philosophical, literary, and theological, early modern, modern, and postmodern, not to mention numerous ancient and medieval ones. His placement of Aquinas in conversation with deconstructionists makes for no light reading, but the effort required is well rewarded.

All the same, it must be said that the author's style and vocabulary are often ostentatious, and they sometimes obscure rather than disclose whatever he might wish to say. So we find the relation between the aforementioned books of Scripture and nature described in terms of mutual dependence, or the lack thereof, as follows: "Such is the intersected foundation of the two 'books' written by God for human beings: The Book of Scripture is necessary for piercing the enigma of nature and transfiguring its meaning; the Book of nature is necessary for understanding Scripture. The dialectic of Scripture and creation, of 'revealed sense' and 'ontological sense', encapsulates all the dialectics that we have encountered up until now . . . without, however, being necessary for the intelligibility of either one" (335). The reader is left to wonder which of these two sentences may be taken at face value. Fault here is not to be found in the translation, which is admirable.

Also problematic is the author's tendency to find in Aquinas what he wants him to say rather than what he, in fact, says. One such case is Venard's reading of the following extract from Aquinas's commentary on the first chapter of John's Gospel: "Then since the Word is the true light by his very essence, then everything that shines must do so through him, insofar as it participates in him. And so he enlightens every man coming into this world. . . . All men coming into this visible world are enlightened by the light of natural knowledge through participating in this true light, which is the source of all the light of natural knowledge participated in by men" (*In Ioan.*, c. 1, lect. 5). Venard finds Aquinas assuming an epistemic premise he leaves unmentioned in his methodological remarks and engaging in the kind of presupposition that would be the undoing of the deconstructionists: "St. Thomas turns out to *presuppose* in the very reality of his theological performance something which he does not show on the theoretical level: a kind of direct illumination by the Word (incorporated into

the Scriptures!)" (322). Though one can only wonder at what the author means by "direct illumination," Aquinas's meaning is clear enough. Presupposing nothing he does not say unambiguously in many other places, he points out that the light of natural reason participates the light of God's word, without itself becoming the object of knowledge, the source of which is normally sense perception (cf. *STh* II-II, q. 8, a. 1). Aquinas does not doubt that even in this life our love of God is immediate, tending to him first and then falling on other realities, but on his view, with knowledge it is the other way around, as we know God through his effects (see *STh* II-II, q. 27, a. 4). In connection with this same exposition Venard also finds that Aquinas "does not hesitate to make human words participate in the divine Word." But such an inference requires some forcing of the text, wherein that which participates in the divine Word is the natural light by which we form words. Aquinas does not say the same for the words themselves.

Of course, a sustained reflection on the created order's revelatory character that draws attention to the centrality of participation in Aquinas's understanding of creation should warm the heart of any Thomist, provided that it respect on the differences between God and his effects. At the outset of his commentary on John, Aquinas expatiates on the differences between God's Word and ours (*In Ioan.*, c. 1, lect. 1). The discussion so interested subsequent generations of readers that they reproduced and circulated it as an independent treatise of just under 1200 words under the title *De differentia divini uerbi et humani*, with the result that it survives in no fewer than thirty-four manuscript copies and was included in printings of Aquinas's opuscula up to the late nineteenth century. The first of the differences it mentions is that, by contrast with God's Word, our words normally signify neither the substance of our intellect nor the species by which we understand, because these are not typically what we intend to name when speaking of things. Making reference to Augustine (*De Trin.* 9.5), Aquinas adds that for this reason the mind bears a likeness to the Trinity when it reflects on itself, but not when it considers worldly things. Venard's remarkable study has the great merit of showing the import of this likeness in the minds of those who would speak about Christ. And so it is to be hoped that it will prompt further discussion of the Divine Word's centrality in the functioning of our words.

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Sin: A Thomistic Psychology. By STEVEN J. JENSEN. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018. Pp. 336. $34.95 (soft). ISBN: 978-0-8132-3033-7.

The Center for Thomistic Studies at the University of St. Thomas in Houston enjoys prominence among faculties devoted to the study of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Since 1975 a succession of recognized authorities in the field of Thomist studies has taught there. Steven Jensen, who currently serves as Director for the Center and also holds the Bishop Nold Chair in Graduate Philosophy, continues a work that began under the directorship of Professor Anton C. Pegis, formerly president of the Institute of Mediaeval Studies at Toronto. The Center places Houston on the map of Thomist centers throughout the world, alongside Toulouse, Rome, and Fribourg—to name only a few.

The present volume witnesses to the quality of the scholarship that one has come to associate with Texas Thomism. *Distinguer pour unir* recalls an important work of the Thomist author Jacques Maritain, who visited the Houston Center and is numbered among its honorary members. *Distinguish to unite* captures the overall achievement of Jensen's presentation of what he calls a Thomistic psychology. In other words, the author demonstrates the remarkable ability of a good thinker to expose the arguments of those colleagues who purport to interpret the same texts that he does. In this case, the texts under analysis come from the pen of the Angelic Doctor, especially the *Secunda pars* of the *Summa theologiae* and the disputed questions *De malo*. Both works date from roughly the same period of Aquinas's teaching career (the late 1260s and early 1270s).

It is a fair generalization to state that the way Aquinas understands the specifically human workings of the rational animal differs from how many theorists of our period explain human behavior. To claim, as Aquinas does, that "a good understood [*bonum intellectum*] is the will's object and moves it by being something to aim for" (*STh* I, q. 82, a. 4) separates Thomists from those who hold that human actions arise from anything but an understood good. To further claim "that in all of our choices we always act for some good" (1) introduces a number of questions that the author treats in chapter 1 under the heading of "The Enigma of an Evil Will." Facile replies to questions about the relationship of the will to the highest good leads to assertions that would easily fit in the mouth of someone like Goethe's Mephistopheles. The authentic Christian tradition, however, will not allow evil to determine anything.

Had Adam not sinned, Jensen would not have had to write this book. However, original sin entered the world. Christian thinkers, then, face the challenge of explaining the existence of disorder in a world that God created good. I believe that the author chose the title that he did, *Sin*, in order to make this point. One, therefore, may be forgiven for thinking that a book about Aquinas's discussion of human willing would most fittingly carry the title

"Blessedness," whereas casuist authors might hawk their wares by promising cogent thought about sins. The present author, however, cleverly draws us to his subject by his implicit appeal to that which no Christian can escape. Once Christ dies on Calvary, those who follow him must seek to promote the good and to restrain what is evil. Aquinas in fact makes this point explicitly at the start of the *Tertia pars*. Some have even argued that the whole of the *Summa* exposes the path persons must follow to become what God made the human creature to be. Jensen outlines the mistakes that thinkers have made about how one should walk along this path. We need to know these errors, even though it remains the case that the only *real* remedy for the mistakes humans make provides work for theologians and not philosophers.

Chapter 2 introduces the various ways in which contemporary philosophers interpret Aquinas's teleology. The word "teleology" does not appear in the Index. Jensen discusses the ways in which Aquinas considers a person's ordering unto God. I found the translation of "in Deum" as "into God" (19 n. 12) puzzling. I should have thought that "unto" would better express the motion toward that the Latin *ad* with an accusative indicates. In any event, Jensen admirably defends Aquinas's telic conception of human action against the several thinkers who prefer to read Aquinas from a more subjectivist point of view. The late Germain Grisez stood out among them. Once Ralph McInerny delivered a lecture to which he gave the title, "Are There Natural Ends?" I overheard Professor Grisez, while looking at the title, observe to a colleague of his, "Sure, lots of them." He of course referred to natural deaths. For his part, Jensen treats his interlocutors with the utmost courtesy. He does not, for instance, dismiss Grisez's reading of Aquinas as overly Kantian. All in all, the author eschews caricatures and summary dismissals. At the same time, he clearly explains how the overall good governs human actions, although several distinctions are required to make this claim applicable to the progress of daily life. Chapter 3 furthers this discussion by considering several views of what constitutes an overall good.

Chapter 4 introduces a focused treatment of the book's leitmotiv. Given that God has made us for himself and that we suffer restless hearts until we embrace him, why do people move away from pursuit of the embrace? To begin this inquiry Jensen asks, How does venial sin happen? In the *Prima secundae*, Aquinas devotes seventy questions to material that today we would consider under the heading of general morals before he arrives at a treatment of sin. Granted that Jensen does not intend to offer a commentary on the *Summa*, still the introduction of sin in order to examine Aquinas's action theory strikes the theologian, though arguably not the philosopher, as influenced more by modern casuistry than by Aquinas's description of the human person as set between God and God. The discussion of venial sin nonetheless affords the author the chance to explain why a person can depart from the movement toward happiness without abandoning the trajectory altogether. Again, he deploys what the old

Scholastics call the "sword of distinction" with profit. This quality of his scholarship proves especially useful when in chapter 5 he discusses the famous unbaptized child who upon reaching an age of discretion makes "a choice for or against God" (84). Few commentators observe that if the boy lives, he still faces a lifetime of moral choosing in accord with the natural law and, presumably, without the benefit of the sacramental mediations that restore sinful persons to communion with God, thus rendering them capable again of choosing unto God. In this chapter, the author makes a reference to the Thomist commentatorial tradition before 1900 when he reports on the solution offered by Cardinal Cajetan (d. 1534) that employs a distinction between the love of concupiscence or desire and the love of benevolence or friendship. In short, venial sin weakens friendship but does not destroy it.

Chapter 6 introduces the figure of Charles De Koninck (d. 1965) whose teaching on the true nature of the common good has contributed significantly to Thomist studies. "Creatures have a natural love for God above all else because their good belongs to the divine good. The good is not solitary but shared" (105). Therein lies the philosophical foundation for the life of divine charity that we learn about from divine revelation. Against the backdrop of much crushing totalitarianism during the first half of the twentieth century, personalist philosophies and theologies gained, after World War II, widespread attention among religious persons. Martin Buber's *I and Thou* (New York, 1970) is a famous example from outside Christianity. It is better to think of Christian communities as made up of participants in a shared common good, the good of divine charity, instead of an assembly of persons connected by some extrinsic ideal such as service.

Whereas the discussion of venial sin serves the author's purpose to clarify how a will made for the good can veer from its complete embrace of the good, chapter 7 introduces a series of discussions that dissect various aspects of sin (chapters 8 to 11). Again, the author returns to his opening theme, namely, the enigma of an evil will. Aquinas's treatment of the *hostes voluntarii*, the enemies of the voluntary, has long occupied moral theorists. Thomists generally agree that while every free act is a voluntary act, not every voluntary act is a free act. The overall thrust of the *Prima secundae* shows, as Thomas Gilby puts it, that freedom is not an absolute or ultimate value. Liberty within limits describes Aquinas's outlook on human activity. The limits arise from the ordering of divine wisdom, not from a social contract. Jensen ably handles his colleagues who find this outlook difficult to reconcile with modern outlooks on human subjectivity. He helpfully points out that medieval authors like Aquinas emphasized judgment more than the status of the will (284). Recall that for Aquinas man is first of all an image of God, not an auto-constituting Self. Sins of commission occupy a place of greater importance in the moral manuals of the sixteenth century than they do in Aquinas's moral thought (see *STh* I-II, q. 72, a. 6). The author points out that Aquinas seems to argue differently about

omissions in *De malo* than he does in the *Summa*. Of course, *questiones disputatae* arise from lecture hall exchanges, whereas the *Summa* follows the order of teaching. Most teachers recognize that responding to a student's question may require a temporary departure from the *ordo disciplinae*.

The final chapters (12 through 15) discuss controversies that mainly arise from within academic settings. It remains a tribute to Aquinas's genius that those who do not share his religious convictions nonetheless recognize the seriousness of his thought. Even those who number themselves among his coreligionists have produced various accounts of his teachings, especially on a matter as theologically dense as human freedom. Jensen handles these inquirers (for lack of a better term) fairly, while politely refusing to update Aquinas so as to make him congenial to the tastes of today's polite academic society. At the same time, Jensen avoids taking sides in every intra-Thomist debate, such as we see in his delicate treatment of F. Marin-Sola (who appears only in footnote 43 on page 237). Some ethicists, in order to protect what they consider the innocence of God, find ways to create an independent movement in the human creature that becomes the space where sin can arise. Classical Thomists, on the other hand, were slow to follow this line of thought and preferred rather to maintain the priority of the divine initiative in all human action. Those who find such an abandonment to divine providence a chilling prospect should ask themselves a simple question: Which do you prefer when it comes to ensuring your eternal salvation, to trust God or yourself?

This book merits careful attention from those who study Aquinas's moral thought, as well as those who want to understand human conduct within the overall context of the Christian tradition. Because of the Houston Center's historical connection to Toronto, I want to say that Jensen has produced a work of Christian philosophy. He shows us that Christian tenets can serve to raise perfectly legitimate philosophical questions to which philosophers can respond, albeit in various ways. He has done an admirable job of collecting the major thinkers of the period who have wrestled with Aquinas's texts. He treats them courteously and at the same time critically.

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Communicatio idiomatum: Reformation Christological Debates. By RICHARD CROSS. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. xxiv + 288. $85.00 (hardcover). ISBN: 978-0-19-884697-0.

Richard Cross's *Communicatio Idiomatum: Reformation Christological Debates* approaches the development of Lutheran Christologies with attention to the Scholastic background, to the intertwined metaphysical and semantic issues at play, and to internal and external pressures shaping the conversations. The result is seven chapters of careful exegesis leveraging finely wrought distinctions to offer a precise analysis of the nature and stakes of the debates. The Introduction sets out crucial parameters and terms for the investigation. The seven chapters trace developments in Lutheran and Reformed Christologies from the 1520s to the 1590s, featuring a lengthy cast of characters and several clearly drawn fault lines.

The Council of Chalcedon serves as a point of initial departure and of constant reference, allowing Cross to introduce as technical terms "person," "hypostasis," and "suppositum" as well as to present overlapping metaphysical and semantic questions. Chalcedon affirms a union of and in two natures without change, confusion, separation, or division. This union is typically designated the hypostatic union. Chalcedon's affirmation provides a limit marking off permissible and impermissible theological reflection, excluding as impermissible any combination of divine and human natures into some new nature (a *tertium quid*) and any assignment of separation of the natures between "two distinct concrete particulars" (3). Within the permissible limits, Cross argues that theologians "have by and large identified two ways of construing this union" (ibid.). One "makes the union between the natures basic" (ibid.), and the other "makes the hypostatic union derivative of or parasitic on some more basic relation" (5). Cross traces this second way of construing the union from Cyril of Alexandria to John Duns Scotus, whose own account focused on the dependence of the assumed nature on the person assuming, in a way akin to the dependence of an accident on a substance. Scotus's articulation of this model proved influential on late medieval and Reformation debates. Lutheran scholars labelled the model "according to which the human nature was something like a (complex) contingent property of the divine person" the "supposital union" (8). Cross employs this label to indicate the assumed human nature's dependence upon the divine person assuming and distinguishes the supposital union from the hypostatic union, which more generally indicates the relationship of the divine and human natures.

Whether or not one affirms the supposital union can change one's conception of the relationship between the divine person and the properties of the human nature. Cross employs the term "properties" to designate "both (contingent) accidents and *propria*, things that follow automatically from a given nature without being included in it" (9). Porphyry lies behind these

discussions. One fault line dividing the thinkers Cross treats is whether they view the divine person directly to bear the properties of human nature or indirectly to bear the properties insofar as they are directly borne by the human nature assumed. Another fault line concerns the assumed human nature as a concrete particular and the reasons why the concrete particular human nature assumed does not fulfill the necessary conditions for personhood.

These metaphysical considerations relate to semantic issues as well. Cross establishes a detailed framework for categorizing a broad range of approaches in their general classifications and in their specific forms. He builds from a "semantics for Christological predication" suggested by Timothy Pawls, a semantics that allows symbolic formulation of fine-tuned differences (helpfully listed under "Frequently Cited Principles" on xxiii-xxiv). Using various symbolic formulations within this semantics allows Cross to develop precise designations to indicate the metaphysical grounds for different predications of Christ. In Cross's analysis "one of the major fault lines in Reformation Christological debate focuses precisely on whether or [not] the divine person bears not only his human nature but also human properties" (19). Framed otherwise, intra-Lutheran and Lutheran-Reformed debates concerned different understandings of the *communicatio idiomatum*, a phrase Cross notes "specifically applies to predicating divine or human properties of the one person under a description appropriate to the *other* nature—'God is passible', for example, or 'the man is eternal'" (21). The Latin tradition adopted the phrase *communicatio idiomatum* from John Damascene, and Reformation thinkers distinguished within this notion a *genus idiomaticum* and a *genus maiestaticum*. The *genus idiomaticum* refers to properties of both natures pertaining to the divine Word. The *genus maiestaticum* refers to properties of the divine nature somehow shared with the human nature. Cross touches upon further points in the Introduction, which I have lingered over due to its larger framing of all the particular discussions and exegeses that follow in the seven chapters, which move along broadly chronological lines.

The chapters begin with debates between Martin Luther and Huldrych Zwingli from the 1520s. As Cross acknowledges, his assessment of Luther's Christology differs in significant ways from standard assessments, as he reads Luther squarely within a Scholastic framework and as affirming a supposital union. Cross persuasively argues that Luther's arguments for consubstantiation over transubstantiation in Eucharistic debates have misled some commentators to suppose that Luther rejects a supposital union. Luther's proposal of consubstantiation relates to his affirmation of Christ's (nonspatial) bodily omnipresence, an affirmation Luther grounds in Chalcedon and its specification of the natures united without separation or division. Cross is careful to note that Luther does not advance a theory of the *genus maiestaticum* but that subsequent Lutheran thinkers do. Zwingli rejects Christ's bodily omnipresence along with any attempt to assign divine predicates to Christ's human nature.

Many of Zwingli's arguments are scriptural, which Cross acknowledges while concentrating on his discussions of *alloiosis* as related to the *communicatio idiomatum*. Zwingli confusingly describes two distinct forms of predication with the name *alloiosis*. Cross parses out these distinct forms (nature-predication vs. subject-predication) and the circumstances under which Zwingli allows them to be true even if figurative.

Perhaps no thinker influenced Luther's Christology to the extent that Philip Melanchthon did. Though closely aligned with Luther in his earlier Christological views, Melanchthon comes to diverge from Luther in rejecting the divine person of the Word as the ontological subject of human properties and bodily omnipresence. Moreover, Melanchthon comes to view the *communicatio idiomatum* as a figure of speech and to deny that Christ's human nature bears divine properties. Johannes Brenz moves in the opposite direction, articulating and defending the *genus maiestaticum*. Cross highlights two crucial aspects of Brenz's approach. The first is to "use 'man' and 'Son of Man' to refer not to the divine person as such, but to Christ's human nature" (96). The second "is a metaphysical principle, to the effect that the *communicatio* requires the divine person to have human properties, and the human nature to have divine properties" (ibid.). Brenz's understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* together with his somewhat careless blending of concrete and abstract predications lead to untenable conclusions. Cross draws careful attention to this fundamental problem and examines various attempts to exploit or to address it in Christological debates.

Cross returns to Eucharistic considerations in discussing John Calvin and responses to Calvin from Joachim Westphal and Tilemann Hesshus. Cross also examines Calvin's similarities to and differences from Zwingli. The similarities include rejection of bodily omnipresence and acceptance of the *communicatio idiomatum* as a figure of speech that can nonetheless be true. Perhaps the most notable difference is Calvin's allowance that Christ's body is life-giving, though he rejects the more general principle of the *genus maiestaticum*. Treating Westphal and Hesshus allows Cross to examine the breadth of Lutheran approaches in the mid-sixteenth century. Westphal sees himself as explicitly following Luther and Brenz in affirming Christ's bodily omnipresence, mistakenly believing that these two agree and showing himself more a polemicist than a theologian attuned to fine distinctions. Hesshus exhibits greater delicacy, clearly recognizing the distinction between abstract and concrete predications and utilizing this distinction to affirm Christ's bodily omnipresence. Cross presents Westphal and Hesshus as affirming the *genus maiestaticum* but only at Christ's exaltation. In subsequent chapters, Cross investigates later thinkers unwilling to restrict the *genus maiestaticum* to Christ's exaltation. He also presents a fruitful discussion of Christ's human nature as life-giving and how these three thinkers understand that differently, based upon different understandings of the hypostatic union.

The central figure in the development of Lutheran majestic Christology was Brenz. Cross highlights Brenz's move to articulate the *genus maiestaticum* on the assumption that "Son of Man" is the human nature assumed and to restrict which divine properties were communicated to the assumed nature. Discussions of Peter Martyr Vermigli, Heinrich Bullinger, Theodore Beza, and Jakob Andreae serve to draw out Brenz's distinctive contributions to Reformation Christologies. Brenz's late Christology advocates the curious position that supposital union was the common phenomenon of human beings sustained by God and that it is rather the *genus maiestaticum* that properly explains the union of natures in the Incarnation. Brenz labors to explain how Christ's human nature bore divine powers without thereby being essentially equal to the divine nature. Thus he attempts to avoid the rather extreme position of Caspar Schwenckfeld according to which Christ's exalted human nature became equal to the divine essence. Beza's criticisms of Brenz and Andreae's reworking of Brenz's views shaped subsequent debates and attempts to refine Brenz's approach. Not all of those who accepted the *genus maiestaticum* did so on Brenzian grounds, and Cross presents Jakob Schegk, Johann Wigand, and Martin Chemnitz as prominent examples, adding richly to the mix of reflection on the conditions for Chalcedonian orthodoxy and the metaphysical and scriptural grounds for the *genus maiestaticum*.

The range of approaches evident within Lutheran Christologies in the 1560s and 1570s reveal stark divisions. The 1577 Formula of Concord sought to harmonize these divisions and to address the pressing question of the correct interpretation of Luther's own Christology. The various parties emphasize different aspects of Luther's thought, namely, abstract predication and Christ's bodily omnipresence. Cross details how the Wittenberg theologians focus on select texts from Luther to raise serious concerns over Brenz's use of asymmetrical and abstract predications in his version of *communicatio idiomatum*. The Wittenberg theologians build upon Luther's predications of divine properties of the human being Christ in the concrete rather than in the abstract.

The discussion of the Formula of Concord proves particularly interesting and compelling, especially in its attention to the second edition of Chemnitz's *De duabus naturis in Christo*, which Cross notes "is perhaps the outstanding Christological treatise from the Reformation" (209). Chemnitz, Cross argues, departs from his earlier understanding of the hypostatic union to follow Melanchthon and also develops a novel approach to the *genus maiestaticum* according to which Christ's human nature possesses the very divine properties without those properties inhering in the human nature, which would risk some elision of the natures and seemingly fall into the non-Chalcedonian views of Schwenckfeld. While intra-Lutheran debates continue, there is also a final attempt to harmonize Lutheran and Reformed Christologies at the Colloquy of Montbéliard. The task was made yet more difficult in that Andreae represents

the Lutheran perspective, Beza the Reformed. Andreae develops a Brenzian account heavily criticized by Beza on semantic grounds as failing to meet the standards of Chalcedonian orthodoxy.

This book is learned, thorough, and valuable to those with interest in Reformation theologies or more generally in Christology. Cross makes a credible case that many standard readings of Luther's Christology are incorrect in significant ways. That alone suffices to recommend the work, but there is far more to this book than consideration of Luther. The technical precision of Cross's analysis of different Christological positions and semantics allows for fine-grained comparisons of subtle yet significant differences within Reformation Christologies whilel also providing a framework for similar approaches in other Christological contexts. While the technical precision and symbolic notations might prove difficult for some, the only real criticism to note of *Communicatio Idiomatum: Reformation Christological Debates* is the regrettable frequency of typos.

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Participation in God: A Study in Christian Doctrine and Metaphysics. By ANDREW DAVISON. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Pp. xii + 423. $34.99 (paper). ISBN: 978-1-1087-0404-5.

This wonderful book is the fruit of the growing interest among theologians in the notion of participation and the participatory way of thought, not only as found in an exemplary way in the thought of Thomas Aquinas, but more broadly as characteristic of a Christian (biblical and patristic) understanding of God's creative and saving presence in the world. It is a form of theology that dares to speak freely in a metaphysical register without feeling cornered somehow by the secular presuppositions of modern philosophy. The book shows signs of being influenced by the Radical Orthodoxy movement, with its predilection for Platonic participation. Even though the book does not assume that movement's full force of a critical and polemical stance towards modern secular culture, it does oppose modern varieties of nominalism, with its individualist ontology, voluntarism, and the modern split between the human subject and the world. The general approach is positive, aiming at setting out a broad Christian vision of the world that has the notion of participation at its heart. The book's closest parallel, explicitly mentioned as a source of inspira-

tion, is Hans Boersma's *Heavenly Participation* (2011), which has introduced many readers to a participatory account of theology. The author proves himself to be an excellent teacher who in a clear and simple language draws a persuasive and well-informed picture of the Christian participatory view of the world in its relation to God. To the author, participation means first and foremost that the world is approached in terms of sharing and receiving, or of communion. The spirit of participation is recognizable, for instance, in the question posed by the apostle Paul: "What have you got that you did not receive?" (1 Cor 4:7). The double message of participation is that a creature is nothing apart from God's gift, while at the same time, by God's gift, it truly exists and has being.

The book's subtitle is "A Study in Christian Doctrine and Metaphysics." The perspective may be called distinctively theological, even in the sense that the relevant sources used to elaborate the participatory way of thought include biblical texts. The author acknowledges that Plato is the philosophical father of participatory thinking, and that the presence of participation in the writings of the Church Fathers (not least Gregory of Nyssa, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, and in the Latin west, Augustine) is due to the comprehensive influence of Platonist metaphysics in the period of late Antiquity. The most prominent source in this book is, undoubtedly, Thomas Aquinas, "the master of the participatory perspective" (7). The author does not intend his book to be a scholarly study about participation in Aquinas; nonetheless it is Aquinas with his broad and consistent participatory vision in the whole of theology who provides the author's main point of reference.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part—"Participation and Causation"—treats of creation, the notion that everything comes from and depends upon God. Creation is approached from the angle of the Aristotelian four causes: God is the efficient cause, the creative agent by which everything is made; he is the (extrinsic) formal cause in the sense that creatures are made "after God's likeness" and have a characteristic form corresponding with the idea in God; he is the final cause in the sense that creatures are made for the sake of God and have their fulfilment in God; and God is not the matter out of which things are made, but rather creatures are made out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). In this way, the author describes a threefold pattern of God's creative causality, which is then linked explicitly with the Trinitarian life in God which is the exemplary model of participatory relatedness and communion.

Part 2 is devoted to language—"The Language of Participation and Language as Participation." It begins with a useful clarification of the grammar of the language of participation. Participation can be understood as having a *part in* or having a *part of*. Christian theology will take participation primarily as having a *part in*, implying a connection with the whole. The author refers to some characteristic formulations used by Aquinas: in his commentary on the *Liber de causis*, he writes that "what is participated is not received in the one participating according to its entire infinity but in the manner of a particular

[*particulariter*]." The qualitative language of *particulariter*, of receiving a perfection in a particular way, is thought to be more appropriate than the quantitative *partem capere*. The author also mentions another formulation, used in the *Summa theologiae*, where Aquinas says that God's act is not so much shared by others according to "a part," but "by diffusion of its processions." It is not a part of God himself that is received in creatures, but "processions" flowing out from God. The aspect of reception is associated with limitation. Participation stands for a limited reception from another of what is in its source more abundantly (141).

The chapters that form part 3 discuss such topics as Christology, human action and freedom, evil as the failure of participation, and redemption. Especially interesting is the doctrine of incarnation, worked out in participatory terms. The author sees here a double participation: through the Son, human beings come to share in a divine relationship, while Jesus comes to share our humanity. There is a lot of sharing and communion in Christianity; and sin may be conceived of as falling out of the mutual sharing. In part 4 ("Participation and the Shape of Human Life"), the author pays attention to the implications of the participatory way of thought for a series of topics pertaining to human life—knowledge, love, ethics, and law. Organized around the transcendental ideas of truth, goodness, and beauty, this part looks especially at how a participatory framework might animate a way of life. The chapters are exceptionally rich in their analyses, observations, and (critical) comments. I want to mention just one theme, that of knowledge, seen from a participatory perspective. Knowledge is, in this view, not so much a matter of the conceptual activity of the knower, aiming to shed light on the data of experience by putting them into a theoretical structure; rather, knowledge is based on the communication to the knower of the form of what is known. According to classical metaphysics, things have a form, an intrinsic truth (*veritas rei*), which is a likeness of their idea in God, and through which they are able to present themselves in the process of knowledge to the mind of the knower. Participation functions here as an alternative to the subject-object opposition of modern philosophy, with its constructive view of knowledge.

What follows are a few comments, some critical, some questioning. The title of the book initially made me raise my eyebrows. To speak of participation *in* God may suggest to the unprepared reader a form of pantheism, as if God is shared by other things. It reminded me of the warning of Aquinas in his commentary on Dionysius's *On the Divine Names:* God, he says, is *imparticipabilis*. However, in a note at the end of chapter 1, the author explains that the expression "participation in" should be read as an active donation from the source. Creatures participate from God, meaning that they receive from God; and what they receive is not God himself but a likeness of him. Aquinas often uses the expression "to participate in a likeness of God"; what creatures receive from God is *being*, and this *being* is a likeness of God. For the author, the central

point is the language of gift and donation; and the gift is such that it relates the creature directly and most intimately to God himself. In Aquinas, however, there are two kinds of participation with respect to God: participation in the order of creation, and participation in the order of grace. The difference is that, in the first, creatures receive something from God according to an outward going process of *influentia*, while in the latter, (rational) creatures receive a likeness of God's nature, which results in a being connected with God personally (*coniunctio ad Deum*).

The Trinity can be seen, according to Aquinas, as the reason and cause of the procession of creatures from God. This close connection between the Trinity and creation, discussed in chapter 2 of part 1, brings the author to the idea that one also can speak of participation within God: "The creature's participation in God is grounded in God's own participation in himself" (54). There is indeed "communion" (sharing, mutuality, *perichoresis*) between the divine persons. But it seems to me that the term participation is used here in a too thin, even improper, sense. Not everything is a matter of participation. Participation cannot be without an aspect of causal dependency and derivation.

There is some confusion about the notion of likeness (*similitudo*). One should strictly distinguish between the general *likeness* and the specific *image*. These two notions get mixed up when the author explains that the creature's goodness comes from the goodness of God, and has a likeness of that divine goodness. He then says, correctly, that the idea of likeness denies any continuity of substance between God and creatures. He illustrates what it means to say that the creaturely likeness differs in substance with the example of an image such as a portrait, which is a representation of the original in another medium, thus lacking the same nature of the original. I think the term "image" here is confusing, since it is already in use with respect to the specific likeness which exists between intellectual creatures and God. The author, however, uses the term in order to emphasize the aspect of discontinuity. To make his point he quotes a passage from Kathryn Tanner who speaks of creation in a peculiar and unfitting way. God's creation of the world, she says, is a kind of "duplication of what God is in the form of something that is not God. It is not an exact duplication. . . . Creation is a duplicate in the form of an image" (78). The word "image" is used here to highlight the aspect of difference and distance, but normally it is used in exactly the opposite sense (the human person as *imago Dei*, thus more than merely a *similitudo*). A similar confusion happens in note 4 of chapter 2, where the notion of an analogical cause (God—creature), in contrast to the univocal causation within nature (man generates man) is clarified and illustrated with the example of a footprint.

In Aquinas's view, one must say that God *is* his being while a creature *has* being. The author offers some interesting reflections about the English word "to have" (75). "Having" might point in the direction of "possessing": if a creature is said to have being or to have beauty, it truly exists (in virtue of its

being) and it truly is beautiful (in virtue of its beauty). Some might suggest instead an opposition between "having" (possessing) and "participation" (having by way of derivation from a source). The author then explains what in his eyes are the two senses of the word "to have," both of which should be affirmed. For instance, Aquinas says that "the creature *has* what belongs to God" (*creatura habet quod Dei est*). There is distinction—the creature is not like God—but the word "has" also stresses the reality of what the creature receives. The unity of both aspects, derivation/dependency and possession, is then expressed by the following crucial formulation: "the perfect intensity of divine being ought to make us think that what God gives is all the more real on that account, not less" (76). I agree with all of this: it is because God has the fullness of being that he can give being to others, in such a way that they truly have being in themselves. The real communication of being to the creature seems absent in the quotation of Calvin, used as one of the book's mottoes. According to Calvin, "our being is nothing but subsistence in the one God." This certainly indicates a strong and radical dependency upon God, but not participation.

Participation in God works with a globalized notion of participation which is given a place of honor within a distinctive Christian theological view of God, the world, and human life. This approach is successful in its broad and persuasive vision, but the disadvantage is that the deeper speculative meaning of participation with regard to the ontological constitution of finite reality, thus participation of *being*, does not receive due attention.

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Creation and Contingency in Early Patristic Thought: The Beginning of All Things. By JOSEPH TORCHIA, O.P. Pp. xxiv + 228. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2019. Pp. xxiv + 288. $95.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-1-4985-6281-2.

Although this book covers ground that has been covered by previous books on the Christian doctrine of creation out of nothing, the title intimates that the question for Christian writers before Nicaea, and even their philosophical interlocutors, was not so much the provenance of the substrate of the world as its "contingency," its dependence on an eternal power and purpose. As Torchia demonstrates in his first chapter, the opening verses of Genesis, while not entirely destitute of a philosophy, were written to proclaim the complete

subjection of the world to its maker, not to determine the ontological status of the chaos that preceded it. The prophets extol God's majesty and beneficence, while the Psalms and Solomonic books ascribe all the works of nature to his wisdom, without pronouncing on the origin of matter, and even the incidental praise of God as the one who made all things "from what is not (*ex ouk onton* or *ouk ex onton*) at 2 Maccabees 7:28 does not tell us whether this state that precedes existence as we know it was one of absolute nothingness. Torchia argues that the early Christians were chiefly concerned to renew and refine this doctrine of contingency when they married the Mosaic account of creation to its most beguiling rival in the Greek world, the *Timaeus* of Plato (which is the subject of chapter 2).

In the *Timaeus* (which, as Torchia says, follows the discussion of formal causes in the *Phaedo* and of the good as final cause in the *Republic*), the efficient cause of creation is a Demiurge, or artificer, who imposes upon the labile realm of becoming the timeless principles that inhabit the realm of being. His action as creator is voluntary, yet also a logical corollary of his goodness; the narrative inevitably depicts him as acting in time, yet time itself is one his first productions, the necessary matrix of the laws which regulate change and succession in the physical cosmos. For the shaping of this world a receptacle is necessary; consistency of reasoning forbids us, however, to grant it any definite form, so that even Plato's own word *khora* or "space" is only a symbol of the unbridged lacuna in our vocabulary. While it is never called "matter," it is sufficiently recalcitrant to impose limits on the resemblance of the temporal copy to its eternal paradigm; at the same time, we are not told whether the Demiurge is the author of this paradigm or what it was a paradigm of in the time (if it was a time) before the cosmos came into existence. Even without the assistance of Aristotle, any thoughtful reader of Plato might have come to the view that this "likely tale" was not a literal statement of his beliefs but a new sketch of the "way of seeming" which his venerable predecessor Parmenides of Elea had opposed to the way of truth.

To these arguments against the literal reading of the dialogue, which are accurately set out by Torchia, we must add that in the *Phaedrus* of Plato, soul is necessarily immortal, being the source of every movement and therefore the only possible mover of itself. From this it would seem to follow both that the temporal creation of the soul in the *Timaeus* is not to be understood literally and that the motion of the receptacle before it submits to the Demiurge must also be attributed to a pre-existent soul. This second point accounts for the postulation of an evil soul of the world in both traditions of exegesis, the literal and the allegoretic, in the early Roman era. Torchia declares the allegorists a majority, though they include at the highest count Calvenus Taurus, Apuleius, Alcinous (whose date and identity are uncertain) and Albinus if he is not the same person as Alcinous. The literal reading, which affirms a temporal creation, is defended at least by Atticus and Plutarch, who answers the difficulties raised

above by ascribing an evil soul to matter, which opposes the operations of the world-soul. Alcinous speaks obscurely of a transformation of this evil soul into the world-soul, though not by any temporal process. This speculation deserves more than passing notice because it explains how those who went under the name of Gnostics could imagine themselves to be Platonists when they maintained that the world is the product of an inferior Demiurge.

It is hard to explain the omission of Numenius of Apamea, an avowed Platonist who nonetheless held that the physical world was produced by the deflection of the gaze of the Second God, or Demiurge, from the realm of being to that of matter. Since he does not imply that this aberration was eternal, he must therefore be added as a third to the minority party, and Torchia's own nomenclature invites us to add the Jewish and Christian "Platonists" who occupy the remainder of this volume. The first of these is Philo of Alexandria who, as Torchia demonstrates, is bound by the authority of Moses to identify God with the Good, with the highest principle, and with being itself, so that Plato's realm of forms becomes the *logos* or template of the temporal world within the eternal intellect. The arguments for the eternity of the world are honored by the postulation of an intelligible cosmos, but the natural world has a finite history. The doctrine of the absolute omnipotence of God might be thought to entail, and some texts in Philo might seem to assert, that matter itself is created, presumably from nothing. As Torchia shows, however, treading nimbly between the competing inferences of Wolfson, O'Neill, and Winston, the contingency of the world is more clearly formulated in Philo than is any doctrine of creation out of nothing. Torchia suggests that his use of the locution *mê on* rather than *ouk on* implies that God created not from nothing but from that which was not yet something; this is both a tenable view and the dominant one, but Gerhard May's dissenting position (*Creatio ex nihilo* [London: T&T Clark, 2004], 27-28) ought not to be ignored.

Divine prepotence is naturally the dominant theme of the chapters on Christian authors, even where there is no clear affirmation of creation out of nothing. For Clement of Rome, God is not only Father but Demiurge and Creator, this cluster of terms implying responsibility not only for the governance of the world as one concordant whole but for its very existence. Justin is for Torchia a "Christian Platonist" who substitutes formless matter for the chaos of Genesis 1:2, asserting the temporality of creation but reserving his judgment as to whether God found or created the substrate. Athenagoras goes beyond him in equating God with being as well as goodness—thereby proving himself at once more biblical and more Platonic—but magnifies the sovereignty of God by explicitly declaring matter to be his creation. Tatian too, although he tacitly sides with the "minority" among Platonists who denied an eternal creation, sets himself apart from both Greeks and Platonists in deducing from the omnipotence of God that God is also the author of matter. While all this is well observed, Torchia attenuates at least one important distinction between

some Platonists and all Christians when he argues that both philosophies hold the world to be contingent in the sense that it depends for its existence on the eternal. The contingent, in common usage, is surely that which might have been otherwise, and the Christian doctrine of temporal creation therefore upholds not only the literal truth of Scripture but the freedom of God to refrain from producing a world. At the same time, there is also at least a superficial analogy to be noted between the evil world-soul of Plutarch and Alcinous and the representation of Satan, in both Tatian and Athenagoras, as the self-appointed overlord of matter. Their purpose of course is to demonstrate the futility of idolatry, not to diminish the power of God, but for that very reason they assert the sovereignty of God over matter more vehemently than do Justin or any of his Platonic forebears.

Theophilus of Antioch unambiguously denies the pre-existence of matter and indicates, by contrasting *ex ouk ontôn* with *einai*, "to be," that he understands 2 Maccabees 7:28 as a testimony to creation out of absolute nonbeing. As Torchia remarks, he cements his argument with quotations from the prophets and a more tenacious exegesis of the first chapters of Genesis than one finds in any of his precursors. In his discussion of the "polemical context," however, Torchia has nothing to say of Hermogenes, against whom Theophilus wrote a whole treatise, and who seems to have been the first professing Christian to have differentiated creation *ex oudenos* (out of nothing) from creation *ex ouk ontôn*. Tertullian, who gives us this information, was bound by biblical precedent to embrace creation *ex nihilo*, for that is the wording of 2 Maccabees 7:28 in his Latin translation. Studies of creation from nothing repeatedly fail to note that for all Latin authors it is the only position sanctioned by the Scriptures—not so much for theological reasons as because common Latin speech had no equivalent for the Greek participle of the verb "to be."

The Alexandrian school of Clement and Origen supplies a bridge between Athens and Jerusalem, and a fine peroration to Torchia's inquiry. Clement vindicates both the goodness of the created order against the Gnostics and the superiority of the biblical God to any first principle imagined by the philosophers. Yet even his strong asseverations of divine transcendence and the contingency of the material order yield no clear doctrine of the creation of matter, and he does not achieve perfect clarity in reconciling the temporal creation with the atemporal design of the Creator. In Origen the Wisdom of God is eternally pregnant with the forms of being, and the material cosmos (which he takes to be temporal in origin and created out of nothing) would not need to exist at all were it not that the beings who populate the intellectual realm are prone to fall away and are therefore in need of a penal sphere in which they can expiate their sins. Neither Torchia nor others who accept this reading of Origen explain why it should not entail an everlasting cosmos or (as some of his detractors claimed) an infinite series of worlds. There is no discussion here of the authenticity of the Greek text in Koetschau's edition of the *First Principles*

(see 200 n. 52), of the possible distinction between a fall and a descent of souls (as noted by Ilaria Ramelli), or of Panayiotis Tzamalikos's observation that the contents of the eternal realm are *logika* (intelligibles) rather than *logikoi* (intelligible beings). The Greek in Koetschau is once again preferred to the Latin when Origen is said to have held that God's power is finite rather than that God has the power to create a finite world of any magnitude that he chooses (*First Principles* 2.9.1 [Torchia, 188]). And, like most other scholars, including those who made a search for antecedents of Bishop Berkeley in the Fathers, Torchia does not mention Origen's doubts (at *First Principles* 4.4.7) as to the necessity of postulating even created matter as a substrate for entities which a truly omnipotent deity could sustain by the mere exertion of his will.

I do not say that this is Origen's settled theory, and I do not expect Torchia to resolve in half a chapter the questions that have not been put to rest by other scholars in whole monographs on Origen. Within the terms that it sets for itself, this study of the early Christian doctrine of contingency is both subtle and comprehensive, and my comments have been designed not to express disagreement with what Torchia has said, but to show what more may need to be said to complete our understanding of this momentous topic.

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Aquinas and the Metaphysics of Creation. By GAVEN KERR. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. viii + 252. $99.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-0-1909-4130-7.

At the core of Gaven Kerr's new volume is an explanation and a defense of Aquinas's account of divine creation. Aquinas's basic insight on this topic is that everything other than God is dependent on God for existence but that God is dependent on nothing whatsoever. This position recurs throughout the corpus of Aquinas's works and is a nonnegotiable aspect of the Catholic faith.

Kerr includes an analysis of Aquinas's use of other thinkers as well as a brief comparison of his position with contemporary scientific thinking on the evolutionary development of the cosmos and on biological evolution. He defends the Thomistic position that all developments in the physical cosmos, including those of a biological character, necessarily presuppose the creative activity of God. The activity of divine creation, for Aquinas, is not simply a divine act that took place long ago and far away. By envisioning divine creativity

not only as what brought things into existence but also as what sustains them in existence and guides their development, Aquinas shows how every creature and every kind of creature exhibits ultimate dependence upon God.

In the first chapter Kerr considers the body of thought about the nature and origins of the cosmos that Aquinas inherited, especially through his study of the newly recovered texts of Aristotle. Chapter 1 reviews the positions taken by various Presocratic thinkers. Where they argued that all forms of being are produced from certain first principles of a material character by the operations of an efficient cause, Aquinas saw the need to consider the topic in a more universal way (that is, from the perspective of what they all share: existence) so as to supply in his account something that could bring things that do not have existence of themselves into existence *ex nihilo* (out of nothing).

In Plato Aquinas saw a thinker who regarded all material being as dependent on an immaterial source and who proposed a version of the doctrine of participation as an explanation for the unity in being that obtains among the multiplicity of existents. Here Kerr finds Aquinas quietly to have adapted the Platonic concept of participation (and thereby to have corrected what Aristotle so sharply criticized in the thought of Plato) by interpreting it in a way that resembles his own position: those things that do not possess being essentially must depend on God, whose essence is existence. For Aquinas, participation in existence by things that do not of themselves have existence is a vital aspect of the metaphysics of creation.

In the final portion of this first chapter, Kerr treats Aquinas's use of other thinkers whom he found to have proposed the reality of a first cause by reasoning that without such a primary cause nothing else would exist. These philosophers include Jewish, Christian, and Islamic thinkers and their pagan Neoplatonic sources.

The second chapter features Aquinas's argument for holding that the nature of the creator differs in kind from the natures of all creatures. Whereas the creator of beings has existence essentially and bestows *esse* on creatures, every creature (no matter what kind it is) is a composite of *esse* and *essentia*. The gift of *esse* actualizes the potency of these finite essences, which participate in (that is, depend on) the existence that God gives them in order for them to be.

In this chapter Kerr considers at length the signature Thomistic doctrine that in God existence and essence are identical. As the unique source of existence for everything else, God is not dependent on anything for existence. Kerr then relates this fundamental aspect of divine existence to Aquinas's discussion of divine knowledge, love, and power. In Aquinas's account of the divine ideas, God knows all the possible ways in which his essence can be reflected in his creatures, but he does not choose to bring all these possibilities into existence. The beings that God does call into existence are ordered to the end of showing forth his divine goodness.

Much as Lawrence Moonan did in his wide-ranging *Divine Power: The Medieval Power Distinction up to Its Adoption by Albert, Bonaventure, and Aquinas* (Clarendon Press, 1994), Kerr in his third chapter locates Aquinas's doctrine of creation within the long-standing medieval tradition of differentiating the infinite power of God (that is, considered absolutely) and the actual exercise of divine power (that is, considered conditionally). The significance of this distinction for the doctrine of creation turns on Aquinas's decision to argue for the one-way real relation between God and creatures, such that creatures are causally dependent on God (and thus really related to him) because of the gift of *esse* that God communicates to them when bringing them into existence. Apart from this use of divine power they would not exist, and even once creatures are in existence, they cannot create anything *ex nihilo* but can only act upon what already exists. God, however, is independent in being and not dependent on creatures in any way.

The nature of divine causality is the subject of Kerr's fourth chapter. Here we find a lucid account of the difference between God as the uncaused cause and the series of caused causes that participate in the causality communicated to them and to each element in the series by the first cause. Taking this point as the lynchpin of Aquinas's account, Kerr stresses the way in which all the causality that we can ever in principle observe among secondary causes would cease if a theorist were to remove from the series the operation of the first cause.

Kerr devotes the fifth chapter to a consideration of the being of creatures as participants in *esse*. The topic leads him not only to a consideration of the role of secondary causes in the production of new substances but also to a defense of the Thomistic doctrine of *creatio continua*. It follows from the recognition that each created substance as a whole and each of its metaphysical components (e.g., matter and form, accidents) are to be understand as preserved in being by the creator. Without the gift of *esse* in which a substance participates, neither a substance considered as a whole nor its components would exist.

The final two chapters take up the question of the history and purpose of creation. After reviewing the reasons for Aquinas's reticence about ruling out the possibility of the eternity of the created world on purely philosophical grounds, apart from faith in divine revelation, Kerr examines Aquinas's understanding of the notion of *creatio ex nihilo* as meaning that beings that are composed of essence and existence would be nothing without the gift of a participation in existence. The act of creation, he notes, does not involve a process of change in something that exists but the bestowal of existence that it would not have unless it were given (whether in time or in eternity).

In the latter half of the sixth chapter, Kerr introduces the subject of Aquinas's use of the biblical account of creation in Genesis. For the purpose of his exegesis, Aquinas distinguishes God's work into three periods: the creation of the entirety of the cosmos (the conferral of existence upon spiritual creatures as well as corporeal things), the distinction of creatures (the role of the divine ideas

in the way God thinks up the various ways in which different types of creatures could reflect one or another aspect of God's own goodness), and the adornment of creation (including the interventions by God that bring individual human beings into existence as creatures made in his image and according to his likeness).

In chapter 7 Kerr examines Aquinas's views on God himself as the end for which God made all that he chose to create and to preserve in existence. Here Kerr stresses Aquinas's use of one of the most fundamental principles in his typical pattern of argumentation, namely, his doctrine that every action is for an end. If the final cause were to be removed, an efficient cause would be without its causality. Kerr shows that, for Aquinas, secondary efficient causes depend on the first cause both for their causal efficiency and for their end. God is not only being itself and thus the source from which everything else proceeds, but also the end toward which all things are directed. For Aquinas, this is true of every range of being in the cosmos, but especially human beings. The possibility of their union with God comes about through the access to the beatific vision that is opened to them by the grace of Christ.

Kerr's volume on the metaphysics of creation is a well-crafted account of an important aspect of Aquinas's thought.

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