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FAITH AND REASON RECONSIDERED: AQUINAS AND LUfHER ON DECIDING WHAT IS TRUE[1]

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IN WHAT MAY REMAIN the most widely read book in English about Thomas Aquinas, G. K. Chesterton locates Thomas's chief contribution to the Church, and to the whole human enterprise, by contrasting him with Luther. "It was the very life of the Thomist teaching that Reason can be trusted: it was the very life of the Lutheran teaching that Reason is utterly untrustworthy. "[2]

Thomas's great achievement, Chesterton argues, was to achieve a perfect balance and harmony between faith and reason, Christ and Aristotle. Luther's great importance lay in his singleminded effort-remarkably successful, Chesterton ruefully concedes-to destroy what Thomas achieved. Luther's passionate hatred of reason rudely dissolves the problem Thomas had so exquisitely solved. Thus no comparison between them on the problem of faith and reason is really possible, since properly speaking Luther, having simply rejected reason, has no position on the issue at all. Indeed, while the two figures can rightly be compared for their great though antithetical historical influence, in the nature of the case there can be no comparison of their views on any matter of theological and philosophical substance.

[1] This paper considerably revises a presentation first given at a conference on Trinitarian theology in Neuendettelsau, Germany, in March 1993, and published in German in the proceedings of that conference: Joachim Heubach, ed., *Luther und die trinitarische Tradition: Okumenische und philosophische Perspektiven* (Erlangen: Martin-Luther-Verlag, 1994).

[2] G. K. Chesterton, *Saint Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Doubleday, 1956; first published 1933), 33.

"To compare these two figures bulking so big in history, in any philosophical sense, would of course be futile and even unfair. On a great map like the mind of Aquinas, the mind of Luther would be almost invisible."[3]

This paper argues that Aquinas and Luther hold basically the same view of faith and reason: the view that the most central Christian beliefs, those generated by communal interpretation of Scripture according to creedal rules, enjoy unrestricted epistemic primacy. It is not my purpose here to argue that this is the right theological view to have of how to decide which beliefs (or candidates for belief} are true; that I have done elsewhere.[4] But of course in order to hold this view one need not rely upon the contemporary idiom I have just used to state it. Despite their distance from us and their genuine differences from each other, Aquinas and Luther each counts as a rich precedent for a theological epistemology which accords unrestricted epistemic primacy to the Christian community's most central convictions-to the deliverances of faith rather than to those of reason.

Of course much has changed since Chesterton's dismissal of Luther sixty years ago. A generation of Catholic and Lutheran scholarship has found Aquinas and Luther to be not only comparable, but in profound agreement, on some utterly central theological matters-above all the justification of the sinner and the wider complex of issues surrounding that topic, traditionally regarded as the most important and most divisive in Catholic-Lutheran theological controversy.[5] Unfortunately school theology, both Catholic and Protestant, has barely begun to get the message that Aquinas and Luther might both be greatly misunderstood if they are assumed to be opposites.

Perhaps nowhere is this more clearly the case than on the question of faith and reason. Though in our day few would put the matter quite so bluntly as Chesterton, the assumptions which lead him to play Aquinas and Luther off against one another remain largely in place. Defenders of Aquinas on faith and reason

[3] Ibid., 194.

[4] In *Trinity and Truth* (Cambridge: University Press, 1999).

[5] Above all see Otto Hermann Pesch, *Die Theologie der Rechtfertigung bei Martin Luther und Thomas van Aquin* (Mainz: Matthias-Griinewald-Verlag, 1967; reprint 1985).

(most, though not all, Catholic) still tend to assume that Luther was a naive if perhaps admirably passionate fideist, whose hatred of reason isolates Christian theology from the rest of human knowledge and thereby makes it impossible to give reasonable people any grounds for thinking that Christian beliefs are plausible, let alone true. Defenders of Luther on faith and reason (here the Lutherans have the field pretty much to themselves) still tend to assume that Aquinas was more a philosopher than a theologian, a rationalist who skews-perhaps perverts-the gospel by trying to harmonize it with Aristotle, and thereby fails to see that the gospel contradicts all human wisdom, as it contradicts all human righteousness.

Even among specialists, the suggestion that despite obvious and important differences in concept, interest, and style, Aquinas and Luther might basically agree on faith and reason has made little progress compared with the suggestion that they agree on the justification of the sinner. In part this reflects the persistence of those readings that support the assumption that their opposition on the matter of faith and reason is basic and obvious. I will therefore try to suggest how the standard readings might be undermined in both cases. In part, though, the assumption of opposition has nothing specifically to do with Aquinas and Luther, but with the vagueness of the question of "faith and reason." Our chance of progress in sorting out their respective views on this nest of issues will likely increase if we pose to each of them a more precise question: how should we decide what sentences and beliefs are true? The hope is that by attending to this question about epistemic justification we will be able to uncover broad and deep agreement between the two theologians on how it should be answered.

I. AQUINAS ON FAITH, NATURAL REASON, AND EPISTEMIC PRIORITIES

Since my primary aim is to test the claim that Aquinas and Luther basically agree on how to decide what is true, I will here only outline a reading of Aquinas on this matter. I have developed and defended this sort of reading in more detail

elsewhere.[6] The interpretation of Aquinas outlined here is, moreover, broadly congruent with those proposed at book length by Michel Corbin and, more recently, by Thomas Hibbs and Eugene Rogers.[7] In what follows I will try to identify the main elements in Aquinas's account of how we should decide what is true, and since the way I will read him departs rather dramatically from standard interpretations respond to some objections to this reading which naturally arise.

"The chief matter in the teaching of the Christian faith," Thomas observes in commenting on 1 Corinthians 1:17, "is the salvation accomplished by the cross of Christ." In order to teach any subject matter successfully, he goes on to say, the manner of teaching must befit the distinctive character of that subject matter. Otherwise the matter itself will be distorted or destroyed in the attempt to teach it, and the learner will come to understand and know not the intended subject matter but a different one, or perhaps none at all—as happens, for example, with those who try to teach the inexact science of ethics deductively.[8] Here as elsewhere, Thomas maintains, Aristotle had the right idea: "The way of making the truth manifest in a given science must be suitable to the matter which is the subject of that science."[9] What then is the proper way to make manifest that truth which is the chief matter of Christian faith? Thomas seems to propose two main conditions for rightly teaching (or preaching) "the salvation accomplished by the cross of Christ."

[6] See Bruce D. Marshall, "Aquinas as Postliberal Theologian," *The Thomist* 53 (1989): 353-402; idem, "Thomas, Thomisms, and Truth," *The Thomist* 56 (1992): 499-524; idem, "Absorbing the World: Christianity and the Universe of Truths," in *Theology and Dialogue*, ed. Bruce D. Marshall (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 69-102, esp. 90-97.

[7] Michel Corbin, *Le chemin de la theologie chez Thomas dAquin* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1974); Thomas S. Hibbs, *Dialectic and Narrative in Aquinas: An Interpretation of the Summa Contra Gentiles* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995); Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: Sacred Doctrine and the Natural Knowledge of God* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995). The last includes an instructive comparison with Barth (who, as we will argue here about Luther, apparently turns out not to be the epistemic antithesis of Thomas that he himself supposed).

[8] *In I Cor.* c. 1, lect. 3 (no. 45). *S. Thomae Aquinatis Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura*, vol. 1, 8th ed., ed. R. Cai, O.P. (Turin: Marietti, 1953). All translations are my own.

[9] *S. Thomae Aquinatis in Decem Libras Ethicorum Aristotelis Expositio*, ed. R. Spiazzi, O.P. (Turin: Marietti, 1949), c. 1, lect. 3 (no. 32).

First, this matter cannot be taught rightly if we attempt to decide about its truth by the standards of human reason. That person teaches "according to human wisdom" *(in sapientia verbi),* Thomas explains, "who accepts the wisdom of human reason as the primary basis of his teaching, so that he accepts only those teachings which are supported by human reason, and rejects those which are not. But this destroys the faith."[10] As Thomas sees it (in, for example, his commentary on Col 2:8), the great temptation of philosophy for Christian faith and theology lies in its power to lure those who would teach the faith into this self-destruction, which happens "when someone wants to measure the things of faith according to the principles of [created] reality and not according to divine wisdom...u Philosophy deceives when it seduces us into "measuring the truth of faith according to the truth of creatures"; the greatest temptation to this fatal epistemic reversal comes, of course, precisely from *good* philosophy, that which judges *per principia realia philosophiae,* and not *per sophisticas rationes-but* presumes to render a verdict where no philosophical *principia* have the right to judge.[12] For those who succumb to the temptation and decide about truth "according to the world" *(secundum mundum)* and its wisdom, the preaching of the cross of Christ inevitably turns into foolishness, "since it includes something which seems impossible according to human wisdom, namely that God dies *[Deus moriatur],* and that the omnipotent becomes subject to the power of the violent."[13]

On Thomas's account two outcomes, in fact, seem possible when the *annuntiatio crucis Christi* is measured for truth by the standards of human reason: either it will be taken to propose beliefs inconsistent with these standards, and so be rejected as false, or the meaning of the sentences that make up the *annuntiatio* will be changed in order to make them consistent

[10] *In I Cor.* c. 1, lect. 3 (no. 43). On the equivalence of *sapientia verbi* and *sapientia humanae rationis,* cf. ibid. (no. 42).

[11] *In Col.* c. 2, lect. 2 (no. 92); *Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura,* vol. 2, ed. R. Cai, O.P. (Turin: Marietti, 1953).

[12] Ibid. (nos. 94, 91).

[13] *In I Cor.* c. 1, lect. 3 (no. 47).

with, and so capable of being held true by, these same standards (so that God is not really held to die, be subject to the violent, and the like). Either way the chief matter of Christian faith fails to be taught; Paul's point in this passage, Thomas argues, is precisely that those who rely epistemically "primarily upon the wisdom of human reason" empty the cross of Christ of its power to save, because in so doing they fail to teach the chief matter of Christian faith in "a manner suitable to" the matter itself.[14]

Interpreting this claim depends in part on specifying the beliefs or classes of beliefs that are supposed to count as "the wisdom of human reason," and as such may not be used to assess the truth of the chief matter of Christian faith, however legitimately they may be applied to test the truth of other beliefs. The long way to go about this would be to search out a definition (what Thomas calls a *formalis ratio)* of "human wisdom," "human reason," or "philosophy" that would enable us to pick out those beliefs that are humanly wise, reasonable, or philosophical, but there is, I think, a more direct way to get at what Thomas is claiming. He objects not to "human reason" and "philosophy" *per se* but to a particular use of those beliefs that human beings will naturally tend to regard as reasonable. That person rightly "uses the wisdom of human reason," Thomas argues, "who, presupposing the foundations of the true faith, if he finds anything true in the teachings of the philosophers, takes it into the obedience of faith."[15] *Any* belief, it seems, no matter how reasonable or obvious, becomes for Thomas "human wisdom" in the sense Paul rejects when it is set up as a standard by which to assess the truth of those beliefs which constitute "the foundations of the true faith"; conversely, the right use of the "true faith" is to take it as the final standard by which to assess beliefs we otherwise regard as reasonable, in order to see decisively if we can "find anything true" in them. Thomas's first rule for teaching the Christian faith is thus that we keep our epistemic priorities straight: we ought to

[14] Ibid. (no. 45). On *principaliter mundo innititur,* cf. *In I Cor.* c. 3, lect. 3 (no. 179), which contrasts this sort of disordered epistemic use of the *res huius mundi* with use rightly ordered by the *sapientia Dei.*

[15] *In I Cor.* c. 1, lect. 3 (no. 43). Thomas gets this idea from Augustine *(De doctrina christiana* 2.40).

decide whether other beliefs are true by seeing whether their contents agree with those interpreted sentences which together identify and describe "the salvation accomplished by the cross of Christ," and we ought not to decide whether those same interpreted sentences are true by seeing whether they agree with the contents of other beliefs. (fhe precise range of "other beliefs" to which this rule applies will occupy us later on.)

Thomas's second rule for teaching the Christian faith is that we treat the beliefs which together identify and describe its chief matter as a complex but indivisible whole.

The Church's creed (specifically the Apostles' Creed) enumerates the leading elements in this complex of belief; Thomas counts fourteen of them, grouped into those having to do with the hidden majesty of God and those having to do with the narrative (what Thomas calls the "mystery") of Christ's particular humanity, by which we are inducted into the vision of God's otherwise hidden majesty-or, as Thomas elsewhere puts it, those pertaining to the Trinity and those pertaining to the incarnation. [16] Thus the interpreted sentences which (according to the first rule) are tests of truth for other beliefs but not tested by them are those which, when believed, shape more than any others the identity of a particular historical community; the Church is constituted as a coherent community, Thomas maintains, by its assent in love to what the creed teaches (though not, of course, only by that). [17] The articles of faith themselves collect innumerable further sentences for belief, chiefly those of Scripture. The Church's Trinitarian and Christological confession adds nothing to Scripture, but rather is drawn from Scripture in order to organize communal reading of the biblical text (an aim which includes, on Thomas's view, proposing for assent a clear summary of Scripture's content for those who would not know what to make of the text on their own). [18] "Canonical scripture alone," he

[16] Cf. *STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 8 (Turin: Marietti, 1948); *In I Cor.* c. 15, lect. 1 (no. 894).

[17] Cf. *STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 9, ad 3: "The confession of faith is handed on in the creed by the person, as it were, of the whole Church *[quasi ex persona totius Ecclesiae]*, which is united by faith. Now the faith of the Church is formed faith … ".

[18] Cf. *SI'h* II-II, q. 1, a. 9, ad 1: The creed "is certainly not added to sacred Scripture, but rather taken from sacred Scripture"; on the creed as a binding rule for scriptural interpretation, cf. *STh* II-II, q. 5, a. 3 (cited below, n. 21), and ad 2.

argues, "is the rule of faith," and so no one ought to teach otherwise than it does.[19]

Thus the epistemic priority over other beliefs which belongs to "the salvation accomplished by the cross of Christ" may be ascribed more precisely to the body of beliefs (the specific contents of which naturally change somewhat over time) generated by Scripture interpreted in the Christian community according to shared creedal rules. Communally interpreted Scripture has this high status because "it is a kind of light, flowing like a ray from the first truth"-that is, from God, who is the source and measure of all truth.[20] So understood, Scripture is the self-testimony of God as first truth, and faith is that act and habit defined by its reliance upon this self-testifying God (and so upon "divine truth itself") in its assent to (or dissent from) interpreted sentences about God, and about creatures in their relations to God.[21] Faith, in other words, clings to the incarnate and triune

[19] Thomas Aquinas, *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis Lectura,* 5th ed., ed. R. Cai, O.P. (furin: Marietti, 1952), c. 21, lect. 6 (no. 2656); cf. *In I Tim.* c. 6, lect. 1 (no. 237): "The teaching of the apostles and prophets is called canonical because it is a kind of rule for our intellect. And therefore no one ought to teach otherwise [than it does]."

[20] "The truth of sacred Scriptm e is a kind of light, flowing forth like a ray from the first truth" (fhomas Aquinas, *In Dion. de Div. Nom.,* ed. C. Pera, O.P. [furin: Marietti, 1950], c. 1, lect. 1 [no. 15]). Therefore: "If the principles on the basis of which this teaching [of the faith= theology] proceeds are those which have been received through a revelation from the Holy Spirit and handed on in the sacred Scriptures, it follows that in this teaching nothing else is handed on than those things which are contained in the sacred Scriptures" (ibid., no. 11, but I cite from the fuller text of this passage provided by Bruno Decker in "Sola Scriptura bei Thomas von Aquin," in Ludwig Lenhart, ed., *Universitas: Dienst an Wahrheit und Leben,* Festschrift for Albert Stohr [Mainz: Matthias-Grunewald, 1960], 117-29; here, 118). On God as *prima veritas,* cf. *STh* I, q. 16, aa. 5-6; *Summa Contra Gentiles* I, c. 62 (no. 519) (3 vols., ed. C. Pera et al. [furin: Marietti, 1961]).

[21] *STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 1: "Faith ... does not assent to anything except because it is revealed by God: hence faith relies upon divine truth itself as its means *[media],"* that is, as the "formalis ratio obiecti" by which the act and habit of faith are defined. Regarding faith as reliance precisely on the testimony of the first truth, which therefore necessarily includes holding specific sentences true, cf. *De Spe,* a. 1: "Faith does not count as a virtue except insofar as it clings to the testimony of the first truth, such that it believes that which is made manifest by him" (fhomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae,* vol. 2, ed. P. Bazzi, et al. *[f* urin: Marietti, 1965]). And: "The formal object of faith is the first truth, according as it is manifested in the sacred Scriptures and the teaching of the Church. Hence whoever does not cling to the teaching of the Church, as to an infallible and divine rule which originates *[procedit]* from the first truth made manifest in the sacred Scriptures, does not have the habit of faith" *(STh* II-II, q. 5, a. 3).

God who manifests himself to us as first truth by way of the scripturally normed discourse of the Christian community. Indeed, the teaching and preaching of the Church are not simply this community's talk about God, nor even God's talk about himself, but God's way of giving the world a share in his own self-knowledge: "By assent faith . . . joins the human being to God's own knowing." [22]

Epistemically, the articles of Christian faith are for Thomas strictly a package deal. The central nexus of Christian teaching is made up of many beliefs, but they are all mutually fit for one another in such a way that the "perception of divine truth" depends upon holding them all true together. [23] That is: if one of the sentences which make up the articles of faith is held true-say, "Deus est unus"-while another is not-say, "Deus est trinitas Personarum" or "Deus moritur"-then the sentence held true is, in the mind and on the lips of that holder, false.

Thomas makes this point in a particularly striking way when he considers the possibility of what later came to be called "natural theology," that is, whether a person without Christian faith (specifically a pre-Christian philosopher) is able, at least in some respects, to know the truth about God. Commenting, for example, on the statement "O righteous Father, the world has not known you" Gohn 17:25), he remarks that "while some of the Gentiles knew God with respect to certain things which were knowable by reason, nevertheless they did not know him insofar as he is the Father of the only-begotten and consubstantial Son," that is, they did not know about the Trinity and the incarnation. In this way they were wrong about God, if only by error of

[22] *De Verit.,* q. 14, a. 8 (S. *Thomae Aquinatis Quaestiones Disputatae,* vol. 1, 8th ed., ed. R. Spiazzi, 0.P. [Turin: Marietti, 1949)). Correlatively *sacra doctrina,* having as its first principles the articles of faith, is able to talk about God not only with respect to what may be known *per creaturas* (about which more momentarily), but "with respect to that which is known to God alone concerning himself, and which is shared with others by revelation" *(STh* I, q. 1, a. 6).

[23] *STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 6: "Those matters which the Christian faith proposes for belief *[credibilia fidei Christianae]* are said to be distinguished into various 'articles' insofar as they are divided into certain parts having a mutual fitness for one another *[coaptationem ad invicem];* ibid., sed contra: "We attain the perception of divine truth in a way which involves a certain distinction, in that those things which are one in God become manifold in our intellect."

omission (though Thomas also ascribes errors of commission to all the ancient philosophers, including Aristotle). But "even if they err in the smallest way regarding the knowledge of God, they are said to be completely ignorant of him *[Unde etsi in minimo aliqui errent circa Dei cognitionem, dicuntur eum totaliter ignorare]*."[24] The beliefs that God is and is one are true on Thomas's account, it seems, only when they are held true together with the rest of the articles of faith ("under the conditions faith defines," as Thomas puts it).[25] Otherwise the holder labors under a cognitive defect so drastic that his holding true completely fails to attain any real object; in this case *defectus cognitionis est so/um in non attingendo totaliter-any* defect of knowledge is complete ignorance.[26] In other words: under these conditions a person's holding true lacks the *adaequatio* or *correspondentia mentis ad rem* by which (however more precisely construed) truth is defined, and so his beliefs are false.[27]

Thomas's technical device for making this point is a notion, derived from Aristotle, of the way a simple or incomposite reality may be known. The idea, roughly, is that while our minds can be conformed to any reality (be "true" with respect to that reality) only by holding true interpreted sentences, in "simple things," unlike the composite objects of our ordinary sense experience, there are no real distinctions which correspond to the distinctions between the relevant true sentences. As a result, while it is logically and psychologically possible to hold some of the relevant sentences true without others, in the case of "simples" there can be no partial conformity; one either believes enough sentences to bring about the conformity, or one does not have it at all. Applied

[24] *In Joan.* c. 17, lect. 6 (no. 2265); for the text and a more detailed discussion, cf. Marshall, "Thomas, Thomisms, and Truth," 501-4. On Aristotle's errors of commission, cf. ibid., 502 n. 4.

[25] *SI'h* 11-11, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3. For a fuller discussion of this text see Marshall, "Aquinas as Postliberal Theologian," 380-84. On the Trinity as falling "under the conditions faith defines," cf. III *Sent.*, d. 23, q. 2, a. 2, qcla. 2, ad 2 (no. 151) (ed. P. Mandonnet, O.P., and M. F. Moos, O.P. [Paris: Lethielleux, 1929-47]).

[26] *SI'h* 11-11, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3.

[27] For a more detailed discussion of the notion of truth as *adaequatio, correspondentia*, and the like, see my essay, "'We Shall Bear the Image of the Man of Heaven': Theology and the Concept of Truth," *Modern Theology* 11 (1995): 93-117; and *Trinity and Truth*, chs. 8-9.

(in a supreme or supereminent sense) to God, this notion of simplicity means that "those things which are one in God become manifold in our intellect," and only taken together does the manifold yield "perception of divine truth. "[28]

However, the force of Thomas's apparent claim that the prospective natural theologian-someone who believes that God exists but not that God is incarnate and dies-fails *(totaliter)* to "reach" God cognitively, need not depend, I think, upon recourse to a theory of the knowledge of simples. The same point can be made by attending to the way the sense or interpretation of the sentence "Deus est" is fixed in such a way that when held true, it is true. According to Thomas, someone in the epistemic situation of the would-be natural theologian "does not believe under the conditions faith defines," and therefore "does not really believe that there is a God *[nee vere Deum credunt]."*[29] In the first place this seems simply to mean, as the conclusion of this reply goes on to state explicitly, that the natural theologian's beliefs about God (and in particular his belief that God exists) are not true *(defectus ... est ... in non attingendo totaliter).* But it also suggests that the natural theologian, not believing "under the conditions faith defines" (for example, together with belief in the Trinity and the incarnation), does not believe the same thing as the Christian when he asserts "Deus est" (that is, "does not 'really' *[vere]* believe that God exists"). The point would then be that "Deus est" when spoken by the natural theologian does not mean the same thing as it does when spoken by the believer, and indeed cannot have a meaning which agrees with the way the world is arranged, that is, which makes for a true sentence.

Read in this way, Thomas's claim that "Deus est" can be, as spoken, false-even when spoken as the conclusion of a formally valid argument, as it was, so Thomas supposes, by the ancient

[28] *STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 6, sc (cf. above, n. 23). Thomas applies this argument in both of the passages just discussed *(STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3 and *In Joan.* c. 17, lect. 6 [no. 2265]); cf. also IX *Metaphys.,* lect. 11 (nos. 1905-7) (ed. M.-R. Cathala, O.P., and R. Spiazzi, O.P. [Turin: Marietti, 1964]). The general principles at work here are: "Every knower has knowledge of that which is known not in the manner of the thing known, but in the manner of the knower," and "No creature's manner [of knowing] reaches the height of the divine majesty" (I *Sent.,* d. 3, q. 1, a. 1).

[29] *STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3.

philosophers-might be interpreted along the following lines. The meaning and interpretation of any one sentence a speaker utters are fixed by ascertaining the truth value the speaker assigns to that sentence, and establishing the logical location of the interpreted sentence by working out its connections to a host of other more or less closely associated sentences the speaker holds true. (I group meaning and interpretation together on the assumption, argued for in different ways by Wittgenstein, Quine, Davidson, and others, that meaning is public-that a speaker means just what an interpreter can correctly make out, where "correctly" does not involve any question-begging appeal to prior knowledge of the speaker's beliefs and intentions.) [30] When the believer asserts "Deus est," the meaning of that sentence is fixed by its location in the logical space of the articles of the creed; what the believer means by "Deus," for example, is established by his assent to closely related sentences like "Verbum [therefore "Deus"] caro factum est" and "Deus moritur."

These are sentences which, *per definitionem,* the natural theologian does not hold true. However, if the sense of the natural theologian's "Deus est" is supposed to be what compels the believer to regard it as false (apart from a theory about the knowledge of simples), then that sense will presumably have to be incompatible with the meaning the sentence has in the logical space of assent to the creed, and not simply different from it. Now believers, according to Thomas, "recognize in the cross of Christ the death of God, by which he has conquered the devil and the world"; in so doing, as we have seen, they attribute to God what "seems impossible according to human wisdom." [31] That is: people who fix the sense of "Deus est" by holding true sentences like "Verbum [=Deus] caro factum est" and "Unus de trinitate passus est" (people who are *eo ipso* believers) will also, indeed necessarily, hold true "Deus moritur." By contrast, people who fix the sense of "Deus est" otherwise than by holding true

[30] *As* Davidson observes: "We cannot hope to attach a sense to the attribution of finely discriminated intentions independently of interpreting speech ... interpreting an agent's intentions, his beliefs and his words are parts of a single project, no part of which can be assumed to be complete before the rest is" ("Radical Interpretation," in *Inquiriesinto Truth and Interpretation*[Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984], 127).

[31] *In I Cor.* c. 1, lect. 3 (no. 47); cf. above, n. 13.

sentences like these will, Thomas supposes, inevitably reject "Deus moritur," indeed will find it foolish. Consequently what they mean by "Deus" when they assert "Deus est" will not only be different from, but contradictory to, what the believer means; if the believer's assertion of "Deus est" is true, the natural theologian's cannot be.

Of course many more people hold true the sentence "Deus est" than hold true sentences like "Verbum caro factum est" and "Deus moritur," and the existence of God can (when he is adequately identified as the God who dies on the cross) be demonstrated, while his death cannot (about which more in a moment). But it seems that on Thomas's view "Deus est" is no more central epistemically than "Deus moritur," since the latter fixes the former's sense, that is, the sense according to which "Deus est" is part of the creedal network of belief to which epistemic primacy belongs.

In either case Aquinas apparently rejects natural theology in the sense in which it is usually attributed to him; people without Christian faith, despite having sometimes mastered formally valid arguments concluding in sentences like "Deus est" and "Deus est unus" (as did the ancient philosophers), do not actually speak and think truly about God--even about God's existence and unity. Despite initially appearing to offer strong resistance, Thomas's treatment of natural theology turns out, I think, to exemplify with particular force the rule that the articles of faith can only be rightly taught as a package.

To be sure, Thomas thinks God can be known *per creaturas*, in that matters like God's existence and unity can be demonstrated on the basis of beliefs about the world one need not be a Christian to hold. He takes this to be the clear teaching of Scripture (Rom 1:19-20a invariably serves as the textual support), but he takes it to be the equally clear teaching of Scripture that the possibility of knowing God *per creaturas* has been effectively withdrawn by God from fallen human beings on account of sin (for which Rom 1:20b-21 provides some of the textual support). [32]

[32] For such a juxtaposition of Rom 1:21 with Rom 1:19, see *In Joan.* c. 17, lect. 6 (no. 2265). For more on Thomas's commentary on Rom 1, see Marshall, "Thomas, Thomisms, and Truth," 509-15; Rogers gives a much more detailed analysis in *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth*, 73-180.

What the Vulgate of Romans 1:18 calls *impietas* and *iniustitia,* caused on Thomas's account by that "vanity" in which "the human mind ... having bypassed God, relies upon some sort of creature," so that human beings "place their trust in themselves, and not in God," results in the loss of the interior light by which God enables us to know him *per creaturas-a* situation which can be analyzed, I have argued, in part as an inability to fix the sense of "Deus" in a way adequate to making true assertions about God.[33]

The possibility of such knowledge becomes available once again only through "the salvation accomplished by the cross of Christ," that is, only through faith's reliant apprehension of the cruciform self-testimony of the *prima veritas,* and consequent participation in God's own knowledge: "Creatures were insufficient to lead to knowledge of the creator, hence 'the world was made through him, and knew him not' Uohn 1:10]. Therefore it was necessary that the creator himself come into the world in the flesh, and be known through himself *[per seipsum]."*[34] "The human mind is freed from vanity"-and so

[33] *In Rom.* c. 1, lect. 7 (no. 129). Thus, "'Their heart has been made foolish,' that is, it has been deprived of the light of wisdom, by which a person truly knows God" (ibid. [no. 130]).

[34] *In Joan.* c. 1, lect. 5 (no. 141). Thomas's argument here that even without sin human beings would have to believe in the future incarnation of the Word in order to know God at all contrasts sharply with the view generally attributed to him, namely that God would not have become incarnate had there been no sin-a view which, to be sure, he often enough endorses (cf. *STh* III, q. 1, a. 3; *In I Tim.* c. 1, lect. 4, [no. 40]; the latter cited in Marshall, "Thomas, Thomisms, and Truth," 514-15 n. 32). Yet in Thomas's commentary on the Johannine prologue, in contrast to the *Lectura* on Romans 1 just discussed, the inability of human beings to know God from creatures comes explicitly from a "defect of creatures" *(creaturarum defectum),* who cannot by themselves serve as an adequate basis for the knowledge of God, and not from the darkness of the human mind brought on by sin. These are two different reasons, here clearly distinguished by Aquinas, "why God willed to become incarnate." This suggestion is not without parallel in Thomas's texts. Even before the fall, he elsewhere argues, human beings could know God demonstratively *per creaturas* only together with knowledge available by faith alone, in particular only together with faith in the future incarnation (though not yet passion) of the Son: "Faith, which clings to the first truth, is common to all who have knowledge of God, but have not yet reached the blessedness to come" *(STh* II-II, q. 5, a. 1); "Before the state of sin human beings had explicit faith concerning the incarnation of Christ, insofar as this was ordered toward the attainment of glory *[consummationem gloriae],* but not insofar as it was ordered toward liberation from sin through the passion and resurrection, because humans lacked foreknowledge of the sin which was to come" *(STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 7). For some provocative reflection on these issues in

from ignorance of God-"only when it relies upon God"; God can be known through creatures only when human beings do not rely primarily upon creatures for this knowledge.[35] The believer who works out a demonstration of God's existence or unity attains genuine knowledge of God *per creaturas,* but continues to rely primarily on God's self-testimony in order to speak and think truly about God even with respect to these matters, rather than on his own apprehension of the principles upon which the demonstration is based or on the cogency with which he draws the conclusion. "A human being is much more certain about what he hears from God, who cannot be deceived, than about what he sees by his own reason, because his reason can be deceived."[36] Thus if it comes to a conflict between what seems self-evident (and in that sense certain) to us and the articles of faith (which are not certain in this way), then one holds the articles true. Here too it is necessary to keep one's epistemic priorities straight, and primacy continues to belong to the articles of faith.[37]

Thomas, cf. Michel Corbin, "La Parole devenue chair: Lecture de la premiere question de la Somme Theologique de Thomas d'Aquin," in *L'inoui"de Dieu: Six etudes christologiques* (Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1980), 109-58.

[35] *In Rom.* c. 1, lect. 7 (no. 129); cf. the "credere Deo" of *STh* 11-11, q. 2, a. 2.

[36] *STh* 11-11, q. 4, a. 8, ad 2. Similarly, "No one ought to have any doubt concerning the faith, but ought to believe what belongs to the faith more certainly than what he sees, since human vision can be deceived, but the knowledge *[scientia]* of God is never mistaken" (Nicholas Ayo, C.S.C., ed. and trans., *The Sermon-Conferences of St. Thomas Aquinas on the Apostles'Creed* [Notre Dame: University Press, 1988], 24. Ayo here publishes a preliminary version of the Leonine text [vol. 44, still forthcoming] of Aquinas's *Collationes Credo in Deum,* a work known in the "vulgate" tradition of Thomas's texts as *In Symbolum Apostolorum Expositio* [cf. *Opuscula Theologica,* vol. 2, no. 868]). Therefore, "The believer's assent to what belongs to the faith is greater and more stable even than assent to the first principles of reason" (I *Sent.* pro., q. 1, a. 3, qcla. 3). As a result, "just as knowledge *[scientia]* is certain, so also faith. Indeed much more so, since the certainty of knowledge relies upon human reason, which can be deceived, while the certainty of faith relies upon divine reason, which cannot be contradicted" *(In Joan.* c. 4, lect. 5 [no. 662]). And conversely: faith "does not rely upon human wisdom, which very often *[plerumque]* deceives human beings ... faith relies upon divine power, and therefore it cannot fail" *(In I Cor.* c. 2, lect. 1 [no. 79]). Regarding the believer's continuing reliance in love upon God's self-testimony even with respect to those articles (called by Thomas, in light of their demonstrability, "praeambula") which may be demonstrated, see *STh* 11-11, q. 2, a. 10, ad 2.

[37] The way Thomas conceives the epistemic relation between what we "hear from God" and what we "see by our own reason" helps explain his lack of interest in the question, greatly troubling to rationalist apologetics since the Enlightenment (including that of many

How far, then, does the epistemic primacy of the articles of faith-materially, of the beliefs sufficient to identify and describe "the salvation accomplished by the cross of Christ"--extend? Thomas, I think, dearly regards the epistemic primacy of the articles as unrestricted-as extending to decisions about the truth of all possible sentences. The articles, moreover, are unrestrictedly decisive. They are epistemic trump: whatever interpreted sentences are inconsistent with them cannot be true. In the nature of the case this unrestricted criteriological primacy of central Christian beliefs (that is, the beliefs which most centrally constitute the identity of this community) can only be stated negatively: "Whatever is not in agreement with Christ is to be rejected [lit., 'spewed out']."[38] The positive complement, of course, does not follow; whatever is in agreement with Christ is not, on that ground alone, to be accepted as true.

Thomists), of how we can be sure that Scripture and creed actually are God's speech. For Thomas supreme certainty belongs not to those beliefs which seem most compelling for us *in via,* but to what God says-God's speech is, indeed, that than which there can be nothing more certain, since it declares and gives us a share in God's own knowledge, itself the measure of all truth. Thus, "when a person has been led to believe by [natural reason, the testimony of the law and the prophets, and the preaching of the apostles], then he can say that he does not believe on account of any of these things: not on account of natural reason, nor on account of the testimony of the law, nor on account of the preaching of others, but on account of the truth itself" *(In Joan.* c. 4, lect. 5 [no. 662]; cf. *STh* II-II, q. 4, a. 8 and above, nn. 20-22). Since what God says is much more certain for us than what we see by our own reason, anything we could without circularity adduce in support of the claim that the articles of faith are actually God's speech would be less certain than the content of the speech itself. Because the conclusion of an argument cannot be any more certain than its premises (as Thomas, following Aristotle, assumes), any attempt to conclude on the basis of what we can see by reason that the articles are God's speech will, if successful, diminish rather than enhance the certainty of the articles (since "human vision can be deceived"). Thus any attempt to demonstrate that the articles are in fact God's speech (though not the more modest effort of attempting to reply to objections which maintain they could not be) is in the nature of the case, like other endeavors to measure God's own wisdom by the principles of created reality (cf. above, n. 11), not only fruitless but counter-productive. Only the Holy Spirit can teach us to hear God's speech, and to rely upon it beyond even the most compelling of our own reason's certainties (about which more below). For a more detailed analysis of Thomas on certainty, see Marshall, "Aquinas as Postliberal Theologian," 393-401.

[38] *In Col.* c. 2, lect. 2 (no. 95). And: "What is against [Christ] is to be spewed out, because he is God" (ibid. [no. 96]). In an earlier article I confused the issue by suggesting that the unrestricted epistemic primacy of the articles of faith could be stated positively; cf. Marshall, "Aquinas as Postliberal Theologian," 376.

One way to get at Thomas's view here is to recall that for him Christian faith and Christian theology are, each in its own way, a kind of wisdom *(sapientia).* Wisdom for Thomas is the capacity to grasp the highest cause and to judge and order other things "most certainly" with reference to, or on the basis of, that cause (the definition is Aristotle's, and here "cause" has the roughly Aristotelian sense of "explanation"). "Highest cause," however, can be taken in an unrestricted sense or in a limited sense *(simpliciter, vel in aliquo genere,* as Aquinas says). When "highest cause" is taken in a limited sense, "wisdom" is the capacity to judge and order beliefs and actions according to explanatory principles of restricted application; the range of application for these principles defines a particular domain of human knowledge, like medicine or architecture. But when "highest cause" is taken *simpliciter,* then "wisdom" is the capacity to judge and order beliefs and actions according to the highest possible explanatory principles, which, as such, are of unrestricted application. The highest cause *simpliciter* is the triune God, and the highest principles are the articles of faith. Faith assents to these principles as the *prima veritas* (more precisely as the self-testimony of God, who is the *prima veritas)* and therefore not on account of any other beliefs held true (otherwise they would not linguistically embody the *prima,* but at best *secunda, veritas).* The capacity to order the total field of human belief and action according to these principles is wisdom as a gift of the Holy Spirit to believers. The unrestricted epistemic application of the articles of faith (that is, the exercise of the capacity the Spirit gives) defines not a particular domain of knowledge but a comprehensive system of the world, a world-view. This system of the world, now as content rather than capacity, constitutes the highest wisdom: the Christian faith itself. "The person who knows the highest cause without restriction *[simpliciter],* which is God, is said to be wise without restriction *[simpliciter],* insofar as he is able to judge and to order *all things* according to divine rules [viz., according to the articles of faith]."[39]

[39] *STh* II-II, q. 45, a. 1. On the connection between faith in the articles and the Spirit's gift of the highest wisdom, see ibid., ad 2: "Faith assents to divine truth on account of itself, and that judgment which is in accord with divine truth belongs to the gift of wisdom. Therefore the gift of wisdom presupposes faith."

Thomas's discussion of the way in which theology (that is, *sacra doctrina)* is itself in a certain sense the highest wisdom helps to clarify the way he conceives the connection between faith's supremely wise ordering of the whole field of possible belief and the local, subordinate wisdom of medicine, architecture, and the like-that is, between the articles of faith taken as epistet;nically primary and all the rest of what we think we have good reason to believe.[40] *Sacra doctrina,* Thomas maintains, is a science in basically Aristotle's sense, roughly, a set of interpreted sentences (or propositions) tied in logically tight ways to other interpreted sentences which are themselves either proven or beyond proof and doubt alike (and so are the "first principles" of the science). But "the knowledge proper to this science *[sacra doctrina]* is that which comes through revelation, not that which comes through natural reason," that is, the first principles of *sacra doctrina* are the articles of faith by which the *prima veritas* bears witness to himself. "Therefore it does not belong to sacred doctrine to prove the principles of the other sciences, but only to judge them: for whatever is found in other sciences which contradicts the truth of this science is totally to be rejected as false, according to II Cor. 10: [5]."[41]

[40] Wisdom as a *donum Spiritussancti* is related to *sacradoctrina* as the actual capacity to order the total field is related to the acquired ability reflectively to articulate what that capacity (which itself cannot be acquired, but only freely given by the Spirit) accomplishes. The former is wisdom *per modum inclinationis,* the latter is wisdom *per modum cognitionis (STh* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3).

[41] *STh* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 2. Similarly, "Those who use philosophy in sacred doctrine can err in two ways. In one way when they use those [philosophies] which are contrary to faith … In another way when what belongs to faith is included within the boundaries of philosophy, such that one is only willing to believe that which can be maintained by philosophy, when, on the contrary, philosophy is to be brought within the boundaries of faith, as the Apostle teaches in 2 Cor 10" *(In Boet. de Trin.,* q. 2, a. 3 [ed. Bruno Decker (Leiden: Brill, 1955); cf. the text from *In I Cor.* cited above, n. 10). Conversely, "secular wisdom and eloquence" are rightly used "in [the study of] sacred Scripture … when they are not one's chief aim, but rather when one submits them to sacred Scripture, to which one chiefly clings, in order that in this way Scripture may take all other things into obedience to itself, according to 2 Cor. 10, 5" *(Contra Impugnantes* sect. 3, c. 5 [no. 414], in *Opuscula Theologica,* vol. 2). Indeed: "Those who use philosophical texts in sacred doctrine by bringing them into obedience to faith do not mix water with wine, but transform water into wine" *(In Boet. de Trin.,* q. 2, a. 3, ad 5).

Two points important for our purposes may be gathered from these remarks. (1) The unrestricted epistemic primacy of the articles of faith gives the content of *sacra doctrina* the rank of highest wisdom, as it gives the same rank to the habit of wisdom which the Spirit imparts to the faithful. Once again the logical relationship of inconsistency, not consistency, defines the unrestricted character of that primacy: of the articles of faith alone may it be said that whatever beliefs are inconsistent with them cannot be true.[42] (2) The epistemic primacy of central Christian beliefs with respect to the total field of possible belief is, by contrast, almost never deductive or inferential, and need be warranting in any sense only when the meaning of the beliefs in question is dose enough to that of the articles to call for it.[43] We

[42] This may seem to overstate the case, since Thomas clearly supposes that there are beliefs besides the articles of faith with which no true sentence can be inconsistent; the clearest example is what he calls *principiaper se nota* (lit., "principles known through themselves"), beliefs whose truth is directly and non-inferentially apparent, and thus self-evident (including particularly what Thomas calls "the first principles of reason," and beliefs like "the whole is greater than the part"; cf., e.g., *STh* I, q. 17, a. 3, ad 2; *STh* 11-11, q. 1, a. 5). But as we have already seen, (1) Thomas takes the believer's assent to the articles of faith to be "greater and more stable" *(magis… et firmius)* than his assent "even to the first principles of reason" (cf. above, n. 36), and (2) consistency with the articles of faith (or with Christ) is required of "all other" *(omnia alia)* beliefs, such that "whatever" *(quidquid)* is inconsistent with them cannot be true (cf. nn. 41, 38). This suggests that in order to decide whether a belief which appears self-evident to us is actually true, we need to test it for consistency with the articles of faith; should it turn out not to be we need not suppose we have found a self-evident principle which is false, but simply that we have failed, despite initial appearances, to identify a self-evident principle (cf. *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 2, a. 3: "If anything is found contrary to the faith in the sayings of the philosophers, this is not philosophy, but rather an abuse of philosophy arising from a defect of reason"; the *dicta philosophorum* of course contain much more than *principiaper se nota).* Read in this way, Thomas seems to hold that *principiaper se nota* are indeed of unrestricted epistemic *application,* in that nothing inconsistent with them is true, but not of unrestricted epistemic *primacy,* since we *decide* whether we have a *principium per se notum* by seeing whether the belief in question is consistent with the articles of faith, but we do not test the articles for their consistency with the *principia* which they help identify, or with any other beliefs (assuming throughout, of course, that we have *interpreted* the articles correctly, on which see Marshall, "Absorbing the World," 90-97, and the penultimate section of the present article). This means, to be sure, that Thomas's account of faith and *sacra doctrina* as (each in its own way) the highest wisdom calls for greater revision of Aristotle's notion of self-evidence than Thomas actually undertakes (cf. VI *Ethic.*, lect. 5 [no. 1179]); if we have to repair to other beliefs in order to decide whether a putative "principle" is actually true, we obviously do not know the principle "through itself."

[43] The "almost" is to account for inferences within theology after the pattern of *STh* I, q. 1, a. 2; *STh* I, q. 1, a. 8. Cf. the remarks below, n. 58, regarding Luther on inference.

cannot on Thomas's view deduce the chief points of what we ought to believe about medicine or architecture from the articles of faith, the way we can deduce, and in that sense prove, the first principles of optics from geometry. The reasons we have for holding the vast majority of our beliefs (or, if it is reasonable to have some beliefs without reasons, our very holding of them) will not be traceable to those which are central to the whole field of belief, and they need not be in order to maintain the unrestricted epistemic primacy of the articles.

That the highest wisdom is a gift specifically of the Holy Spirit suggests its irreducibly Trinitarian character; formed faith and the correlated spiritual gift of *sapientia* (along with the gifts of *intellectus* and *scientia)* together constitute the specifically cognitive way of being drawn into the one life of the triune God, or of sharing in God's self-knowledge.

Thomas's view seems to be something like this. To have the gift of the highest wisdom is to assess everything else in light of the highest cause or explanation, namely God. But "the root and source of the knowledge of God is the Word of God, that is, Christ ... insofar as human beings share in the Word of God, they know God"-not, it should be stressed, in a fleshless and therefore anonymous *Verbum,* but precisely in the eternal Word become our flesh, the human being Jesus of Nazareth: "this human being is divine truth itself."[44] Wisdom is therefore the practice of interpreting and assessing everything else in light specifically of Scripture's identification and description of the human being Jesus Christ, and above all of the salvation accomplished by his cross. Only the Holy Spirit can teach us this practice. The beliefs according to which it is the highest wisdom to assess all others are not self-evident, empirically obvious, demonstrable, or widely shared; when assessed in light of those which are (according to what Thomas calls "the wisdom of human reason"), the articles of faith will be rejected as false (indeed, foolish), not taken as the highest wisdom. Taught by the Spirit the practice of ordering all things around the crucified and risen Jesus, however, we "become sharers in the divine wisdom

[44] *In Joan.* c. 17, lect. 6 (no. 2267-68); ibid. c. 1, lect. 8 (no. 188).

and knowers of the truth. The Son teaches us, since he is the Word, but the Holy Spirit makes us capable of being taught by him."[45] We become sharers in the divine wisdom: we begin, however incompletely and feebly, to order all things in the way the highest and uncaused cause does, namely, the one whom Jesus calls Father, who orders all things around the Word whom he has sent into the flesh, and whom this Word alone enables us to know because, in Thomas's phrase, he "expresses the total being of the Father."[46] And we are able to be wise in this way because the Spirit gives us the gift of wisdom-inducts us into God's own wisdom-by giving us a share in the incarnate Word's total correspondence to the reality of the Father-in that unique relation to the Father on account of which Jesus Christ is "wisdom itself' and "truth itself."[47]

For Thomas, then, it seems that if "the salvation accomplished by the cross of Christ" is the "chief matter" of the Christian faith, it must turn out epistemically to be the chief matter across the board.

II. LUTHER ON NATURAL REASON, FAITH, AND EPISTEMIC PRIORITIES

Reading Aquinas this way greatly increases, at least at first glance, the likelihood that he and Luther basically agree on how to decide what is true. Much modern interpretation of both figures has, of course, made agreement between them seem unlikely, especially on this matter.

For a great many post-Enlightenment Protestant interpreters of Aquinas (including particularly some of the leading figures in Protestant theology and *Dogmengeschichte* since the nineteenth century), the intellectual labor of medieval Scholasticism in which

[45] *In Joan.* c. 14, lect. 6 (no. 1958).

[46] *In Joan.* c. 1, lect. 1 (no. 29).

[47] That is, the Son's perfect correspondence to the Father is the reason why "wisdom" and "truth" are appropriated to the Son; cf. *De Verit.* q. 1, a. 7; *STh* I, q. 39, a. 8; *In Joan.* c. 18, lect. 6 (no. 2365). Thomas, however, has no trouble dropping the language of appropriation: "Truth belongs to Christ through himself because he is the Word … the Word of God is truth itself" *(In Joan.* c. 14, lect. 2 [no. 1869]; cf. also the text cited in n. 45). On appropriation see *Trinity and Truth,* ch. 9.

he was (they assumed) the dominant force brought forth, in the phrase of the seventeenth-century Lutheran dogmatician Abraham Calov, an enormous "mixo-philosophico-theologica." This grotesque and sterile hybrid was both bad theology and bad philosophy. As these interpreters saw (and in some cases still see) it, Aquinas and others tried to build the chief matters of Christian faith onto a foundation already laid by philosophy. Naturally only that can be added onto a foundation which the foundation will support, so Aquinas on this view both trimmed the teachings of Christian faith to fit the requirements of reason (which is bad theology) and refused to let reason go digging about wherever it saw fit in pursuit of truth, demanding instead that it stick to constructing a foundation for a suitably trimmed Christianity (which is bad philosophy). These interpreters attribute to Aquinas, one can say, a view of the epistemic status of Christian belief roughly like Locke's: some Christian beliefs are above reason; this does not necessarily mean they are false, but they can only be true if they are not against reason, that is, not contrary to what any suitably diligent human being, regardless of his historical and communal location, can find out.[48] With his battle cry "crux probat omnia," so these interpreters often suppose, Luther hit on the chief axiom of a genuinely theological epistemology and in so doing overthrew the dubious medieval "mixo."[49]

[48] Cf. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 4.18-19, especially 18, §§ 2, 10; 19, § 14.

[49] For a recent reading of the medievals along these lines, and of Luther as solving medieval problems, see Ingolf U. Dalferth, *Theology and Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 71-88. On "crux probat omnia" cf. Gerhard Hammer and Manfred Biersack, eds., *Archiv zur Weimarer Ausgabe der Werke Martin Luthers*, vol. 2 (Cologne and Vienna: Bohlau Verlag, 1981), 325.1 *(Operationes in Psalmos*, 1519-21). As Luther uses it (cf. also 301.14-17) this is not a general theological axiom, epistemological or otherwise. What the cross (more exactly, the cruciform suffering of believers) tests or proves is specifically the believer's own existence *in gratia:* "If the joy and praise of God continue eternal and fixed even in suffering, this cannot be a fallible sign [whether we are (as they say) 'in grace']" (324.17-20). Similarly Luther's famous remark, "CRUX sola est nostra Theologia" (319.3), functions for him not as a general dictum, but specifically as the proper basis for the mystical ascent "into the darkness ... above being and non-being": "I truly do not know whether [the mystical theologians] understand themselves when they attribute that [ascent] to elicited acts and do not rather believe that the sufferings of the cross, death, and hell are signified. THE CROSS alone is our theology" (318.20-319.3; cf. D. *Martin Luthers Werke Kritische*

Modern defenders of Thomas on truth and justification have rightly objected to this crude reading of him, but they too have generally taken the deliverances of reason-which is to say, in practice, Thomas's refinement and elaboration of Aristotle's philosophy, including a large dollop of natural theology-to be epistemically central for him. *As* these interpreters read Aquinas, Scripture and creed are of course to be believed on the authority of the revealing God, but they have little or no epistemic role; their interaction with the beliefs which are epistemically central is kept (deliberately, it seems) to a minimum. Indeed, the possibility of regarding the scriptural and creedal description of "the salvation accomplished by the cross of Christ" as epistemically central in Thomas seems never to arise. One gets the impression from these interpreters that this would be a bizarre excess unsuited to serious reflection on these matters.so

If correct, the reading of Aquinas I have outlined in this article obviates the main assumptions of both sides about Thomas's views, and to that extent suggests the possibility of closing the presumed distance between him and Luther. Whether this can actually be done, however, depends on what Luther's own views are.

A) Epistemic Priorities

In his sermons of 1532-33 on 1 Corinthians 15, Luther proposes that the resurrection of Jesus is the "chief article" *(heubtstuck)* of Christian doctrine.st Jesus' resurrection can only be preached and believed, however, if we take it as the decisive criterion for making judgments about the nature and destiny of

Gesamtausgabe [Weimar: Herman Bohlaus Nachfolger, 1883ff.], hereafter WA, 40/1:204.23-27). Note that Luther here seems to accept the ascent *super ens et non ens;* what he rejects is any way of ascent that bypasses the cross.

[5]0 For a classic interpretation of Aquinas along these lines, see Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas,* trans. L. K. Shook (New York: Random House, 1956).

[51] Paul "stakes everything on the ground from which he has set out: that Christ is risen from the dead, which is the chief article of Christian doctrine. No one can deny it who wants to be a Christian or a preacher of the gospel" (WA 36:524.31-34).

the embodied beings we are-and this requires blocking inferences which would otherwise seem quite reasonable.

> Against everything reason proposes, or against the way reason wants to measure things and find out about them, indeed against what all the senses feel and grasp, we must learn to cleave to the word and to judge entirely according to it-even though we no doubt see before our eyes that a human being is buried in the earth, furthermore, that he or she must decay and become food for worms and finally crumble to dust.[52]

There seem to be two complementary claims here about the epistemic priorities compatible with holding it true that Jesus is risen from the dead.

First, our ordinary, empirically obvious beliefs about ourselves and our bodies, while surely pertinent and no doubt true as far as they go, cannot be employed as criteria by which to "judge" or "measure" the truth of those interpreted sentences which identify and describe Jesus' resurrection, nor those which promise our own resurrection in him. Luther attacks reason in many different contexts and to many different ends; here the crucial point seems not to be that beliefs which most people (Christians and non-Christians alike) regard as reasonable or obvious are false. Believing that we die and rot in the ground is not by itself the problem; evidently we do.[53] The problem arises when from these manifestly true beliefs we draw conclusions about the ultimate destiny of human beings, and so deny the resurrection of the body in general, and Jesus' resurrection in particular. Drawing inferences from these otherwise unobjectionable beliefs to conclusions about the resurrection attributes to these beliefs an epistemic centrality which must be denied to them-or, more precisely, which can be attributed to them only at the cost of "destroying and losing the gospel entirely."[54]

[52] WA 36:494.13-17.

[53] It seems right to group these under "what nature teaches everyone and what all human reason and understanding has to allown (WA 36:526.35-36).

[54] So Luther paraphrases Paul on the contrast between his own gospel and that of the Corinthian enthusiasts: "For I did not preach it, as they claim and say, in a human way, according to reason and our understanding. For to preach in such a worldly form, or to judge according to such a form, destroys and loses the gospel entirelyn (WA 36:492.23-26). Luther

This reversal of epistemic priorities Luther calls "rhyming" or "harmonizing" *(reimen)* the gospel with reason, and it can, he observes, have two different results: either the truth value of the gospel or its interpretation will have to change. That is: because reason "sees that [the gospel] is entirely against its understanding and all sense and feeling, and against experience as well, it rejects and denies [the gospel]"; or, "when it cannot get away from God's word"-that is, supposing the interpreter wants to hold the gospel true- "it twists and trims it with glosses, so that the word must harmonize with its understanding. Then faith no longer has any room but must give way to reason and perish."[55] One of these equally unhappy outcomes ensues when any aspect of the gospel ends up in an epistemically subordinate position; what Luther says about Jesus' resurrection recurs in his discussions of (for example) the eternal and consubstantial divinity of the Logos, and the suffering and death of God on the cross.[56]

Luther's second claim is the positive complement of this. People who do not already believe in the resurrection of the body, he concedes, will likely find Paul's argument for it in 1 Corinthians 15 entirely unconvincing. As Luther reads him, Paul

explicitly characterizes this judging "according to reason" (and its opposite, faith in the gospel) as a matter not simply of the beliefs one holds true, but of the patterns of inference one follows: "For human wisdom and reason cannot go any higher or further than to judge and draw conclusions *[scbliessen]* as its eyes see and it feels, or than it grasps with its senses. But faith has to draw conclusions beyond and against such feeling and understanding, and cleave to what is presented to it by the word" (WA 36:493.4-7).

[55] WA 36:494.7-12. Similarly: "This article does not agree *[rei1net]* with [reason] at all. Indeed many foolish things have to follow if people try to judge concerning this article according to their own understanding and darkness. They must either take this article for a lie, or interpret it with great cleverness, so that it somehow harmonizes *[reimeJ* with their understanding" (632.13-16; cf. also 661.28-31).

[56] Thus on John 1:1: "Many heretics of all kinds have attacked this article and wanted to measure, grasp, and master it by reason, but they have all gone to ground. The Holy Spirit has preserved this article against all of them, so that God's word still stands fast against all the gates of hell" (WA 46:545.23-26; cf. 551.7-9; "this article" ="the high article of our holy Christian faith, which we believe and confess: that there is a single true, almighty, and eternal God, and nonetheless that in the same single divine essence there are three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit," and with that the article "concerning the eternal divinity of Christ"; 541.5-8; 542.29). Faced with this set of beliefs, "Reason draws another conclusion, and says: if the Word is with God, are there then two Gods?" (549.21-22). On the cross, cf. WA26:321.19-28; 39/2:279.26-280.3; also the text cited below, n. 90.

there infers the bodily resurrection of believers to life with Christ in God from the premise that Christ is risen. Those who want to "rhyme" the proclamation of the gospel with reason by deciding about the resurrection on the basis of what is otherwise obvious will naturally find this procedure at best a *petere principium*.[57] But the point, as Luther sees it, is precisely that the gospel of Jesus' resurrection, together with the other articles of faith (including a nest of beliefs about the truthfulness of God, the reliability of the apostolic witness, and God's preservation of the Church in the truth), is the *principium* from which the Christian community draws inferences about human nature and destiny, and by decisive appeal to which this community and its members assess the truth of what they otherwise believe and infer.[58] As *principia*, the resurrection of Jesus and the rest of the articles of faith are criteria by which the truth of other beliefs may be assessed, but whose truth may not be assessed by those beliefs; they are, more particularly, premises from which other beliefs may be inferred, but may not themselves be inferred as conclusions from any other beliefs-or regarded as false because no such inference may be made (in this, of course, Luther follows the broad pattern of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, which he would presumably have learned from his Erfurt teachers Trutfetter and Arnoldi).

For Luther this side of the issue becomes particularly pressing not (as with Thomas) when the Christian community is

[57] "To the heathen and unbelievers it appears to be a weak dialectic or proof, since they deny not only the article he attempts to prove, but everything which he introduces in order to prove it. This is called 'probare negatum per negatum' und 'petere principium'" (WA 36:525.16-19).

[58] "These are our principles, our grounds and chief article, on which the whole of Christian teaching stands" (WA36:527.17-18). "Thus St. Paul contended for this article [the general resurrection] on the basis of the correct and strictest principles, so that whoever wants to deny the resurrection of the dead must also deny that Christ is raised" (529.28-30). Cf. 527.12-13, 34-36. This is not, it should be noted, contrary to Aquinas's denial of an inferential relationship between the articles of faith and the rest of the epistemic field; Aquinas does not deny the possibility of such inferences in certain cases (in the articles referred to above, n. 43, he insists upon it), but denies that those subordinate *principia* coherence with which defines various sciences (regions, one could say) within the total field can be deduced from the articles. Luther agrees with this, indeed has a strong version of it (cf. below, n. 76). For Aquinas what can be deduced from or otherwise warranted by the articles constitutes theology or *sacra doctrina* as a special science, which differs from the others, however, in being able to judge them all.

confronted by a powerful belief system originating from without, but in the intra-Christian conflict between the Churches of the Augsburg Confession and Rome, the outcome of which looked to Luther's eyes increasingly distressing in the late 1530s. Judging by the evidence of the senses, Rome has everything on its side: numbers, prestige, political and military power, even, Luther is willing to concede for the sake of argument, miracles. But the Christian community judges not primarily by the evidence of the senses but by the gospel of Christ; consistency with the gospel is the chief test of truth, and by this standard the Lutherans can be confident that they will carry the day. In this connection Luther argues as follows, preaching in 1534 on John 16:13 ("[The Holy Spirit] will declare to you the things that are to come").

> The Holy Spirit himself must be there with his revelation in order that one may hold to the word of Christ and his wisdom, and judge in accordance with it concerning all teachings and signs, life and work. What goes against this chief doctrine and article of Christ [viz., the gospel] … one should neither value nor accept, even if it snows miracles every day. For what is against this doctrine is certainly false, and concocted by the devil for the seduction of souls.[59]

On Luther's account believing the proclamation that Jesus is risen and we too shall rise in him is not simply a matter of holding true a range of sentences, but a way of configuring a wide field of belief-of deciding where truth and falsity lie within the field. It cannot be otherwise: unless the proclamation of the resurrection orders a wider epistemic field, it will either be rejected or interpreted in a sense contrary to that which it has when it is epistemically central. Configuring a wide field of belief in this fashion involves an ongoing struggle to reconfigure the field we otherwise inhabit, since at minimum we have (1) to block a whole range of inferences from the obvious, inferences upon which our "carnal" (i.e., fallen) reason seizes in its self-destructive

[59] WA 46:65.13-20; cf. also WA 45:570.19-32. On the gospel's identification of Jesus Christ as the chief test or criterion for resolving the dispute about what is true within the Church, cf. WA 45:573.34-36: "Everything rests on this man Christ alone, for he is the test of which is the right Spirit or the Spirit of truth"; cf. also 576.28-34. For the dating of Luther's sermons on John 14-16, first published in 1538 (chaps. 14-15) and 1539 (chap. 16), cf. WA 59:255-60.

defiance of God, and also (2) to make a whole range of inferences from beliefs which, in this life, can never be obvious for us.[60] Only the Holy Spirit is up to the epistemic effort involved.[61] In all this Luther seems in vigorous agreement with Thomas's first rule about teaching and preaching the Christian faith: keep your epistemic priorities straight.

B) The Package of Articles

Before we look at the way Luther handles Thomas's second rule, we should pause briefly to observe that a long tradition of Luther interpretation (of which Albrecht Ritschl and Wilhelm Herrmann may be regarded as the progenitors) has maintained that "faith" for Luther is at bottom not a matter of holding sentences true at all, and thus not a matter of having "beliefs" in the sense in which I am using the term. Guided by neo-Kantian philosophical assumptions, these interpreters variously contend that for Luther faith is an interior trust in Christ *(Vertrauen auf Christus,* or *auf Gott in Christo)* which can of course be expressed by, but is not dependent upon, any *Fur-wahr-halten-upon* having any particular beliefs about God or Christ.[62]

As many of the passages we have already cited indicate, however, Luther himself seems to have no trouble supposing that faith involves holding sentences true under particular interpretations-that is, having beliefs. The interpreted sentences which faith holds true are what Luther calls Christian "articles" or "teachings"; these seem straightforwardly to be the contents of

[60] On "carnal reason," see *De Servo Arbitrio:* "These are the arguments of human reason, which is accustomed to this sort of wisdom ... [at present] we dispute with human reason concerning an inference, for it interprets the Scriptures of God by its inferences and syllogisms, and turns them in whatever direction it wishes" *r:tfA* 18:673.6-10). On the equivalence of "human reason" and "carnal reason" here, cf. 676.38.

[61] "Thus it was and still is with true Christians: they see and experience that this truth-that is, the faith which should hold fast to the article concerning Christ and his kingdom-cannot be held by human reason or power, but rather the Holy Spirit himself must do it" *r:tlA* 46:55.26-30).

[62] Regarding the influence of neo-Kantian philosophical assumptions on modern Protestant Luther interpretation, see Risto Saarinen, *Gottes Wirken au(Uns: Die transzendentale Deutung des Gegenwart-Christi-Motivs in der Lutherforschung* (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1989).

propositional attitudes like "to believe" and "to hold [true]," as evinced by Luther's repeated placement of them as the objects of "that" *(quad* or *da{5)* clauses which express such attitudes. And Luther seems to make no significant distinction between having saving faith in the gospel and "holding firmly" to these articles-that is, to these sentences.

So, for example, in an extended Christological commentary on Psalm 2:7, Luther argues that "you are my son; today I have begotten you" ought to be taken to assert the following article of faith: "This person born of the Virgin Mary is at once *[simul]* a true human being and true God."[63] He admonishes his readers to follow "with simple faith" this "Verbum"-that is, sentence-taught to us by Christ himself. In other words: "Let us believe that this article is shown and handed on to us by God, rather than being discovered by us, and let us not judge *[aestimemus]* such things on the basis of our own mendacity." Indeed, in this Psalm "you have ... now shown to you the chief articles of our faith," in particular what sort of king Christ is: one begotten of the Father in eternity, and set up by the Father as king on Mount Zion in time. Christ teaches us this article-"that he is the eternal Son of God"-precisely in order that we may trust him alone for salvation: "so that he might arouse us to embrace him and to trust his merits and works." Holding true this article (that is, sentence) seems, moreover, to be a necessary condition for saving *fiducia* in Christ. "To the person who believes these [chief articles] the King will soon magnify himself by his words and deeds; you will not neglect his word or hold it in contempt, for you know that he is the Son of God." Christ's *facta* are nothing less than to liberate us from death, sin, and the tyranny of Satan. But "all these things happen, when you firmly hold *[retinent]* this article, that Christ is the eternal Son of God." Those (like "Turks" and "Papists," as Luther puts it) who "do not firmly hold" this article regarding the eternal generation of the Son thereby lack saving faith. They know of Christ's birth to Mary and his suffering under Pontius Pilate, but "all these things are for them mere history, and they do not arouse to faith." This notion of being "aroused to faith," such

[63] WA 40/2:258.30-31. I am grateful to David Yeago for pointing out this passage to me.

that the gospel becomes the message of salvation for me and not "mere history," may seem tailor-made to support the view that faith for Luther is at root a prelinguistic *Vertrauen auf Christus.* But Luther is quite dear that the difference between these two opposing "takes" on the gospel depends on the sentences one holds true; the believer is "aroused to faith" (that is, trust) in Christ just because he has a different propositional attitude from the Turk-just because he "firmly holds [true]" what the Turk denies: "The whole gospel becomes mere history if this primary belief about the eternal birth of Christ is lost *[amissa hac capitali sententia de aeterna nativitate Christi].* For with this belief everything else is given."[64]

Luther also seems to have no trouble seeing "the heart" as the seat of both trust in Christ and having true beliefs about Christ. Indeed, these two aspects of faith are not only alike indispensable to it, but are very closely bound up with one another, as Luther suggests in remarks directly pertinent to our present concern:

> Faith is nothing other than the truth of the heart, that is the right knowledge *[cogitationeml* of the heart about God. Faith alone, and not reason, is able to think rightly about God. A person thinks rightly about God when he believes God's word. However, when he wants to measure and to believe God by his own reason, apart from the word, he does not have the truth about God, and therefore neither thinks nor judges rightly about him.... Therefore the truth is that very faith which judges rightly about God.[65]

[64] All quotations from WA 40/2:258.23-259.30. I have been citing the printed version of 1546; that "believing the gospel" and "firmly holding the articles" are more or less interchangeable is particularly clear from Rorer's handwritten notes of Luther's lectures, which were given in 1532. "The gospel is therefore a new teaching beyond the law of Moses, which the Son preaches at the command of the Father, namely [the teaching] that he is the true King on Mount Zion and the true Son of God. Given this article, you have the gospel *[Isto posito articulo habes Euangelium*]. Later he will glorify himself through his words and deeds; now you must believe that this true human being and the Son are one person. When this article is lost nothing remains of piety" (258.10--259.1). When this version goes on to say, "Christ's words and deeds become [mere] history if the gospel principle *fprincipium Euangelit]* is lost" (259.3-4), the "principium Euangelii" clearly refers, once again, not to an interior *Vertrauen,* but back to "isto posito articulo."

[65] WA40/1:376.23-377.14; cf. 377.3-4: "If I believe, I have that true thought which is nothing other than faith. I can neither grasp [this thought] nor prove it by reason, but I can hear it preached."

Thus it seems that for Luther faith, while it certainly involves more than holding sentences true, cannot involve less; unless we hold true particular sentences which identify and describe God in Christ, we cannot have faith, and unless those sentences are true, our faith is false-it fails "to think" and "to judge" correctly about God.

Luther also agrees with Thomas's second rule, that the articles of faith come only as a package. "If you deny God in one article you have denied him in all, because God is not divided into many articles, but all of him is in each article and he is one in all the articles."[66] Luther's reasoning here seems quite close to Thomas's. We know God only by holding true a range of interconnected propositions and associated beliefs, but there is no multiplicity in God corresponding to the multiplicity of our beliefs. The articles of faith (or, we could equally well say, the constitutive features of the gospel) "all hang on one another" in what Luther takes to be a logically tight way, so that believing any one requires believing the others, and rejecting any one involves rejecting the rest.[67] Denying any one of the articles lands the denier in unbelief about all of them not only by implication, but, as it were, by definition, since one can reject an article of faith only by holding the

[66] WA 40/2:48.22-24 (or as the handwritten version has it, God is "whole *[totus]* in every article" [48.7]). Cf. WA 28:199.21-28 (on John 17:26): "To know the Father is not only to know that he made heaven and earth, and how he helps the pious and punishes the wicked, but to know that he has sent the Son into the world and given him to us in order to take away sin and death, and to win for us and give us the Father's favor and grace. That is the right name of God; it shows us what is in his mind and opens up for us his fatherly heart, will, thought, and blessing. Whoever does not know him in this way does not know him rightly, and does not know he should serve or praise him."

[67] With stress on the positive (to believe one article involves believing the rest): "Because every Christian must believe and confess that Christ is risen, he is immediately driven to grant that the resurrection of the dead must also be true-<>r else he has to deny in a heap the whole gospel and everything which is preached about Christ and God. For it all hangs together like a chain, such that where one article stands, they all stand. Thus [Paul] draws everything together, and always infers one thing from another" (WA 36:524.37-525.15). With more stress on the negative (to deny one article involves denying the rest): "Thus you see that everything hangs on our certainty about this single article [the general resurrection, in this case]. For where this article waversor is no longer valid *[nichtmehr gilt]*, all the others have no use or validity, because everything-Christ's coming and setting up his kingdom in the world-has occurred for the sake of the resurrection and the future life. Where this, the basis, cause, and aim of all the articles of faith, is overturned or taken away, all the others must fall away with it" (605.16-22).

truthfulness of God in contempt, and this roughly defines unbelief; the person who declines to believe in the coming general resurrection, for example, rejects the trustworthiness of the God who makes this promise and thereby rejects all the other promises as well.[68]

Luther's notion of the mutual inherence of the articles of faith also helps explain how he can combine insistence upon upholding the "chief article" of Christian faith with relative insouciance about what the chief article is. He variously names not only (as is well known) justification by faith, but also the Trinity, the incarnation, the distinction between law and gospel, and (as we have seen) the resurrection; since each can be understood properly and held true as so understood only in intimate connection with the others, we need not, and perhaps should not, settle which is "chief."[69] Luther is content to suggest that three complexes of belief together have primacy: Trinity, incarnation, and justification.[70] If what Thomas means by "the salvation accomplished by the cross of Christ" is at least compatible with what Luther means when he talks of "justification by faith" (and

[68] In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul "thus wants to say that whoever wants to deny this article [here, Christ's resurrection and ours in him] has to deny much more. First, that you [Corinthians] believe correctly, second, that the word which you believe was correct, third, that we apostles preach correctly and are God's apostles, fourth, that God is truthful-in sum, that God is God" (WA 36:526.23-27). In Thomas's terms, someone in this epistemic situation declines not simply one article of faith, but the formal object by which faith is defined, namely God as self-revealing first truth (he does not "believe God" *[credere Deo]*), and so does not have faith even with regard to those creedal sentences to which he assents (d. *STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 1; q. 5, a. 3).

[69] John's Gospel presents the Trinity as "the high article of our holy Christian faith"; - therefore this article "is the highest art of Christians, who alone know and believe it" (WA 46:541.5; 550.26-27). At the same time: "This is our chief article ... and our right, true, and Christian faith, beside which there is no other, that Christ is true God and true man" (599.38-40; cf. also 601.4-12). But also: "The highest art and wisdom of Christians is not to know the law and to be ignorant of works and all active righteousness" (WA 40/1:43.25-26); "It is supremely necessary to know this matter *[locus]* of the distinction between law and gospel, because it contains the sum of all Christian teaching" (209.16-17).

[70] Cf. the *Vorrede* to Luther's sermons on John 14-16: "Here [in John 14-16] the right, chief, and high articles of Christian teaching are grounded and presented in the most compelling way. Nowhere else in Scripture are they found so close together: the article about the three distinct persons of the holy Trinity, and especially the article about the divine and human nature of the eternal and undivided person of the Lord Christ, and likewise about the righteousness of faith and the right consolation of the conscience" (WA 45:467.29-35).

it has, as I suggested at the outset, been well demonstrated that they are more than merely compatible), then it seems that he and Luther not only agree that those beliefs which are central to the Christian community ought to be epistemically primary, they agree on what these beliefs are.

C) Unrestricted Primacy

The step from endorsing the two rules we have first found in Thomas to ascribing unrestricted epistemic primacy to the gospel and the articles of faith is not a long one, and Luther takes it boldly: "In God, a person who has grasped one thing has grasped all things, and a person who does not grasp God never grasps any part of the creation."[71] Believing the gospel, it seems, involves configuring (that is, interpreting and assessing) not only the local neighborhood of belief-what we hold true about God-but also all our beliefs about creatures in accordance with it. And that is the whole field; there is nothing about which to have beliefs besides God and creatures. As Luther's remarks about not accepting anything that "goes against" the gospel of Christ already suggest, the range over which the gospel and the articles of faith extend in deciding what is true-negatively, by excluding what is inconsistent-has no boundaries. Again like Thomas, Luther can also put the point in terms of higher and lower (or, one could say, more and less central) criteria of truth, with appeal to the same scriptural text Thomas favors when this issue comes up: "When it comes to the works and words of God one should take captive reason and all wisdom, as St. Paul teaches in 2 Corinthians 10, and allow them to be blinded and guided, led, instructed, and mastered, in order that we do not become judges of God in his words."[72]

III. LUTHER ON RESOLVING EPISTEMIC CONFLICT

Were this the only line of thought in Luther about deciding what is true, we could stop at this point and declare *him-nolens*

[71] WA 18:605.12-14.
[72] WA 26:439.31-35.

volens, to be sure-in virtually complete agreement with Aquinas on the matter. But Luther often seems to think quite differently about these issues. In an academic disputation in January 1539, for example, Luther responded to the objections of his Wittenberg colleagues and students to a series of forty-two theses he had proposed on the question, "Whether this proposition is true in philosophy: 'Et Verbum caro factum est.'" [73] The text of this disputation is corrupt in places to the point of being indecipherable, but Luther's answer is unmistakable: no. [74] "In theology it is true that the Word became flesh, but in philosophy this is entirely impossible and absurd," as he puts the point in his second thesis. [75] If Luther took "Verbum caro factum est" to be not only true but epistemically primary across the board, as my analysis to this point suggests, and if, as here, he takes "philosophy" to be committed to rejecting this belief completely, one would expect him to bite the bullet and say that "philosophy" is just false: however strongly held or well-grounded our philosophical beliefs (whatever these turn out more precisely to be), since they "go against" one of the chief articles of faith, we will have to do without them. Interestingly, he declines to do this. He argues instead that theology and philosophy, like the bishop and the prince, each ought to keep to its own territory and not try to decide about truth outside its area of competence. "For as God has created distinct spheres in the heavens, so also he has

[73] WA 39/2:1-33; here: 6.2-3.

[74] For an analysis of this text and its companion piece, the *Disputatio de divinitate et humanitate Christi,* including helpful suggestions for more intelligible readings of some passages, see Reinhard Schwarz, "Gott ist Mensch: Zur Lehre von der Person Christi bei den Ockhamisten und bei Luther," *Zeitschrift {Ur Theologie und Kirche* 63 (1966): 289-351. An alternative interpretation of both disputations, sharply critical of Schwarz's reading of both Luther and the Ockhamists (especially Biel)-and much better informed about the logical issues involved-may be found in Graham White, *Luther as Nominalist* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Society, 1994). Cf. also Reijo Tyorinoja, *"Proprietas Verbi:* Luther's Conception of Philosophical and Theological Language in the Disputation: *Verbum caro factum est* Ooh. 1:14), 1539," in *Faith, Will, and Grammar: Some Themes of Intensional Logic and Semantics in Medieval and Reformation Thought,* ed. Heikki Kirjavainen (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola Society, 1986), 141-78; and Stefan Streiff, *Novis Linguis Loqui: Martin LuthersDisputationuber Joh 1,14 "Verbum CaroFactumEst" ausdem]ahr 1539* (GOttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1993).

[75] WA 39/2:3.3-4; cf. 12.5-7; 16.12-13.

created distinct kingdoms on earth, so that every matter and art may keep to its own place and kind and not be engaged outside its own center, in which it has been placed."[76] This is not to say that theology contradicts philosophy, exactly; rather, theology is "outside and inside, above and below, on the near side and on the far side, of every philosophical truth."[77] The point seems to be that theology and philosophy each has its own legitimate sphere of judgment; one does not eliminate (and in that sense contradict) the other. But the relation between the two spheres is not a harmonious one; what theology finds most vital to hold true philosophy is compelled to hold false. Insisting as Luther does that philosophy has no business passing judgment on theological matters (or theology on philosophical ones, as the distinction of legitimate spheres also suggests) may enforce an armed truce between the two, but seems not to eliminate their logical conflict.[78]

Luther himself appears to realize this, and other binary oppositions which feature prominently in parts of his theology-especially those between law and gospel and between God hidden and revealed-sometimes seem to be used in ways which reinforce the conflict. Far from proposing a coherent Christian "system of the world" defined by the epistemic primacy of the gospel and the articles of faith across the whole range of possible belief (however incomplete and only partially coherent such a "system" will inevitably be in practice), Luther when he thinks in this vein seems convinced that we neither need nor can have a system of the world. Our most basic beliefs and epistemic commitments are locked in a conflict we cannot resolve. God will clear the matter up at the Last Judgment, and in the meantime our job is to bring down pretentious-perhaps even demonic--efforts to usurp God's prerogatives by resolving the conflict prematurely. On this

[76] WA 39/2:8.5-8.

n WA 39/2:4.34-35; cf. 4.33. "Theology is not contradictory to philosophy" (14.8-9).

[78] "The chief issue at stake in this disputation is that God is not subject to reason and to syllogisms, but to the word of God and to faith" (WA 39/2:8.4-5). "The syllogism is not allowed *[admittitur]* into the mysteries of faith and theology. Philosophy is error in theology" (12.29-30). "I grant that the legal wisdom of God is not against the wisdom of the gospel-but neither is it included in the wisdom of the gospel. Theology, the incarnation, and justification are above and outside reason and philosophy" (13.27-14.26).

view the gospel and the articles of faith do not have unrestricted epistemic primacy, not because other beliefs have primacy over them, but because no beliefs, not even these, have unrestricted epistemic application.

Whether Luther in fact holds such a robustly paradoxical view of how to decide what is true depends at least in part on what he thinks "philosophy" is, and why he supposes philosophy will find itself compelled to reject "Verbum caro factum est." Later Protestant theologians (not least some Lutherans) have regularly assumed that when Luther talks like this he is proposing a universal dialectical conflict between theology and philosophy, which they have taken as precedent and warrant for their own love-hate relationships with philosophy. It turns out, however, that he is objecting to something quite specific. The "Parisian theologians" are the target, and more broadly the nominalist tradition stemming from Ockham, which Luther knew best in the version developed by Biel; the problem lies in the use to which they put their formal logic and philosophical grammar. For the logic and grammar themselves Luther had high respect ("My master Ockham was the greatest dialectician").[79] But when they try to harmonize theology with philosophy-"to hold the same thing true in theology as in philosophy and vice versa"-and when they do so, more precisely, by "measuring everything theological according to their own philosophical reason," they end up holding theologically decisive sentences like "Verbum caro factum est," "Deus est homo," and "Homo est Deus" false.[80]

[7]"WATr 2:516.16-17 (no. 2544a); "I am of the Ockhamist faction" (WA 6:600.11). Cf. Peter Manns, "Zurn Gesprach zwischen M. Luther und der katholischen Theologie: Begegnung zwischen patristisch-monastischer und reformatorischer Theologie an der Scholastik vorbei," in T. Mannermaa, A. Ghiselli, and S. Peura, eds., *Thesaurus Lutheri: Auf der Suche nach neuen Paradigmen der Luther-Forschung* (Helsinki: Finnischen Theologischen Literaturgesellschaft, 1987), 63-154 (here: 63-64), and Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil,* trans. E. Walliser-Schwarzbart (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 120.

[80] "We are disputing against the Parisian Sorbonne. For the Parisian theologians have determined that the same thing is true in theology as in philosophy, and conversely" (WA 39/2:7.8-10). "The Parisian theologians … want to measure everything theological by their philosophical reason" (7.30-31; regarding the identity of these "Parisians"and their theology, see White, *Luther as Nominalist,* 367-76). On Ockham and Biel, see WA 39/2: 11.35-37. Like the medievals, Luther thought that "Verbum caro factum est" should be interpreted as

The "Parisian theologians" would no doubt have been surprised to hear their views put this way, since they dearly assumed, as had theologians east and west for over a millennium, that Scripture plainly teaches these things, and whatever Scripture teaches is true. But in order to hold these sentences true, Luther argues, the nominalists have to give them a forced sense contrary to that which they have when embedded in the scriptural and creedal matrix of belief, so that what Scripture (more precisely, the person who speaks scripturally) teaches when it asserts "Verbum caro factum est" the nominalists in fact hold false, and what the nominalists teach with the same sentence, Scripture holds false. As Luther reads the situation, the misguided use of two assumptions in particular drives the Parisians to this untenable position. One is logical, the other ontological.

In nominalist logic--Qr so Luther seems to suppose, at any rate-an identity statement, indeed any affirmative statement, is true only if the terms it joins have the same *res significata.* It seems obvious enough that in order for a statement like "Hesperus is Phosphorus" to be true, the terms "Hesperus" and "Phosphorus" must refer to the same thing (have the same "supposition," in medieval logical terminology). As Luther reads the nominalists, though, such statements are true only if subject and predicate have not only the same referent, but the same meaning or sense (roughly what the medievals would have thought of as the same "signification"). "Hesperus is Phosphorus" is true, in other words, only if it can be taken to *mean* "Phosphorus is Phosphorus." [81]

implying both "Deus est homo" and "Homo est Deus"; see, e.g., 12.5-10.

[81] In a letter to Prince George of Anhalt in late 1541, Luther comments as follows: "Aristotle says in Meta. 6 *[Metaphysics E,* 1027b.20-22] (if I have understood him correctly}, 'An affirmative proposition requires composition of the extremes, a negative one division, etc.,' that is, when two words refer to or are supposed to speak of the same thing *[ein Ding deuten oder sprechen sol/en],* they have to be put together, e.g., 'God is a human being.' [fhe Scholastics, including the nominalists] have made of this text the following: subject and predicate stand for the same thing *[supponunt pro eodem]'....* Their view is that the two, subject and predicate (that is, the thing signified *[res significata]),* must be one thing" (WABr 9:444.37-42). That Luther has the nominalists specifically in mind here is evident from his ensuing discussion of what he took (cf. WA 39/2:95.34-37) to be distinctively nominalist Christological claims.

Luther's text is unclear as to whether he accepts the logical principle the nominalists

In nominalist ontology, as Luther reads it, the infinite distance between God and creatures, between uncreated and created being, must be maintained in all contexts. "In the old use of language," according to Luther, "'creature' signifies that which is separated from divinity in an infinite way."[82] The nominalists take this "old use of language" as a rule for thinking about the incarnation, and consequently propose a theology of the hypostatic union that strives to uphold the infinite distance between the divine and the human even while saying, in conformity with Chalcedon, that divine and human natures are one person in Christ. They do this by arguing on the one hand, under pressure from Chalcedon, that human nature in Christ has no independent existence or personal reality of its own; it is sustained, supported, or borne by the divine Logos. On the other hand, under pressure from the assumption of infinite distance, this human nature never becomes the nature *of* that divine person the way Peter's or Socrates' human nature is his own, or the Logos's divine nature is his own, namely, by sharing fully in the unique independent, personal existence of that subject; rather, the human nature always

derive from Aristotle, but rejects its theological application (as White supposes; cf. *Luther as Nominalist,* 392-96), or whether he attributes to them a logical principle which he himself rejects (as Schwarz supposes; cf. "Gott ist Mensch," 339-43). That Luther explicitly charges the nominalists not only with basing their theology on philosophy, but "on philosophy falsely understood" (WABr 9:444.34; cf. 444.50) suggests the latter; he goes on to mock the Scholastic interpretation of Aristotle's logic, though only after considering a case of its theological application: "If Aristotle were alive and heard such a thing, he would say: 'Who in the devil has made such complete mockery and foolishness out of my book? The blockhead has no idea what I mean by "substance," "subject," or "predicate"'" (444.46-49). In any case Luther's interpretation of the nominalists on identity statements (and affirmative predications more generally) here seems implausible, since it apparently depends on his own equation of supposition and signification ("'Subiectum et predicatum supponunt pro eodem' … Ist aber die Meinung … res significata, mussen ein ding sein"), which the norninalists were at pains to distinguish {White questions Luther's reading on other grounds; cf. *Luther as Nominalist,* 394-95). For our purposes whether Luther got the norninalists right is, of course, less important than the epistemic principles which emerge from his engagement with them.

[82] WA 39/2:94.19-20. We will return to Luther's talk of "old" and "new" language a bit later on.

remains--or so Luther worries-"extrinsic" to the divine subject who sustains it.[83]

For Luther the key problem arises not from accepting these assumptions (at least the second he clearly regards as legitimate in many contexts or "spheres"), but from interpreting "Verbum caro factum est" and its cognates so as to harmonize with them. He wants to avoid, in other words, an interpretation of "Verbum caro" (to the truth of which the nominalists are of course fully committed) which will allow these assumptions to apply as tests of truth across the board, and so be epistemically primary. From this equivocation inevitably results, and "all equivocation," Luther warns, "is the mother of errors."[84] As the nominalists interpret "Homo est Deus," for example, the rules for identity statements require that if this sentence is true, "homo" and "Deus" will not only have to refer to the same thing, but mean the same thing. So the identity statement "Homo est Deus," with help from the

[83] Nominalist views of the hypostatic union are complex, and an adequate treatment of them, and of the extent to which Luther's criticisms are fair to them, is beyond the scope of this essay. For a more detailed discussion, cf. White, *Luther as Nominalist*, esp. 231-98. White argues that Luther is in the end much closer to the nominalists than he admits; for the older view which takes their positions to be basically opposed (and which White criticizes extensively), cf. Schwarz, "Gott ist Mensch," 293-303.

While it may initially look similar to the view Luther imputes to the nominalists, on closer inspection Thomas's claim that human nature in Christ "does not exist separately, through itself, but in something more perfect, namely in the person of the Word of God" *(ST'h* III, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3) apparently turns out to be the opposite of the nominalists' position on this point. The nominalists typically argue that Christ's human nature "does not subsist in its own supposit, but is supported *[sustentificatur]* by the Word, in the manner in which an accident is supported by its subject" (the language is Ockham's, *In III Sent.* 1 *[Opera Theologica* 6:9-10 (St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1982)]). Thomas by contrast rejects (indeed considers heretical) any attempt to conceive the hypostatic union (or union "in supposit" *[ST'h* III, q. 2, a. 3]) along the lines of the unity of accident to substance (cf. *ST'h* III, q. 2, a. 6; q. 17, a. 2), while granting that certain scriptural passages, not least Philippians 2:7, require that this question be handled carefully (cf. *In Phil.* c. 2, lect. 2 [nos. 61-62]; *In Gal.* c. 4, lect. 2 [no. 204]). In the incarnation a human nature comes to be by fully acquiring the one divine act of existence *(esse)* of the Logos: "it comes to share that complete act of existence" (SI'h III, q. 2, a. 6, ad 2; cf. q. 17, a. 2, ad 2; I *Sent.* d. 16, a. 3, ad 4: "The visible nature in which the Son appears has been taken into the one act of existence in the person of the Son of God"). Thus for Thomas the assumption of a human nature by the Logos cannot leave that human nature "extrinsic" to the divine subject who sustains it, as Luther criticizes the nominalists for supposing; instead the Logos sustains his human nature precisely by making it fully intrinsic to his own act of existence.

[84] WA 39/2:28.28; cf. 28.10; 17.2-3, 31-36.

nominalist theology of the hypostatic union, must be taken to mean something like "the Son of God, who sustains human nature, is God."[85] In order to hold "Homo est Deus" true, in other words, the nominalists find themselves compelled to offer "Deus est Deus" as its proper interpretation. This saves the truth value of the troublesome sentence at the cost of taking "homo" to mean "Deus"; by the nominalists' own standards (the "infinite distance" assumption), it would be hard to conceive a more radical equivocation.[86]

Whether Luther's interpretation does justice to the nominalists we need not decide for our purposes. We can now see more clearly, though, what Luther means when he denies that "the same thing" can be true in both philosophy and theology: "philosophy" -that is, nominalist logic and ontology-inevitably ends up giving equivocal interpretations to sentences like "Verbum caro factum est," and so even when it holds these sentences true does not in fact assert the same thing as theology (that is, Scripture) does. The "philosophical" interpretation is equivocal precisely with respect to the theological one, which always tries to take the words of theologically decisive sentences in the same sense they have in the other sentences in which they are used (and to which we have assigned a truth value). So with regard to the case in point:

> The philosopher does not say that God is a human being or that a human being is God and the Son of God. But we do say that a human being is God, and we prove [or: "assert" = *testamur]* this by the word of God, without a syllogism and without philosophy, since philosophy is nothing in our grammar .... It is true to say that God has become a human being, just as you and I are.[87]

[85] "So they say, as though this were much better, 'Homo est Deus,' that is, 'The Son of God, who sustains a human nature, is God,' because it is necessary that the subject and the predicate stand for the same thing" (WABr 9:444.55-57).

[86] As White puts the point: "Thus, the error is ... to argue from identity of reference to identity of sense" *(Luther as Nominalist,* 394).

[87] WA 39/2: 12.5-10. In the same vein, on John 1:14: "The loftiest treasure and the highest consolation of Christians is that the Word, the true, natural Son of God, has become a human being, who certainly has flesh and blood like any other human being. He has become a human being for our sake, so that we might attain the great glory of having our flesh and blood, hide and hair, hands and feet, belly and backside reside in heaven like God" (WA 46:631.26-32; cf. 625.1-10; 626.25-28).

Equivocation between the interpretation of these scripturally and creedally mandated sentences and the rest of the sentences whose truth value we know (which is almost all of them) is, so far as possible, to be avoided. "Est homo" should be taken to mean the same thing when we say "Deus est homo" as it does when we say "Petrus est homo."[88] Luther generalizes the point in his argument with the Swiss Reformers over the interpretation of another difficult but theologically crucial identity statement: "This is my body." The burden of proof always falls on taking words in any one sentence differently from the way we take them in the other sentences in which we use them. "In Scripture one should take words just as they go, according to their natural force, and give no other interpretation unless a dear article of faith requires it." About this, it seems to me, Luther shows not inconsiderable linguistic-philosophical sophistication: "Otherwise one would no longer have any definite text, interpretation, speech, or language."[89]

Remarks of this sort abound in Luther's corpus, usually in connection with the interpretation of specific scriptural passages. Let us look at a somewhat more complicated argument along the same lines, from *De servo arbitrio.* Luther is here arguing about the interpretation of "I will harden Pharaoh's heart" (cf. Exod 4:21; Rom 9:17f.), which Erasmus takes to mean "God allowed Pharaoh to harden his own heart." But Luther takes "Deus est homo" as the chief example of the sort of interpretive problem posed by the passages about Pharaoh's hardening.

[88] "Ockham does not want to be univocal, but equivocal, so that humanity in Peter is different from humanity in Christ." Similarly, "The Sorbonne demands that we make every word ambiguous. This should be resisted. We should not allow it in order to reconcile theology and philosophy with regard to this proposition (that is, 'Deus est homo') by distinguishing between 'human being' and 'human being' [Non *admittendum, ut concilietin hac propositionetheologiamet philosophiam,id est, Deus est homo, cum distinguiturinter hominem et hominem]"* (WA 39/2:11.36-37; 17.32-34).

Thomas's position on the Christological issue, it should be noted, is the same. In "Deus est homo" and similar sentences, the subject, the predicate, and the predication are all to be taken "in their true and proper sense *[vere et* proprie]"; "est homo" means the same thing when applied to "Deus" as it does when applied to "Petrus," or, to use Thomas's examples, "Socrates" and "Platon" (cf. *STh* III, q. 16, a. 1).

[89] WA 26:403.27-29; 279.7-8.

> Absurdity is one of the principal reasons why the words of Moses and Paul are not taken literally *[simpliciter]*. But what article of faith does this absurdity sin against? Who is offended by it? Human reason is offended, which, although it is blind, deaf, stupid, impious, and sacrilegious with regard to all the words and works of God, is introduced here as the judge of the words and works of God. By the same argument you will deny all the articles of faith, because it is far and away the most absurd thing of all ... that God should be a human being, the son of a virgin, crucified, and seated at the right hand of the Father. It is absurd, I say, to believe such things. Let us therefore dream up some tropes with the Arians, so that Christ might not be literally *[simpliciter]* God.[90]

Some reflection on the logic of these passages may help us understand how the relationship between plausible interpretation, the ascription of truth to sentences, and epistemic primacy works in Luther's theology.

We can begin by considering just the relationship between truth and interpretation. Luther's argument here can perhaps be put in the following terms, which owe something to Davidson. We seek an interpretation of "Homo est Deus" and "Deus est homo"; the especially problematic word for our purposes is "homo." The aim of the interpretation is to fix the sense of "homo," or perhaps the coherent range of senses which the word may have; we want what Luther calls a "definite interpretation." If the interpretation is to be genuinely radical (that is, if we do not beg the question by assuming in advance that we know what "homo" means), we will have to try to fix the sense by maximizing the ascription of truth to sentences held true by Latin speakers in which "homo" is used, and especially those in which it is used as a subject or predicate nominative. So we note that Latin speakers hold true a host of sentences like "Petrus est homo" and "Maria est homo," and from the rest of the beliefs they (and we) hold true about "Petrus," "Maria," and others, we begin to get a fix on the sense of "homo." But we also observe that these speakers hold true the sentences "Homo est Deus" and "Deus est homo" (perhaps we are conducting our radical interpretation in a far-off monastery where Latin is still spoken). This gives us pause; we already have at least a partial fix on the sense of "Deus," and this word seems to denote something of a

[90] WA 18:707.19-29.

radically different sort from "Petrus," "Maria," and ourselves. Assuming for present purposes that we are confident in our interpretation of "Deus" so far, and do not want to change it, we are faced with two alternatives. We can come reluctantly (since we always interpret by seeking to maximize agreement on sentences held true) to the conclusion that in the case of these particular sentences our speakers are uttering falsehoods; aiming for a coherent and "definite" interpretation of "homo," we decide we can maintain it only by holding "Homo est Deus" and the like false. Or we can sense that something strange and wonderful is going on here, perhaps that this "Deus" is giving us the gift of an inconceivably intimate share in his own life by having freely made our life absolutely one with his own; and for this reason we may come to agree with our speakers in holding "Homo est Deus" true, convinced that we can do so without sacrificing the coherence and definiteness of our interpretation of "homo," which would of course vitiate our reason for holding the sentence true. This confronts us with the additional task, of course, of trying to show how these semantically unanticipated sentences may be held true without interpretive incoherence. The one thing we cannot do, however, is agree with our speakers in holding "Homo est Deus" true by taking "homo" to mean something like "Deus"; semantic economy and plausible (that is, coherent and definite) interpretation would be served simply by taking "Homo est Deus" to be false, rather than resorting to so drastic an equivocation. And as Luther sees it, this is just what the nominalist position comes to in the end.

These considerations may also help explain why the gospel and the articles of faith can retain their "natural force" or plain sense *and* be held true only when they function with unrestricted epistemic primacy across the whole field of possible belief. In these late disputations, Luther sometimes says theology speaks a "new language" and uses "new words," in contrast (as we have already noted) to the "old language" and "old words" of philosophy (the idea is of course not a new one in his theology; recall, *inter alia*, the "modus loquendi theologicus" of the early

lectures on Romans).[91] The "new" discourse of theology does not differ from the "old" discourse of philosophy by assigning meanings to words radically discontinuous with those they have in the rest of human speech; this would presumably be just the sort of equivocation which Luther goes out of his way to reject. Theology is new not primarily in the meaning it gives to terms but in the way it combines them, that is, in the radically unexpected sentences it holds true. Holding these sentences true may of course extend or otherwise alter the sense of their terms, but not in such a way that the terms utterly lose their "natural force"; alluding to an old medieval distinction (much exploited by Thomas Aquinas) Luther argues that the terms in theological sentences signify (or, we could say, refer to) the same thing they do in the rest of our discourse, but signify it in a new way.[92] So, to use two of Luther's examples, "mother" when applied in theology to Mary continues to signify a woman who gives birth, but does so in a new (viz., virginal) way; "creature" when applied to Christ continues to signify that which God makes by an act of will, but which he now makes by uniting it absolutely to himself, rather than by separating it infinitely from himself.[93]

[91] "21. 'Creature' in the old use of language and in other matters signifies something separated from God in infinite ways. 22. In the new use of language it signifies something inseparably conjoined with divinity in the same person in ineffable ways" (WA39/2:94.19-22; cf. above, n. 82). "In theology a philosophical term [vox] becomes entirely new"; "the customary vocabulary of philosophy becomes new" (19.7; 19.34-35). On "modus loquendi theologicus," cf. WA 56:351-52.

[92] "20. Nonetheless it is certain that all terms *[vocabula]* receive a new signification in Christ, although they continue to refer to the same thing *[in eadem re significata]*.23. In this way it is necessary that the words 'human being,' 'humanity,' 'suffered,' etc., and everything said about Christ be new terms. 24. Not that they signify a new or different thing, but they signify it in a new and different way, unless you also want to call that a new thing" (WA 39/2:94.17-18; 23-26). For Thomas's understanding of the distinction between the *res sign.ificata* of terms and their *modus sign.ificandi* which lies in the background here, cf. *STh* I, q. 13, a. 3; I *Sent.* d. 22, q. 1, a. 2. For examples of its theological use, see *STh* l, q. 39; *STh* III, q. 16.

[93] "'Mother' in philosophy signifies a woman who is impure, in theology 'mother of Christ' signifies a pure and virgin [woman]" (WA 39/2:19.33-34). "In the old language 'creature' is that which the creator makes and separates from himself, but this signification has no place in the creature Christ. There creator and creature are one and the same" (WA 39/2:105.4-7).

"Philosophy" goes beyond its "sphere" and becomes a problem for theology, an "old" language to which the "new" language of theology must stand opposed, when it takes our ordinary ways of combining terms into sentences as the key to interpreting and assessing the truth of the scriptural and creedal sentences theology is charged to uphold (a temptation "reason" finds itself powerless to resist). The scripturally and creedally formed discourse of the Christian community is, as Luther sees it, God's own way of talking in our language; as such the sentences it teaches us to hold true are shockingly novel and odd by comparison with the way we combine terms in the rest of our discourse. If we take consistency with "Petrus est homo" and similarly quotidian beliefs as the chief test for deciding whether a radically unexpected sentence like "Deus est homo" is true, and we are good interpreters who know how to take words according to their natural force, then we will naturally be inclined to regard such a novel sentence as false, indeed absurd. If we (like the nominalists) are bad interpreters who also want to hold true the sentences of Scripture and creed, then we will take "Deus est homo" in a way opposed to its natural force, which an efficient theory of interpretation converts to falsity according to the natural force.

If we want to be both good interpreters and believers in the teaching of Scripture and creed we must not, it seems, try to decide about the truth of sentences such as "Deus est homo" by measuring them for consistency with the rest of our beliefs, but must rather take these sentences as the standard by consistency with which the truth of all the rest of our beliefs is chiefly measured. This means, of course, that there is no standard for deciding to hold true "Deus est homo" and the nest of beliefs in which it is most closely imbedded, that is, no higher or more central beliefs against which we could test their truth. This is, I suppose, part of what Luther means when he says that theology must hold to the word of God "without a syllogism," without any further *principia* to which it might appeal. We seek, to be sure, an interpretation of our daily discourse-indeed our whole field of belief-which is consistent with holding true the novel sentences of Scripture and creed, an interpretation which eschews equivocation and allows the natural sense to reign wherever

possible in the sentences we hold true. Such an interpretation seems to require that we proceed in a certain way, that we speak the new language of theology rather than the old language of philosophy. But this is simply to say that the discourse of Scripture and creed can be held true, and all of our beliefs together can have their natural force, only when we take that discourse in a way suited to its radical novelty: as the principle for reconfiguring the whole field of belief, that is, as epistemically primary across the board.

So Luther's argument that the same thing cannot be true in theology and philosophy need not be taken for a denial of the unrestricted epistemic primacy of the gospel read in accordance with the articles of faith. Theology and philosophy each has its own "sphere"; neither provides the content for the other's discourse, and each has its own rules for forming true sentences. But this distinction turns out to be a way of insisting that theology has to keep its epistemic priorities straight. Theology's "sphere" ends up being the whole; theology puts philosophy in its place by defining philosophy's sphere, that is, by marking out the boundaries within which its rules for forming true sentences may apply (viz., wherever they do not conflict with the truth of Scripture and creed taken in their natural sense). Luther accordingly concludes his disputation on John 1:14 with an appeal to 2 Corinthians 10:

> This is the point of this disputation: that when it comes to the mystical articles of faith we are not permitted to rely in argument on philosophical reasons, but must cling to the naked word and truth of Scripture, and that in faith the judgment of reason should not hold sway against the word, but should submit and subject itself to the obedience of Christ.[94]

IV. CONCLUSION: DESPOILING THE EGYPTIANS

Despite Chesterton, to say nothing of others more ·scholarly than he, it seems that Luther was not a naive fideist who sought to isolate Christian belief and Christian theology from the rest of human knowledge and inquiry. Or if Luther was a fideist then so

[94] WA 39/2:30.15-18.

was Aquinas, since the logic of their positions on how to decide what is true seems to be the same. But rather than think of either of them as fideists, it seems more plausible to think of them both as scripturalist and creedalist theologians much concerned to keep their epistemic priorities straight, and that on the widest possible scale.

How then did Chesterton (and others) go so far wrong? The short answer might be that he never read Luther. But even if true, this would not really be fair. Many who have read Luther, both Catholics and Protestants, share Chesterton's conviction that the difference between Luther and Thomas on faith and reason is radical, not superficial-they share, in other words, Luther's own assumption that he and Aquinas are at fundamental odds on this issue. Luther's assumption has a certain obvious plausibility. However little *he* had read Thomas, Luther, like Chesterton, rightly perceives that Thomas likes Aristotle, finds him intellectually fascinating and challenging, and thinks him theologically useful. Luther, by contrast, often says that Aristotle is useful only for non-theological purposes, and expresses deep contempt for Aristotle's world-view (his ethics and metaphysics, as distinct from his logic) and for those who find that world-view theologically useful.[95] If the reading I have proposed here is right, then interpreters of Luther and Aquinas, of whatever confessional stripe, have widely been mislead by surface issues-like the different attitudes the two theologians have toward Aristotle-and so have missed the deeper logical and structural likeness in their views of faith and reason, a likeness which comes to the surface when one attends to the question of how to decide what is true.

To be sure, the differences between Luther and Aquinas on Aristotle and philosophy generally, while not radical in the way

[95] Cf. e.g., the famous comments about "the blind heathen master Aristotle" in *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation* of 1520 (WA 6:457.28-458.40). *As* Theodor Dieter shows in "Der jungeLuther undAristoteles" *(HabilitationschriftTiibingen,* 1997), however, in practice Luther's attitude towards Aristotle during this period was quite different from what this sort of rhetoric suggests; he took Scholastic, including Aristotelian, questions very seriously, and sought to answer them in his own way. Cf. also White, *Luther as Nominalist,* 320-25. On Luther's knowledge of Thomas, cf. Denis R. Janz, *Luther on Thomas Aquinas: The Angelic Doctor in the Thought of the Reformer* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1989).

appearances sometimes suggest, are not trivial. If this reading is correct, however, they stem not from fundamentally different epistemic priorities and outlooks, but from the quite different, and in important respects diametrically opposed, situations in which the epistemic outlook the two theologians basically share had to work.

Confronted in Aristotle and Moslem Aristotelianism with a highly sophisticated world-view new to his Christian culture and deeply challenging to some of its most basic assumptions, Thomas vigorously and self-consciously sets about despoiling the Egyptians. He follows, with astonishing thoroughness and success, Augustine's advice that Christians who find themselves in this situation sort out the "simulated and superstitious imaginings" from the useable truths.[96] He tells the difference between the useless and useful goods of the Egyptians, as we have observed, by keeping his epistemic priorities straight-by seeing whether the goods in question are compatible with the gospel and can be put to its service.

Luther sees himself confronted not so much with fresh Egyptian goods as with wayward children of Israel who, enticed by the local finery, have gone native-have forgotten how to keep their epistemic priorities straight. Overwhelmed by the beauty of Egypt to the point where they can no longer tell useable goods from useless idols, these wayward Israelites must have their sights set once more on the promised land. This Luther vigorously sets out to do, by insisting that everything in Church and theology cohere with the gospel, and ruthlessly discarding whatever does not-by insisting that we keep our epistemic priorities straight. That is: logically, if not rhetorically and stylistically, Luther did just what Aquinas would have done if Aquinas had been living and writing in Luther's very different situation.

Or so I would seek to argue if my aim were to account for the differences between Aquinas and Luther on faith and reason rather than to display their more fundamental likeness. But the fulfillment of that aim reaches beyond the scope of this essay.

[96] Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* 2.40 (cf. above, n. 15).

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FROM SCHRODINGER'S CAT TO THOMISTIC ONTOLOGY [1]

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I AM PLEASED and honored to give this *Templeton Lecture on Christianity and the Natural Sciences.* I regard the objective of these Lectures as a cultural task of prime importance. I believe that the reputed conflict between science and religion does exist, and is in fact far more serious than one tends to think; but, at the same time, I am persuaded that the conflict arises not from science as such but from a penumbra of scientistic beliefs for which in reality there is no scientific support at all. This oft-overlooked distinction between scientific truth and scientistic belief has long been a special concern of mine. I have, for many years, made it my business to hunt down and ferret out major articles of scientistic belief-not as an academic exercise, but in the conviction that the acceptance of such contemporary dogmas is injurious to our spiritual well-being. I have no doubt that the ongoing de-Christianization of Western society is due in large measure to the imposition of the prevailing scientistic world-view.

Meanwhile something quite unexpected and as yet largely unobserved has come to pass: this scientistic world-view, which still reigns as the official dogma of science, appears no longer to square with the scientific facts. What has happened in our century is that unprecedented discoveries at the frontiers of science seem no longer to accord with the accustomed *Weltanschauung,* with the result that these findings present the appearance of paradox. It seems that on its most fundamental level physics itself has disavowed the prevailing world-view. This science, therefore, can

[1] The following lecture was given at Gonzaga University on February 5, 1998.

no longer be interpreted in the customary ontological terms; and so, as one quantum theorist has put it, physicists have, in a sense, "lost their grip on reality."[2] But this fact is known mainly to physicists, and has been referred to, not without cause, as "one of the best-kept secrets of science." It implies that physics has been in effect reduced to a positivistic discipline, or, in Whitehead's words, to "a kind of mystic chant over an unintelligible universe."[3] Richard Feynman once remarked: "I think it is safe to say that no one understands quantum mechanics." To be sure, the incomprehension to which Feynman alludes refers to a *philosophic* plane; one understands the mathematics of quantum mechanics, but not the ontology. Broadly speaking, physicists have reacted to this impasse in three principal ways. The majority, perhaps, have found comfort in a basically pragmatic outlook, while some persist, to this day, in the attempt to fit the positive findings of quantum mechanics into the pre-quantum world-picture. The third category, which includes some of the most eminent names in physics, convinced that the pre-quantum ontology is now defunct, have cast about for new philosophic postulates, in the hope of arriving at a workable conception of physical reality. There seem to be a dozen or so world-views presently competing for acceptance in the scientific community.

It is not my intention to propose yet another ad hoc philosophy designed to resolve quantum paradox. I intend in fact to do the opposite: to show, namely, that there is absolutely no need for a new philosophic *Ansatz*, that the problem at hand can be resolved quite naturally on strictly traditional philosophic ground. What I propose to show, in particular, is that the quantum facts, divested of scientistic encrustations, can be readily integrated into a very ancient and venerable ontology: namely, the Thomistic, which traces back to Aristotle. Rejected by Galileo and Descartes, and subsequently marginalized, this reputedly outmoded medieval speculation proves now to be capable of supplying the philosophic keys for which physicists have been groping since the advent of quantum theory.

[2] Nick Herbert, *Quantum Reality* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 15.

[3] Alfred North Whitehead, *Nature and Life* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 10.

I

First formulated in 1925, quantum mechanics has shaken the foundations of science. It appears as though physics, at long last, has broken through to its own fundamental level; it has discovered what I shall henceforth term the physical universe-a world that seems to defy some of our most basic conceptions. It is a world (if we may call it such) that can be neither perceived nor imagined, but only described in abstract mathematical terms. The most useful and widely accepted representation is the one formalized in 1932 by the Hungarian mathematician John von Neumann. In this model the state of a physical system is represented by a vector in a so-called complex Hilbert space. This means, in effect, that a state can be multiplied by a complex number, and that two states can be added, and that non-zero linear combinations of states, thus formed, will again be states of the physical system. Now, it is this fundamental fact, known as the superposition principle, that gives rise to quantum strangeness. Consider, for instance, a physical system consisting of a single particle, and then consider two states, in which the particle is situated, respectively, in two disjoint regions A and B, which can be as widely separated as we like. A linear combination of these two states with non-zero coefficients will then determine a third state, in which apparently the particle is situated, neither in A nor in B, but somehow in both regions. Now, one may say: "State vectors actually describe, not the physical system as such, but our knowledge concerning the physical system. The third state vector, thus, simply signifies that so far as we know the particle can be in A or in B, with a certain probability attached to each of the two possible events." A grave difficulty, however, remains; for the state of the physical system corresponding to the third state vector can in fact be produced experimentally, and when one does produce that state one obtains interference effects which could not be there if the particle were situated in A or in B. In some unimaginable way the particle seems thus to be actually in A and B at once.

What happens then if one measures or observes the position of the particle in the third state? It turns out that the act of

measurement instantly throws the system into a new state. The detected particle, of course, is situated either in A or in B; which is to say that only unobserved particles can bilocate. All this, to be sure, is very strange; but let me emphasize that from a mathematical point of view all is well, and that in fact the theory functions magnificently. As I have said before, what puzzles physicists is not the mathematics, but the ontology.

Thus far I may have conveyed the impression that superposition states are rare and somehow exceptional. What is indeed exceptional, however, are states in which a given observable *does* have a precise value (the so-called eigenstates); and even in that case it happens that the system remains necessarily in a superposition state with respect to other observables. The quantum system, thus, is always in a state of superposition; or more precisely, it is at one and the same time in many different states of superposition, depending upon the observable one has in view. On the quantum level superposition is not the exception, but indeed the fundamental fact.

At this point one might say: "There is no reason to be unduly perplexed; superposition applies, after all, to microsystems too minute to be observable without the aid of instruments. Why worry if 'weird things' happen on the level of fundamental particles and atoms? Why expect that one can picture things or happenings which are by nature imperceptible?" Most physicists, I believe, would be happy to adopt this position, if it were not for the fact that superposition tends to spread into the macroscopic domain. It is this quantum-mechanical fact that has been dramatized in the celebrated experiment proposed by Schrodinger, in which the disintegration of a radioactive nucleus triggers the execution of the now-famous cat. According to quantum theory, the unobserved nucleus is in a superposition state, which is to say that its state vector is a linear combination of state vectors corresponding to the disintegrated and undisintegrated states. This superposition, moreover, is transmitted, by virtue of the experimental set-up, to the cat, which is consequently in a corresponding superposition state. In plain terms, the cat is both dead and alive. It remains, moreover, in this curious condition until an act of observation collapses its state vector, as the

expression goes, and thus reduces it to one or the other classical state.

Of course, the mystery here has nothing especially to do with cats; it has to do with the role of measurement in the economy of quantum mechanics. Now, measurement is a procedure in which a given physical system is made to interact with an instrument, the resultant state of which then indicates the value of some observable associated with the system. For example, a particle is made to collide with a detector (a photographic plate, perhaps) which registers its position at the moment of impact. Prior to this interaction, the particle will in general be in a superposition state involving multiple positions; we must think of it as spread out over some region of space. Its evolution or movement, moreover, is governed by the so-called Schrodinger equation, which is linear, and hence preserves superposition, and is moreover strictly deterministic: an initial state uniquely determines the future states. At the moment of impact, however, this deterministic Schrodinger evolution is superseded by another quantum-mechanical law, a so-called projection, which singles out one of the positions represented in the given superposition state-apparently for no good reason!-and instantly assigns the particle to the chosen location. This simple scenario exemplifies what happens generally in the act of measurement: a physical system interacts with an instrument or measuring apparatus, and this interaction causes the Schrodinger evolution of the system to be superseded by an apparently random projection. It is as though the trajectory of a particle, let us say, were suddenly altered without an assignable cause. Why does this happen? Inasmuch as the instrument is itself a physical system, one would expect that the combined system, obtained by including the instrument, should itself evolve in accordance with the corresponding Schrodinger equation; but in fact it does not! What is it, then, that distinguishes the kind of interaction we term measurement from other interactions between physical systems, in which Schrodinger evolution is *not* superseded?

Quantum theory holds many puzzles of this kind; the scandal of superposition assumes many forms. I would like to mention one more of these enigmas, which strikes me as particularly

central. One might think of it as a simplified version of the Schrodinger cat paradox. In the words of Roger Penrose, the problem is this:

> The rules are that *any* two states whatever, irrespective of how different from one another they may be, can coexist in any complex linear superposition. Indeed, any physical object, itself made out of individual particles, ought to be able to exist in such superpositions of spatially widely separated states, and so be "in two places at once"! ... Why, then, do we not experience macroscopic bodies, say cricket balls, or even people, having two completely different locations at once? This is a profound question, and present-day quantum theory does not really provide us with a satisfying answer.[4]

These matters have been debated for a very long time, and various interpretations of the mathematical formalism have been proposed in an effort to make philosophic sense out of the theory. However, as Penrose observes, "These puzzles, in one guise or another, persist in *any* interpretation of quantum mechanics as the theory exists today."[5] After more than half a century of debate it appears that no clear resolution of the problem is yet in sight. One thing, however, one crucial point, has been consistently overlooked; and that is what I must now explain.

II

As is very well known, it was the seventeenth-century philosopher Rene Descartes who laid the philosophic foundations of modern physics. Descartes conceived of the external or objective world as made up of so-called *res extensae,* extended things bereft of sensible qualities, which can be fully described in purely quantitative or mathematical terms. Besides *res extensae* he posited also *res cogitantes* or "thinking entities," and it is to these that he consigned the sensible qualities, along with whatever else in the universe might be recalcitrant to mathematical definition. One generally regards this Cartesian partition of reality into *res*

[4] Roger Penrose, *The Emperor'sNew Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 256.

[5] Ibid., 296.

extensae and *res cogitantes* as simply an affirmation of the mind-body dichotomy, forgetting that it is much more than that; for not only has Descartes distinguished sharply between mind and body, but he has at the same time imposed an exceedingly strange and indeed problematic conception of corporeal nature, a conception, namely, that renders the external world unperceived and unperceivable. According to Descartes, the red apple we perceive exists-not in the external world, as mankind had believed all along, but in the mind, the *res cogitans;* in short, it is a mental phantasm that we have naively mistaken for an external entity. Descartes admits, of course, that in normal sense perception the phantasm is causally related to an external object, a *res extensa;* but the fact remains that it is not the *res extensa* but the phantasm that is actually perceived. What was previously conceived as a single object-and what in daily life is invariably regarded as such-has now been split in two; as Whitehead has put it: "Thus there would be two natures, one is the conjecture and the other is the dream."[6]

This splitting of the object into a "conjecture" and a "dream" is what Whitehead terms "bifurcation"; and this, it turns out, is the decisive philosophic postulate that underlies and determines our interpretation of physics. Beginning with his Tarner Lectures (delivered at Cambridge University in 1919), Whitehead insistently pointed out and commented upon this fact. "The result," he declares, "is a complete muddle in scientific thought, in philosophic cosmology, and in epistemology. But any doctrine which does not implicitly presuppose this point of view is assailed as unintelligible."[7] After seventy years of quantum debate, the situation remains fundamentally unchanged. Just about every other article of philosophic belief, it would seem, has been put on the table and subjected to scrutiny, whereas bifurcation continues to be implicitly presupposed by physicists, as if it were a sacrosanct dogma revealed from on high. And so "the muddle in scientific thought" continues, and has only been exacerbated by the demands of quantum theory.

[6] Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 30.

[7] Whitehead, *Nature and Life,* 6.

That's the bad news; the good news is that the situation can be remedied. In a recent monograph I have shown that physics can indeed be interpreted on a nonbifurcationist basis, with the result that quantum paradox disappears of its own accord.[8] No need any more for such things as the "many worlds" hypothesis or other ad hoc stipulations; to resolve the semblance of paradox one needs but to relinquish a certain philosophic postulate foisted upon us by Galileo and Descartes. Quantum paradox, it appears, is Nature's way of repudiating a spurious philosophy.

III

We need thus to take a second look at quantum mechanics, this time from a nonbifurcationist point of view. Now, to deny bifurcation is to affirm the objective reality of the perceived entity: the red apple, thus, is once again recognized as an external object. That perceptible entity, moreover, is to be distinguished from what may be called the "molecular apple," a thing that, dearly, cannot be perceived, but can be known only through the methods of physics. One is consequently led to distinguish between two kinds of external objects: corporeal objects, which can be perceived, and physical objects, which can only be observed indirectly through the *modus operandi* of the experimental physicist. The two ontological domains are of course closely related, failing which there could be no science of the physical at all. The basic fact is this: Every corporeal object X is associated with a physical object SX from which it derives all of its quantitative attributes. The red apple, for example, derives its weight from the molecular. The crucial point, however, is that the two are not the same thing; X and SX belong to different ontological planes-to different worlds, one could almost say.

The bifurcationist, obviously, does not recognize this distinction, since he denies the existence of the corporeal object X; but in so doing, he implicitly identifies X with SX. The credo of bifurcation thus entails a reduction of the corporeal to the

[8] Wolfgang Smith, *The Quantum Enigma* (Peru, Ill.: Sugden, 1995). A helpful summary of the book with commentary has been given by William A. Wallace in "Thomism and the Quantum Enigma," *The Thomist* 61 (1997): 455-67.

physical. And in that reductionism, I say, lies the fundamental fallacy-the illusion, if you will-of the prevailing *Weltanschauung.*

The amazing thing is this: whereas classical physics seemingly tolerates that error, quantum mechanics does not. It turns out that the new physics itself distinguishes between X and SX; it insists in fact upon that distinction-which is precisely what perplexes the physicist. In its very structure, that is to say, in its categorical distinction between the physical system and its observables, quantum mechanics affirms in its own way the ontological distinction between the physical and the corporeal planes. The system thus belongs to the physical domain, whereas the act of measurement terminates dearly on the corporeal, in the perceptible state, namely, of a corporeal instrument. It is true that the corporeal instrument I is associated with a physical system SI: but the point, once again, is that the two are by no means the same. What is special about measurement is the fact that it realizes an ontological transition from the physical to the corporeal domain. No wonder, therefore, that quantum theory should be conversant with two very different "laws of motion," for it has now become apparent that Schrodinger evolution operates within the physical domain, whereas projection has to do with a transit out of the physical and into the corporeal. In the language of metaphysics one can say that the former describes a horizontal and the latter a vertical process. One can now see that the discontinuity of state vector collapse mirrors an ontological discontinuity; and that is the reason why the phenomenon cannot be understood from a reductionist point of view. State vector collapse is inexplicable on a physical basis because it results from the act of a corporeal entity.

These considerations strongly suggest that the superposition principle must be amended for subcorporeal systems, that is to say, for the SX of a corporeal object X; for it is altogether reasonable to suppose that the state vector of SX can admit only superpositions consistent with the perceivable properties of X. That is no doubt the reason why cats cannot be both dead and alive, and why cricket balls do not bilocate. Penrose is absolutely right: if cats and cricket balls were "made of individual particles,,;

they would indeed be able to exist in unrestricted states of superposition; but the point is that they are not thus made. From a nonbifurcationist point of view, corporeal objects, as we have seen, are not simply aggregates of particles, but something more. We need therefore to inquire what it is that differentiates X from SX; and for this we shall turn to Thomistic ontology.

IV

We must begin where St. Thomas himself began: namely, with the fundamental conceptions of Aristotle. The first step, if you will, in the analysis of being is to distinguish between substances and attributes: between things that exist in themselves and things that exist in another. Having thus distinguished between what is primary and what is secondary, one proceeds to the analysis of the primary thing. The problem is to break substance into its components-to split the atom of substance, if you will; and for this one evidently requires the conception of things more primitive than substances, things "out of which" substances are made. Aristotle solved this problem with one of the great master-strokes in the history of philosophy: the distinction between potency and act. The customary definition of these terms is simple and quite unimpressive: That which is capable of being a certain thing, but is not that thing, is that thing in potency; whereas that which a thing already is is so in act. A seed is a tree in potency, and a tree is a tree in act. Aristotle goes on to define matter, or prime matter, to be exact, as that which is in potency to substance, to substantial being. Prime matter as such has consequently no being; but it has nonetheless a capacity or an aptitude for being. What actualizes this capacity is indeed an act, and that act is called a form, or more precisely, a substantial form. Substance has thus been split into two components: matter and form. It is the form, moreover, that contributes to the substance its essential content, its quiddity or "whatness," what the Germans so expressively call its *Sosein.* And yet that form is not itself the substance, is not itself the existent thing; for the form without matter does not exist.

It is at this point of the analysis that the genius of St. Thomas Aquinas becomes manifest. And here we come to a second master-stroke in the history of philosophy. Saint Thomas recognized that substantial form is itself in potency to something else: to an act, namely, which is not a form; and that is the act-of-being itself. To put it in his own words: "The act-of-being is the most intimate element in anything, and the most profound element in all things, because it is like a form in regard to all that is in the thing."[9] That innermost element constitutes the point of contact, as it were, between created being and its uncreated Source, which is God. The act-of-being, thus, belongs in the first place to God, who creates and sustains the universe; and yet it also belongs to created substance as its innermost reality. We may think of it as radiating outwards, through the substantial form, to the very accidents by which the being communicates itself to us.

Each being, moreover, is endowed with a certain efficacy, a certain power to act outside itself, which likewise derives from its act-of-being, and thus from God. Yet that efficacy, that power, is distinctly its own. As Etienne Gilson has beautifully explained:

> The universe, as represented by St. Thomas, is not a mass of inert bodies passively moved by a force which passes through them, but a collection of active beings each enjoying an efficacy delegated to it by God along with actual being. At the first beginning of a world like this, we have to place not so much a force being exercised as an infinite goodness communicated. Love is the unfathomable source of all causality.[10]

We are beginning, perhaps, to catch a glimpse of the Thomistic ontology; but let us continue. Not only is God's love the unfathomable source of all causality, but all causation, as we know it, imitates that love. To quote Gilson once more:

> Beneath each natural form lies hidden a desire to imitate by means of action the creative fecundity and pure actuality of God. This desire is quite unconscious in the domain of bodies; but it is that same straining towards God which, with intelligence and will, will blossom forth into human morality.

[9] Aquinas, *STh* I, q. 8, a. 1.

[10] Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 183.

Thus, if a physics of bodies exists, it is because there exists first a mystical theology of the divine life. The natural laws of motion, and its communication from being to being, imitate the primitive creative effusion from God. The efficacy of second causes is but the counterpart of His fecundity. [11]

This same Thomistic vision of Nature has been expressed by Meister Eckhart in a passage of rare beauty, where he writes:

You must understand that all creatures are by nature endeavoring to be like God. The heavens would not revolve unless they followed on the track of God or of his likeness. If God were not in all things, Nature would stop dead, not working and not wanting; for whether thou like it or no, whether thou know it or not, Nature fundamentally is seeking, though obscurely, and tending towards God. No man in his extremity of thirst but would refuse the proffered draught in which there was no God. Nature's quarry is not meat or drink nor clothes nor comfort nor any things at all wherein is naught of God, but covertly she seeks and ever more hotly she pursues the trail of God therein. [12]

Here we have it: a vision of Nature that penetrates to the very heart of things, to that "most profound element" which St. Thomas has identified as its act-of-being. This is no longer an Aristotelian, but an authentically Christian *Weltanschauung.* I propose to show next how the findings of quantum theory fit into that Christian world-view.

V

It needs to be pointed out, first of all, that the Thomistic philosophy, no less than the Aristotelian, is unequivocally nonbifurcationist. There is in neither philosophy the slightest trace of Cartesian doubt. What we know by way of sense perception are external objects, period; and these are the objects with which the Thomistic ontology is principally concerned. It follows that the findings of physics (in our sense) can be assimilated into the Thomistic world-view only on condition that they be interpreted in nonbifurcationist terms.

[11] Ibid., 184.

[12] C. de B. Evans, trans., *Meister &khart* (London: Watkins, 1924), 1:115.

The fundamental problem, dearly, is to situate the physical domain in relation to the corporeal. Now, we know that transitions from the physical to the corporeal are effected by acts of measurement in which a certain possibility inherent in a given physical system is actualized; and this constitutes, Thomistically speaking, a passage from potency to act. Every physical system, in fact, is to be conceived as a potency in relation to the corporeal domain. I might add that this point has been made very forcefully by Werner Heisenberg with reference to microphysical systems: "a strange kind of physical entity just in the middle between possibility and reality" [13] he called these, and went on to observe that in certain respects they are reminiscent of what he termed "Aristotelian potentiae." When it comes to the macroscopic domain, however, Heisenberg identifies in effect the corporeal object X with the associated physical object SX, and thus submits (as does virtually everyone else!) to a reductionist view of corporeal nature-as if the mere aggregation of atoms could effect a transition from potency to act. Nonbifurcation, on the other hand, implies, as we have seen, an ontological distinction between X and SX, which is to say that SX itself, no less than the quantum particles out of which it is composed, constitutes in fact "a strange kind of physical entity just in the middle between possibility and reality." To be precise, fundamental particles and their aggregates-be they ever so macroscopic!--occupy a position, ontologically speaking, between primary matter and the corporeal domain. Contemporary physics, it appears, has discovered an intermediary level of existence unknown and undreamt of in premodern times. It is this intermediary domain below the corporeal that I term the physical universe.

What then distinguishes the two ontological planes? From an Aristotelian or Thomistic point of view the answer is dear: what distinguishes a corporeal object X from SX is precisely its substantial form. It is this form that bestows upon X its corporeal nature and specific essence, its "whatness" or *Sosein,* as we have said. It is important to emphasize that this substantial form is not a mathematical structure; if it were, X and SX would necessarily coincide. Substantial forms fall therefore beyond the ken of an

[13] Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 41.

exclusively quantitative science, a fact Descartes himself clearly recognized, for instance, when he writes:

> We can easily conceive how the motion of one body can be caused by that of another, and diversified by the size, figure and situation of its parts, but we are wholly unable to conceive how these same things can produce something else of a nature entirely different from themselves, as for example, those substantial forms and real qualities which many philosophers suppose to be in bodies.[14]

But is this not in fact the reason why Galileo and Descartes-protagonists of universal mechanism-rejected substantial forms, and banished sensible qualities from the external world? In so doing, however, they cast out the very essence of corporeal being; one is left with a de-essentialized universe, a world emptied of reality.

We need today to free ourselves from the iron grip of this dehumanizing scientistic dogma. We need to rediscover the fullness of the corporeal world, replete with substantial forms and real qualities, and harboring deep within itself the mystery of what St. Thomas calls "the most profound element in all things." We have need of this discovery in every domain of life, including the scientific; but most especially, we have need of it in the spiritual domain. The fullness of the Christian life, in particular, demands a sacramental capacity on the part of matter which is totally inconceivable in terms of a reductionist ontology. There is no room for the Christie mysteries in a universe made up simply of fundamental particles. The deeper truths of religion have thus become unthinkable for us. In the final count, we know neither man nor the universe, because neither can be comprehended in separation from God; "I am the truth," said Christ. To postulate, as we have, a self-existent universe productive of man is to beget an illusion. Like the prisoners in Plato's cave, we are thenceforth confined to an illusory world, constrained to gaze upon a realm of shadows. I surmise that of all the true philosophies-and I believe there are more than one-the Thomistic may be for us the safest and most efficacious means by which to effect the liberating

[14] Cited in E. A. Burtt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modem Physical Science* (New York: Humanities Press, 1951), 112.

intellectual rectification. Whosoever has sensed that "love is the unfathomable source of all causation" has already broken the chains; and whoever has grasped, even dimly, what St. Thomas terms the act-of-being, is well on his way.

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ISRAEL AND THE SHAPE OF THOMAS AQUINAS'S SOTERIOLOGY

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THE CONTEMPORARY understanding of Thomas Aquinas's soteriology has been succinctly expressed in a recent study, *Christology,* by Gerald O'Collins, S.J. O'Collins divides his treatment of Christo logy into three sections: biblical, historical, and systematic. In his historical section, he offers a brief appraisal of Thomas Aquinas's views. He concludes that Aquinas made both positive and negative contributions. On the positive side, Aquinas "mitigates" Anselm's theory of satisfaction by emphasizing the role of charity. Second, rather than focusing only on Christ's passion, Aquinas treats Christ's entire "human story." Third, Aquinas recognizes the redemptive role of Christ's resurrection.

These positive points are followed by three criticisms. The first is that by including the question as to whether Christ would have become incarnate had Adam not sinned Aquinas separates the order of creation and redemption. O'Collins is concerned that the incarnation not be seen as a "divine rescue operation, mounted subsequently after an original plan of creation went astray." His second criticism is directed against Aquinas's theory that Christ, because of the grace of the hypostatic union, possessed the beatific vision. O'Collins speaks for many modern theologians in arguing that this theory posits a docetic Christ. His third criticism is that Aquinas contributes to the development of the notion of penal substitution. Anselm had proposed that Christ's death restored the divine order of justice; Aquinas adds a new emphasis on

Christ's penal *suffering.* This emphasis on Christ's suffering is seen as helping to "open the door to a monstrous version of redemption: Christ as the penal substitute propitiating the divine anger." Aquinas thus stands as the unwitting predecessor of Luther. [1]

Without unfairly singling out O'Collins, I wish to challenge his approach to Aquinas's soteriology. Given the breadth of his project, O'Collins could only be expected to offer a summary of the scholarly consensus about Aquinas's soteriology. Precisely for this reason, his treatment is representative of a widespread misappropriation of Aquinas. Aquinas's treatise is viewed as a collection of propositions from which the modern theologian may select the propositions that remain valuable today. This approach is justified by the assumption that Aquinas's greatness lies in his ability to collect the best Scholastic propositions and organize them according to Aristotelian rules. [2] Such an assumption is not entirely unwarranted: Aquinas certainly desired to assemble the best insights of his predecessors, and he sought to give theology scientific form. And yet, this approach fails to give due credit to Aquinas's theological gifts. When we seek what unifies the propositions of one of Aquinas's treatises, we should look for theological as well as philosophical intelligibility.

In this article, I will argue that Aquinas's soteriological propositions are unified by his insight into how Christ's passion fulfills the Old Law.[3] By overlooking this unifying factor, O'Collins misunderstands Aquinas's reasons for emphasizing Christ's charity, beatific vision, and penal suffering. The main task of this essay, therefore, will be to examine the role of the Old Law in Aquinas's treatise on Christ's passion. Before we undertake this

[1] Gerald O'Collins, S.J., *Christology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 206-7.

[2] A theologian as great as Hans Urs von Balthasar fell into this mistake. He treats Aquinas as "more of a philosopher than a theologian," whose gift lay in philosophical organization rather than theological insight (cited in James J. Buckley, "Balthasar's Use of the Theology of Aquinas," *The Thomist* 59 [1995]: 517).

[3] For Aquinas, since Christ is the incarnate Word, everything that he does (from his coming into the world to his resurrection and ascension) has redemptive significance. Nonetheless, Christ's passion represents the apogee of his redemptive work, since it is primarily here that he brings the Old Law to completion.

task, however, we should briefly summarize Aquinas's conception of the place of the Old Law in the history of salvation.

The rational faculties of Adam and Eve were originally rightly directed to God. This state of "original justice" was itself a gift of grace *(STh* I, q. 95, a. 1). Original sin, as a fall from grace, disordered the rational faculties: they no longer were subject to God, nor did they rule the sense appetites *(STh* I, q. 85, a. 1). Under the sway of the sense appetites, the rational faculties' promptness to perceive and obey the "natural law" (i.e., the rational creature's participation in the "eternal law," the holy order that God has inscribed in creation) was weakened. As a result, in addition to the state of sin brought about by the original rejection of God's grace, human beings became culpable for numerous personal sins.

The giving of the Old Law on Sinai began in earnest the process of extricating man from sin. The Decalogue, Aquinas argues, reveals the tenets of the natural law *(STh* I-II, q. 100, a. 1). The other precepts of the Old Law structure Israel's cultic and political life around these tenets. Aquinas explains that in addition to the moral precepts, the Old Law contains ceremonial and judicial precepts-determinations of the moral precepts by which man is directed to God and to fellow men, respectively. These precepts, while good in themselves, are not "perfect," because they prefigure something higher *(STh* I-11, q. 104, a. 2). The ceremonial precepts, primarily those instituting the sacrificial system, cultically represent the right order of man to God; but the sacrifice of animals inevitably falls short of this right order. The judicial precepts, primarily those instituting the regulation of exchange and punishment for crime, are also figurative, although in a different way. By shaping the government of Israel, they suggest the right order that should exist between man and fellow men, but in practice, like any human politics, they are unable to produce this right order.

Thus the Old Law could only prefigure the final restoration of "right order" and the meriting of salvation. Nonetheless, Aquinas insists, participation in the Messiah's salvific action did not begin only after the event had taken place. Rather, such participation

was possible for the people living under the Old Law, insofar as by faith, hope, and love they were joined to the prefigured salvific action of the prophesied Messiah.[4] Since the New Law is simply the grace of the Holy Spirit that enables man to participate in the Messiah's transcendent fulfillment of the Old Law, the New Law is active even during the period of the Old. Still, the New Law is not ahistorical: it hinges upon Christ's salvific work. Aquinas emphasizes that "the New Law fulfills the Old by justifying men through the power of Christ's Passion" *(STh* 1-11, q. 107, a. 2). When Christ's passion occurs, of course, it brings to an end the Old Law, now taken up into his salvific action. As members of his mystical body (since his person is divine, all people can be joined to him through the grace of the Holy Spirit), we share in the profound reconciliation that his suffering brings. And by sharing in the merit of his suffering, we receive the promise of rising with him to eternal life.

Having reviewed the relationship of the Old and New Laws, we are now ready to turn to Aquinas's treatise on Christ's passion. Since Adam and Eve fell through disobedience, Christ's salvific action must be (as St. Paul says) an act of obedience. In *STh* III, q. 47, a. 2, Aquinas deepens this insight. He argues that Christ's supreme act of obedience-his passion-actually *fulfills* the Old Law. He points to St. John's Gospel, which records Jesus's final words from the cross, "It is consummated." Aquinas understands Christ to mean that the Old Law has finally been consummated in him. Aquinas then shows briefly how Christ's perfect act of obedience, flowing from the supernatural grace that infused his soul at the moment of the hypostatic union, simultaneously fulfills all three aspects of the Old Law. Since charity is the form of all the virtues, Christ's perfect charity, which he displayed "inasmuch as he suffered both out of love of

[4] Significantly, the final question that Aquinas treats before taking up Christ's passion concerns his transfiguration *(STh* III, q. 45). The presence of Moses and Elijah signifies Christ's intimate relationship to the saints of the Old Covenant, who recognized him in the Old Law, and foretold his coming in the prophetic books. Although these saints, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, possessed the supernatural virtue of faith in Christ's passion, as well as the virtues of hope and love, their final restoration awaited the event of Christ's passion, in which he paid the "debt" incurred by original sin *(STh* III, q. 49, a. 5, ad 1).

the Father ... and out of love of his neighbor," perfectly fulfilled the moral precepts of the Law. Secondly, Christ perfectly fulfilled the ceremonial precepts (which direct man to God) in the self-sacrifice that he offered upon the cross. Finally, Aquinas employs Psalm 63:5 to explain how Christ perfectly fulfilled the judicial precepts (which direct man to fellow-man): "He *paid that which* He *took not away,* suffering Himself to be fastened to a tree on account of the apple which man had plucked from the tree against God's command." In other words, Christ, though innocent, took upon himself the suffering due to all others.

In *STh* III, q. 47, a. 2, therefore, Aquinas provides the basic framework that unites the material of his treatise, which spans qq. 46-49. He seeks to explore, and to balance, the three ways in which Christ's passion simultaneously fulfilled the Old Law. Aquinas, of course, does not arrange his questions around the three kinds of precepts. He arranges his material in a more scientific order: q. 46 concerns the passion itself; q. 47, the efficient cause of the passion; and qq. 48-49, the effects of the passion. Yet in each of these questions, his concern is to show how Christ's passion is redemptive within the context established by Israel's Law. This concern enables Aquinas to achieve a profound balance between Christ's charity, his sacrifice, and his suffering.

I. THE CEREMONIAL PRECEPTS

We will begin with Christ's fulfillment of the ceremonial precepts, because this aspect of the Old Law has a special place in Aquinas's understanding of Christ's passion.[5] Earlier in his Christology, Aquinas had devoted an entire question to Christ's priesthood *(STh* III, q. 22), underscoring the special significance of the ceremonial precepts of the Old Law. The ceremonial

[5] This thesis is defended by Romanus Cessario, O.P., in *The Godly Image* (Petersham: St. Bede's Publications, 1990). Cessario notes the dependence of Aquinas's treatment upon the Epistle to the Hebrews, which focuses upon Christ's priestly mediation. See also Albert Patfoort, O.P., "Le vrai visage de la satisfaction du Christ selon St. Thomas," in *Ordo Sapientiae et Amoris,* ed. Carlos-Josaphat Pinta de Oliveira, O.P. (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires Fribourg, 1993), 247-66.

precepts, as Aquinas states in *STh* I-II, q. 101, a. 1, are properly the determinations of the moral law "which pertain to the Divine worship," and so it is not surprising that they have foremost dignity in his presentation.

Before turning to the fulfillment of the ceremonial precepts in Christ's passion, we should examine more closely how Aquinas, in his treatise on the Old Law, interprets the ceremonial precepts, in particular the laws about sacrifices. In contrast to the modern view of sacrificial offerings, Aquinas attributes to sacrifice a positive symbolic force. In *STh* I-II, q. 102, a. 3, ad 8 he notes that Christ's sacrifice is prefigured in the Old Law by three kinds of sacrifices: burnt offerings, peace offerings, and sin offerings, each of which represent a stage of the spiritual life. Since Aquinas holds that people living under the Old Law truly participated (through the Old Law) in the New Law, he can apply the later Christian distinction between the "counsels" and the "commandments" to the spiritual life of the Israelites. Burnt offerings, he suggests, were intended to "show reverence to His majesty, and love of His goodness: and typified the state of perfection as regards the fulfilment of the counsels." Burnt offerings were burnt completely in order to represent the self-offering of the whole man. Similarly, peace offerings were offered out of thanksgiving for divine favors received, and also in supplication for new favors. Aquinas holds that this kind of sacrifice "typifies the state of those who are proficient in the observance of the commandments." The peace offering was divided into three parts, one to be burnt, one for the priests, and one for the offerers. Aquinas explains that this threefold division signified the way in which salvation is from God, is mediated through priests, and is received by those who ask for it.

The third kind of sacrifice, the sin offering, represents (as the name implies) imperfection. Aquinas states that this kind of sacrifice "was offered to God on account of man's need for the forgiveness of sin: and this typifies the state of penitents in satisfying for sins." This sacrifice was the special duty of the priests of the Old Law.

With this background, we will understand more easily how Christ fulfills the ceremonial precepts.[6] In *STh* III, q. 48, a. 3, Aquinas asks whether Christ's passion operated by way of sacrifice. His answer explores the nature of Christ's sacrifice. The proper meaning of sacrifice, he notes, is "something done for that honor which is properly due to God, in order to appease him *[ad eum placandum]."* This definition emphasizes the reconciling aspect of sacrifice; and in this sense, Christ's sacrifice was primarily a sin offering. On the other hand, Christ's sacrifice also embodied the other two kinds of sacrifice. Aquinas cites Augustine to make clear the relationship between sacrifice as a perfect act and as a sin offering: "'A true sacrifice is every good work done in order that we may cling to God in holy fellowship, yet referred to that consummation of happiness wherein we can be truly blessed.'" Christ's perfect charity meant that his sacrifice was both a burnt offering and a peace offering, since as a reverential and thankful gift of the whole person, his sacrifice anticipated the "consummation of happiness"; but his sacrifice was also a sin offering, intended to enable us to regain "holy fellowship" with God. Christ's sacrifice thus draws together the three kinds of sacrifices in the Old Law. Aquinas concludes with two more citations of Augustine. Augustine compares the relationship of Christ's one sacrifice to the various sacrifices of the Old Law with

[6] See also *ITh* 11-11, q. 85 "Of Sacrifice," where Aquinas discusses sacrifice as part of the virtue of religion, which is in turn part of the virtue of justice. In this question, Aquinas conceives of sacrifice as part of holiness, rather than as a penance for sin. In a. 1, he holds that offering sacrifice belongs to the natural law. In a passage that might well serve as a commentary upon the famous "five ways" to show the existence of God, Aquinas explains:

> Natural reason tells man that he is subject to a higher being, on account of the defects which he perceives in himself, and in which he needs help and direction from someone above him: and whatever this superior being may be, it is known to all under the name of God. Now just as in natural things the lower are naturally subject to the higher, so too it is a dictate of natural reason in accordance with man's natural inclination that he should tender submission and honor, according to his mode, to that which is above man.

In a. 2, Aquinas explains that "the sacrifice that is offered outwardly represents the inward spiritual sacrifice ••• since, as stated above *[STh* III, q. 81, a.7; q. 84, a. 2), the outward acts of religion are directed to the inward acts."

the relationship of a single concept to the many words in which it may be expressed. Indeed, Christ's sacrifice not only unifies the various kinds of sacrifices of the Old Law, but also unifies the priest with the victim, and the one who offers with the one who receives.

Emphasizing that Christ's sacrifice unifies the various kinds of sacrifices of the Old Law leaves Aquinas with a difficult problem: if Christ's sacrifice is a "positive" sacrifice, then why is it a sacrifice of human flesh, an act explicitly forbidden in the Old Law? In the same article, Aquinas confronts this objection. Because the ceremonial precepts are "figures," we should expect that the reality would surpass them. Although it would have been unfitting to sacrifice human flesh under the Old Law, Christ's flesh is a fitting sacrifice for four reasons. As with many of his arguments from fittingness, Aquinas draws these reasons from Augustine.

First, Christ's sacrifice is ordered to the redemption of human beings, and specifically to the sacramental system. Therefore, the sacrifice of Christ's flesh is fitting, since otherwise men could not truly receive Christ in the Eucharist. Second, God took on flesh precisely in order to offer it in sacrifice; otherwise, God would not have needed to become incarnate. Third, Christ's flesh was unblemished by sin, and therefore constituted a perfect offering which, when participated through the sacraments, "had virtue to cleanse from sins." Fourth, in Christ's case the offering of human flesh was acceptable, since he himself willed in perfect charity to offer his own flesh.[7]

Having demonstrated that Christ's sacrifice must be seen as a positive offering, Aquinas devotes the next article *(STh* III, q. 48,

[7] It is worth having in mind Aquinas's understanding of "charity." Charity requires expending oneself for the beloved, even to the extent of sacrificing one's own life. The well-beingof the state, for example, requires a political love *by* which citizens "love the good of the state so that it might be preserved and defended .... So much is this so, that men would expose themselves to dangers of death or neglect of their own private good, in order to preserve or increase the good of the state" (fhomas Aquinas, *On Charity,* trans. Lottie H. Kendzierski [Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1984], 43). Supernatural love, therefore, requires at least a willingness to sacrifice the life of the *body.* Christ's bloody self-sacrifice perfectly manifests this supernatural charity. A lesser sacrifice could not have provided an adequate exemplar of supernatural charity.

a. 4) to exploring the nature of Christ's sacrifice specifically as a sin offering. As a sin offering, Christ's sacrifice operates according to the mode of redemption. In *STh* 1-11, q. 87, Aquinas had already explained that mortal sin incurs a "debt" of eternal punishment, because the order of divine justice is transgressed. So long as man is infected by original sin, he owes this "debt" of punishment. Moreover, he cannot pay it of himself: "if a sin destroys the principle of the order whereby man's will is subject to God, the disorder will be such as to be considered in itself irreparable, although it is possible to repair it by the power of God" *(STh* 1-11, q. 87, a. 3). Original sin imposed an ontological "debt" upon human nature; precisely by turning away from God, man incurred the punishment of being turned towards death. Christ's death, as the death of a sinless man, pays this "debt." The order of divine justice is restored. Indeed, Christ's perfect sin offering is "superabundant" compensation for our sin because of the dignity of his bodily life, which is united to the divine nature in the Person of the Word.

Christ's sacrifice can also be described as a "satisfaction." Anselm developed the concept of satisfaction that Aquinas uses in *STh* III, q. 48, a. 2: "He properly atones *[satisfacit]*for an offense who offers something which the offended one loves equally, or even more than he detested the offense." In this article, Aquinas notes three objections to the idea that Christ's passion brings about our salvation by way of atonement. The first objection argues that no one can make compensation for the sins of another. The second objection points out that since crucifying Christ, God incarnate, was the most grievous of all sins, the crucifixion could not atone for this new sin. The third objection holds that Christ's passion is merely one good act, which cannot balance out all sins.

Aquinas's answers reveal how he overcomes the legalistic tendency of Anselm's definition by exploring the dynamics of Christ's priesthood. To the first objection, he responds that all who believe in Christ participate in his passion, as members of his mystical body. Repeating an argument previously made in *STh* 1-11, q. 87, a. 7, he notes that oneness in charity enables the lover to atone for the beloved. To the second, he insists once again that

Christ's sacrifice should be seen as positive, since Christ, in his human will (perfectly conformed by charity to his divine will), chose freely to atone for our sins. To the third, Aquinas explains that the compensation offered by Christ is not merely the suffering of a particular instance of human nature, but rather the suffering of a human nature hypostatically united to the divine Person of the Logos. It is the hypostatic union which accounts for the perfect virtue of his human soul, and which makes the suffering of his human nature more than sufficient compensation for all sins.

II. THE MORAL PRECEPTS

Anselm is known for his theory of satisfaction, Abelard for his insistence that charity is the key to Christ's saving work. Aquinas argues that both are right. In this he is again following the Old Testament, which considered love to be the primary element of sacrifice, and indeed of worship. [8] Christ could not have fulfilled the ceremonial precepts without also perfectly fulfilling the moral precepts. The prophets of the Old Law had condemned the Temple sacrifices of their day as mere external forms, undertaken without faith or charity. Aquinas, therefore, is careful to emphasize the role of charity in Christ's sacrifice.[9]

In *STh* 11-11, qq. 23-25, Aquinas notes that charity is the movement of the will toward the Divine good *as good*, "according as it can be apprehended by the intellect" (q. 24, a. 1). The charitable will loves the Divine good for the Divine good's own sake, and loves all human beings insofar as they are referred to this good. As a supernatural virtue, charity is "created" participation in the Holy Spirit, who is Love. No true virtue is possible without charity, since all virtue is ordered to the good, and charity, which is ordered to the ultimate good, is necessary to direct all virtues perfectly towards the good. In this sense

[8] See for example Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18; Isa l:llf.; Ps 50:8-13; Sir 34:19-21; Mic 6:7. Aquinas makes clear that although the moral precepts of the Old Law concern "natural" virtues, it is impossible to fulfill the Old Law without the supernatural virtue of charity (cf. *STh* 1-11, q. 100, a. l; q. 100, a. 10, ad 3).

[9] Cf. *STh* III, q. 47, a. 4, ad 2; q. 48, aa. 2 and 3; q. 49, a. 4.

charity is called the "form" of all the virtues as well as the "source of merit" for all our acts.

Although it might seem that charity is the same in every person who possesses charity, in fact there are various degrees of charity, corresponding to the degree of the person's participation of the Holy Spirit. In *STh* 11-11, q. 24, a. 8, Aquinas notes that human charity can be called "perfect" in three ways. For our purposes, it will be sufficient to note the highest perfection of human charity, that manifested by Christ. Aquinas explains that the most perfect kind of human charity is reserved for those who are fully united to Christ in heaven. On earth, only Christ displays this most perfect charity, which requires "that a man's whole heart is always actually borne towards God." The grace of the hypostatic union provides Christ with this perfection, which enables his human will always to be in accord with his divine will. In this state of highest human charity, the person is able to "think always actually of God, and to be moved by love towards Him."

The connection that Aquinas makes here between always thinking of God and always loving him is highly significant for our purposes. Christ possesses while on earth the most perfect charity possible for man, precisely because of his possession of the beatific vision, which consists of contemplating God always. It is this perfect charity that enables Christ to fulfill perfectly all aspects of the Law. Only Christ's possession of the beatific vision enables him to love *perfectly,* as man, the ultimate end that his intellect fully apprehends; and thus Christ can fulfill perfectly the ceremonial precepts corresponding to this ultimate end. Likewise, Christ can fulfill perfectly the judicial precepts because he suffers out of charity for each and every man, known to him only by means of the beatific vision.[10]

[10] Aquinas discusses Christ's beatific knowledge (or contemplative enjoyment of God) in *Sfh* III, q. 10. In the first article of this question, Aquinas explains how Christ's contemplation (as man) of God includes knowledge of all created things.

> The soul of Christ knows all things in the Word. For every created intellect knows in the Word, not all simply, but so many more things the more perfectly it sees the Word. Yet no beatified intellect fails to know in the Word whatever pertains to itself. Now to Christ and to His dignity all things to some extent belong, inasmuch as all things are

Christ's beatific vision, in short, enables him to know perfectly what he is doing, and this knowledge enables him to love perfectly both God and those whom he is reconciling to God. Since Christ knows, as man, how his acts fit into the divine plan, his acts truly express the incarnate manifestation of the love of God. Thus for Aquinas, as for Abelard, the person who meditates upon Christ's passion is able to "[know] thereby how much God loves him, and is thereby stirred to love Him in return, and herein lies the perfection of human salvation" *(STh* III, q. 46, a. 3). God's movement of love towards us inspires, by the power of the Holy Spirit, a corresponding movement in us towards God. By this love, we appropriate the reconciliation gained for us by Christ's passion. Faith alone does not cleanse from sin; only faith working through love can truly participate in Christ's passion *(STh* III, q. 49, a. 1, ad 5).

Aquinas thus sees Christ's passion as the most complete human expression of charity. Indeed, he argues that even the smallest details of the passion are totally infused by charity. Christ, on the cross, remained always an active Lover, never a passive victim. This activity manifested itself most evidently in his prayer for his persecutors *(STh* III, q. 47, a. 4, ad 1). Since the perfected soul has complete governance of the body, Aquinas can also hold that Christ's charity governed the very entrance of the nail into his flesh. In Aquinas's view, Christ's charitable will must actually *permit* the infliction of the wounds of the crucifixion, because

> subject to Him. Moreover, He has been appointed Judge of all by God, *because He is the Son of Man,* as is said John v. 27; and therefore the soul of Christ knows in the Word all things existing in whatever time, and the thoughts of men, of which he is the Judge.

The knowledge of all things in the Word cannot cause sadness, because all things are, ultimately, ordered fittingly to God. Therefore, charity, which loves all things insofar as they are ordered to the ultimate end, cannot coexist with sadness. Yet a person possessing charity in this life can have sorrow, in the practical intellect, for the temporal disorder of man. In *STh* 11-11, q. 28, a. 2, ad 1, discussing joy, Aquinas explains that while the joy of charity cannot be *mixed* with sorrow, nonetheless in another sense "charity makes us weep with our neighbor in so far as he is hindered from participating in the Divine good." See also Guy Mansini, O.S.B., "St. Thomas on Christ's Knowledge of God," *The Thomist* 59 Uanuary 1995): 91-124. It should be noted that once we grant the fact of the hypostatic union, the idea that Christ's soul is beatified by this union seems unsurprising.

Christ's "spirit had the power of preserving his fleshly nature from the infliction of any injury; and Christ's soul had this power, because it was united in unity of person with the Divine Word" *(STh* III, q. 47, a. 1). Had Christ's soul not had this power, Aquinas suggests, his perfect freedom in submitting to his passion would have been compromised, since he would have lost his freedom at the moment when the soldiers bound him and led him away. In short, Aquinas can truly affirm that "Christ's love was greater than his slayers' malice" *(STh* III, q. 48, a. 2, ad 2). Although Christ's passion may seem to represent the triumph of sin, it is in fact the triumph of Christ's charitable human will, acting as an instrument of the divine will.

In Aquinas's view, therefore, Christ's human will is empowered, by the grace of the hypostatic union, to embody at every moment of his life the love of God for all human beings. As he says in *STh* III, q. 47, a. 3, ad 3, "The Father delivered up Christ, and Christ surrendered Himself, from charity." Thus Christ, in fulfillment of the moral precepts of the Old Law, willed his death with perfect charity-that is, with complete love for his death's object, known to him by means of the beatific perfection of his human intellect. The necessary conformity between Christ's two wills provides a basis for estimating Christ's psychological state upon the Cross: both his intellect and his will must remain clear and ordered to their object, since intellectual confusion always distorts the will.

Finally, by participating in Christ's passion as members of his mystical body, we are conformed to him to such a degree that his moral perfection becomes a true example for us. In *STh* III, q. 46, a. 3, Aquinas notes that Christ's passion was the most suitable means to achieve the end of man's salvation, first because it revealed God's charity, but second "because thereby He set us an example of obedience, humility, constancy, justice, and the other virtues displayed in the passion, which are requisite for man's salvation." Christ's perfect charity does not therefore make him "superhuman"; rather he becomes the "exemplar," or formal cause, of the holiness which is objectively the ultimate end of every human being.

III. THE JUDICIAL PRECEPTS

Thirdly and lastly, Christ fulfills the Old Law's judicial precepts, that is, those which determine the moral precepts towards our fellow man. In a sense, we have already touched upon the fulfillment of the judicial precepts by discussing how Christ's passion operates according to the modes of "redemption" and "satisfaction." Although God could have redeemed man simply by command, he chose to restore the order of justice by the death of a sinless man, in other words, by a satisfactory sin offering. By this choice, Aquinas argues, God displays "more copious mercy" than he would have had he simply forgiven sins by fiat *(STh* III, q. 46, a. 1, ad 3), since in Christ's passion, God enabled *man* to restore the order of justice. Christ, as man, restores justice both between man and God, and between men. "Redemption" and "satisfaction" primarily concern the former, since they are directed to God. However, Christ's satisfactory suffering was also a suffering *for all men.* He is related to all other men by his suffering, as the one who bears their suffering. In this way, his suffering is the fulfillment of the judicial precepts of the Old Law, which concerned punishment for crime and the rules of exchange.

The fulfillment of the judicial precepts, like the fulfillment of the ceremonial and moral precepts, could not have been accomplished by a mere man. In his treatise on the Old Law, Aquinas had explained that some of the judicial precepts call for severe punishment "because a greater sin, other things being equal, deserves greater punishment" *(STh* I-II, q. 105, a. 2, ad 9). Since Christ suffers for all sins, it is fitting that he undergo the greatest punishment. He is able to do so because his human nature, as the human nature of the Logos, could suffer with more physical and spiritual sensitivity than other men. Therefore, although Christ's "slightest pain would have sufficed to secure man's salvation, because from His Divine Person it would have had infinite virtue" *(STh* III, q. 46, a. 6, obj. 6; cf. ad 6), Christ fulfilled the judicial precepts by undergoing the greatest suffering. Moreover, in contrast to the limited scope of the actions of a mere man, Christ was able to fulfill the judicial precepts because

he could direct his suffering to each human being: while suffering our penalty, he contemplated our ultimate end, and referred his suffering to the end of our being united with God.

We have already examined why Aquinas holds that Christ must have possessed the beatific vision, even on the cross. Aquinas argues that the hypostatic union would have permanently glorified Christ's soul at the very moment of its creation. This, then, has to be balanced with the fact of Christ's supreme suffering on the cross. Aquinas explains that the higher part of Christ's soul (that is, his speculative intellect) "was not hindered in its proper acts by the lower," and therefore "the higher part of His soul enjoyed fruition perfectly while Christ was suffering" *(STh* III, q. 46, a. 8). But if Christ's speculative intellect was perfectly serene, how could Christ be said to suffer? Aquinas answers that if by "suffering" one means the confusion of the speculative intellect, then it is true that Christ could not have suffered in this way.

According to Aquinas, Christ suffers in two ways. First, he suffers through the sensitive powers of his soul, which apprehend his bodily pain. Second, he suffers in his practical intellect by seeing what is contrary to the love of God, even while his speculative intellect continues to enjoy perfect contemplation of God. As Aquinas explains in *STh* I, q. 77, a. 3, the intellect is one power, but it has two functions, which may be termed the speculative and the practical intellects. The speculative intellect is concerned with the contemplation of eternal things, the practical intellect with the disposal of temporal things *(STh* I, q. 79, a. 9). Aquinas uses this psychology to explain Christ's suffering on the cross: Christ "suffered indeed as to all His lower powers; because in all the soul's lower powers, whose operations are but temporal, there was something to be found which was a source of woe to Christ" *(STh* III, q. 46, a. 7). In contrast, Christ's higher reason or speculative intellect could not experience sadness, because its object is God, who is infinite Goodness.

In *STh* III, q. 46, a. 6, Aquinas details these two aspects of Christ's suffering. The cause of his sensitive pain is evident: the wounding of his body. In contrast, his "interior pain" or "sadness" must have had multiple causes. Aquinas suggests that

Christ's practical intellect would have experienced acute sadness especially for the sins of humankind; for the sin of those (including his apostles) who betrayed, abandoned, or condemned him; and for his approaching death. Aquinas then argues that Christ's sensitive pain and intellectual sadness were the greatest possible on earth. In this regard, he notes that the sources of Christ's pain were the greatest, because the wounds of the crucifixion afflicted the most sensitive parts of the body, and because Christ grieved for *all* sins. Second, Christ's body and soul were perfectly made, and so they possessed a greater sensitivity to suffering than any inferior body and soul would po'Ssess.Third, Christ did not allow the higher powers of his soul to soothe the sensitive pain or interior sadness experienced by the lower powers of his soul. Fourth, Christ *chose* to suffer, "and consequently He embraced the amount of pain proportionate to the magnitude of the fruit which resulted therefrom." He freely willed to endure the greatest suffering, and all classes of suffering *(STh* III, q. 46, a. 5), in order to make manifest his fulfillment of the judicial precepts.

Aquinas is careful to add two caveats. First, although Christ's interior sadness is "the greatest in absolute quantity," his sadness remains governed by the "rule of reason"; that is, the sadness in his lower reason is governed by his higher reason *(STh* III, q. 46, a. 6, ad 2). Therefore, Christ's sadness is not despairing or estranged from the truth, and so exteriorly it may not have seemed to be the greatest sadness. Interiorly, however, since his sadness is measured by his higher reason's perfect wisdom, his sadness has, of all human suffering, the greatest intensity: "this grief in Christ surpassed all grief of every contrite heart,[11] both because it flowed from a greater wisdom and charity, by which the pang of contrition is intensified, and because He grieved at the one time for all sins, according to Isa. liii. 4: *Surely He hath carried our sorrows" (STh* III, q. 46, a. 6, ad 4). Aquinas also points out that Christ's grief for his approaching death would, by itself, surpass every other human grief, since Christ's bodily life is that of the Son of God.

[11] Guilt does not add any intensity to grief.Thomas points out that although a guilty man "grieves not merely on account of the penalty, but also because of the crime," nonetheless the grief of an innocent man is more intense "by reason of his innocence, insofar as he deems the hurt to be the more undeserved" *(STh* III, q. 46, a. 6, ad 5).

Second, Aquinas notes that in order to take on the penalty for our sin, Christ does not need to take on the penalty of eternal suffering, or damnation. The judicial precepts require a punishment proportionate to the sin. Since Christ bears all the sins of this world, his suffering is fittingly the greatest *of this world.* His suffering does not need to match the suffering of the damned, since their suffering pertains to the next world. As Aquinas states, "The pain of a suffering, separated soul belongs to the state of future condemnation, which exceeds every evil of this life, just as the glory of the saints surpasses every good of the present life" *(STh* III, q. 46, a. 6, ad 3). Christ could not take on this eternal suffering, since eternal suffering consists precisely in having rejected Christ's passion.

This context stands behind Aquinas's interpretation of certain scriptural passages which, when not interpreted in light of Christ's perfect charity, confuse theologians. In *STh* III, q. 46, a. 4, ad 3, Aquinas gives his interpretation of four such passages: Deuteronomy 21:23 ("He is accursed of God that hangeth on a tree"); 2 Corinthians 5:21 ("Him that knew no sin, for us He hath made sin"); Galatians 3:13 ("Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us"); and Romans 8:3 ("having the resemblance of the flesh of sin"). Following Augustine, he holds that these texts refer to Christ having "become sin" by taking on "the penalty of sin," which is death.

God willed that Christ, as man, pay this penalty. On this basis, Aquinas approaches another difficult text. He argues that Christ's words from the Cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Matt 27:46), are intended to reveal that God could have shielded Christ from the passion, but did not *(STh* III, q. 47, a. 4). The cry of abandonment reveals the central truth of the passion: God gave his only Son into the hands of sinners, to be numbered among the guilty. As we have seen, Aquinas teaches that God did this so that the order of justicemight be restored not extrinsically by divine compulsion or fiat, but intrinsically, by enabling man to fulfill the the threefold Law and merit beatitude. Christ receives this complete beatitude in his resurrection, which thus becomes the "formal" cause of our salvation.

IV. CONCLUSION

Aquinas's soteriology belongs among his more important and lasting theological achievements, if only for its articulation of the manifold way in which Christ brings Israel's history to fulfillment. Beginning with the moral precepts of the Old Law (fundamentally the Decalogue, in which Aquinas found the basic tenets of the "natural" law, our rational participation in God's divine wisdom for creation), Aquinas shows how Christ's perfect charity grounded his fulfillment on the cross of the Old Law's ceremonial and judicial precepts, through which he reconciles all things in himself. Aquinas thereby demonstrates the profound *unity* of the Old Law and the New Law, even while underscoring the infinite *newness* of the New Law, by which we share in Christ's divine Spirit. Moreover, Aquinas at the same time provides a rich understanding of the relationship between nature and grace: the moral precepts of the Old Law are "natural," but they are fulfilled and elevated to the ultimate end by Christ's supreme charity, a supernatural virtue. Calvary thus represents the transcendent fulfillment not only of Sinai, but also of the order of all creation. Aquinas was able to hold together these elements in a profound and delicate balance. Attending to his example, we should strive to do the same.

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THE BROTHERS OF JESUS AND HIS MOTHER'S VIRGINITY

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IN CONNECT! ON WITH his extensive work on the historical Jesus during the last few years, John P. Meier has dealt with the issue of the "brothers and sisters of Jesus" on several occasions.[1] In particular, he has maintained that "from a purely philological and historical point of view, the most probable opinion is that the brothers and sisters of Jesus were his siblings."[2] He has arrived at this opinion from his treatment of the data in the New Testament and "a few noncanonical passages, viewed purely as potential historical sources."[3] In this paper the discussion will center on the latter, postponing a detailed study of the biblical evidence and examining only the relevant non-canonical sources.[4]

[1] John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. 1, *The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 318-32, 354-63. See also the two articles, "The Brothers and Sisters of Jesus in Ecumenical Perspective," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 54 (1992): 1-28; and "On Retrojecting Later Questions from Later Texts: A Reply to Richard Bauckharn," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 59 (1997): 511-27.

[2] Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 332.

[3] Cf. Meier, "The Brothers and Sisters of Jesus," 7.

[4] For a concise but insightful critique of Meier's methodological and philosophical presuppositions see J. Augustine DiNoia, review of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, by John P. Meier, *Pro &clesia* 2 (Winter 1993): 122-25. Also expertly to the point is Joseph T. Lienhard, *The Bible, the Church, and Authority* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 1-8, who delineates some basic flaws in Meier's biblical method, including the fact that it is not quite as objective as it claims to be (cl. 7). For additional material, see Roch Kereszty, "Historical Research, Theological Inquiry, and the Reality ofjesus: Reflections on the Method of J.P. Meier," *Communio* 19 (1992): 576-600; Avery Dulles, "Historians and the Reality of Christ," *First Things* 28 (December 1992): 20-25; and Richard J. Neuhaus,

Although historical labels are often misleading, I will denote as Epiphanian [5] the notion that "the brothers and sisters of Jesus" were the children of Joseph by a previous marriage. I will denote as Helvidian [6] the opinion that "the brothers and sisters of Jesus" were the natural children of Mary and Joseph after Jesus' birth. By Jeromian [7] I denote the idea that Jesus was Mary's only child, virginally conceived, and that the "brothers and sisters of Jesus" were individuals related to him, not as true half siblings but via close non-filial blood ties to either Mary or Joseph.

Meier believes that, in contrast to what he calls the "cousin approach," "both the Epiphanian solution and the view that the 'brothers of Jesus' were real brothers can find supporters in the 2d and 3d centuries." [8] He goes on to assert that "the antiquity

"Reason Public and Private: The Pannenberg Project," *First Things* 21(March1992): 55-60. Kereszty observes that "if Meier had more 'empathy' for the biblical meaning of Mary's virginity as a definitive consecration of her body-person by the Holy Spirit, he would not be so selective in evaluating the biblical evidence" ("Historical Research," 597 n. 33).

[5] After St. Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis (ca. 315-403), who opposed the *antidikomariamitoi,* a heretical sect in Arabia that denied Mary's virginity postpartum. Cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 78 (GCS 37:452-75); and Augustine, *De haeresibus* 56 (CCL46:325).

[6] After the layman Helvidius who around 383 espoused the idea in Rome. Cf. Augustine, *De haeresibus* 84 (CCL 46:338).

[7] After St. Jerome (331?--420)who defended Mary's perpetual virginity against Helvidius. Cf. Jerome, *De perpetua virginitate beatae Mariae adversus Helvidium* (PL 23:193-216).

[8] *Meier,A Marginal Jew,* 329. The label "the cousin approach" is misleading. First of all, the argument is not that "brother" means "cousin." The argument is that, in the special case of Jesus, the term "brother" does not necessarily denote "blood brother." Secondly, no one in the early Church held the Epiphanian view and argued *against* aJeromian interpretation. The question was, did Mary and Joseph have children after Jesus' birth? Historically, it is more accurate to differentiate only between those who held Mary's virginity *postpartum* and those who held the Helvidian position. To say the Epiphanian view enjoyed support is equivalent to the assertion that the doctrine of Mary's virginity *postpartum* enjoyedsupport. Theological reflection on the virginity of Joseph was a development that simply had not occurred. During the first three centuries of the Church Christ's origins were widely challenged, his true humanity as well as his true divinity. From this point of view, it should not be surprising that the focus would be on Jesus' virginal conception and his true birth *ex Maria,* and less on her virginity *postpartum* and *in partu,* let alone the virginity of Joseph (a teaching not *de fide,* however true). Even in the fourth century, around 360, Eunomius of Cyzicus-bishop and leader of those who advocated the *anomoios* (the Son is "unlike" the Father) and denied the *homoousios-attacked* Mary's perpetual virginity in a sermon delivered on the feast of the Epiphany (d. J. Bidez, *Philostorgus Kirchengeschichte* 6.2 [GCS 21:71]). In another sermon ascribed to Basil of Caesarea, who supposedly answered that attack, it is proclaimed that "the lovers of Christ *[philochristot]* cannot bear to hear that the

and spread of the opinion that the brothers of Jesus were real brothers are often overlooked by supporters of the cousin approach. "[9] I will argue that this claim of "antiquity" and "spread" of the Helvidian opinion is an inaccurate estimation at best. Moreover, the implication that the Helvidian opinion had a genuine place in the tradition of the early Church is untenable. Although the explicit evidence in favor of Mary's virginity *post partum* is indeed very sparse, to assert that this doctrine had a fragile basis prior to the fourth century is quite misleading. [10] I will show for example that the lack of pre-Nicene testimony in favor of Mary's virginity *post partum* is not unlike that of other doctrines even more fundamental in the *hierarchia veritatum.* Certainly, the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity was not "thought up" [11] by Jerome and defended by him and other ascetics of the fourth century to justify the notion of the superiority of virginity over marriage and their "pessimistic" evaluation of human sexuality. [12] In fact, it is the Helvidian opinion that cannot

Theotokos ever ceased to be a virgin" (see In *Christi generationem* [PG 41: 1468]). From other indications in the text, however, it is clear that Christ's divinity was the principal issue at stake.

[9] Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 329.

[10] Cf. ibid. See also David G. Hunter, "Helvidius, Jovinian, and the Virginity of Mary in Late Fourth Century Rome," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993): 69.

[11] Cf. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 324.

[12] Cf. Hunter, "Helvidius, Jovinian, and the Virginity of Mary," 68. Hunter views the *Protoevangelium of James* (known to Origen as the *Book of James)* as "the ultimate source of almost all later Marian doctrine" (63). He casts doubt on the veracity of Mary's perpetual virginity by associating it with "Encratite or Origenist accounts of the origin of sin and sexuality" (69). Evidently, he thinks that this doctrine represents "faulty notions of sin, sexuality and the church" (47). He seems to recognize that the *Book of James* had as its primary objective the defense of Mary's perpetual virginity from calumnies corning from certain Jewish and pagan circles that impugned not only the virginal conception, but also her marital chastity (see 63 and n. 66). But he seems to forget this fact and assumes a connection this work may or may not have with marginal or heretical sects such as the Encratites.

The truth of the matter is that the insistence on Mary's virginity in the *Book of fames* represents a popular response to the vulgar slanders of that era referring to Jesus' illegitimate birth and Mary's marital infidelities. That Jesus was the son of a prostitute *(quaestuiaria)* was a common slander. (Cf. Tertullian, *De spectaculis* 30.6 [CCL 1:253]: "Hie est ille, dicam, fabri aut quaestuariae filius, sabbati destructor, Samarites et daemonium habens; hie est quern a Iuda redernistis.") In Jewish legend, Jesus was denoted as the illegitimate son of a married woman (Miriam the hairdresser), who, to top it off, had been unfaithful to her husband with a member of the oppressor's legionary forces (the soldier Panthera, so Jesus was *ben panthera,*

find one single explicit witness prior to the fourth century. [13]

I

Let us proceed to examine in detail the first noncanonical source. Hegesippus seems to have been a second-century Hellenistic Jew who converted to Christianity. His testimony is found only in fragments in Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History.* We can gather from the text of *Eccl. Hist.* 4.22.2-3 that Hegesippus visited Rome during the time of Pope Anicetus (155-56) and remained there at least until the time of Pope Eleutherus (174-89). Meier stresses that he does not accept all of what

perhaps a play on words for *ben parthenos).* Cf. S. Kraus, "Jesus of Nazareth," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, n.d.), 7:170-73. Thus, there are no objective reasons to assume that the *Book "of fames* represented Encratite distortions of human sexuality. Moreover, Hunter's insinuation that second-century belief in Mary's perpetual virginity, popularly expressed in that book, was limited to Encratite circles is also mere speculation.

Hunter also casts doubt on Origen's witness by associating his belief in Mary's perpetual virginity with the notion that "all sexual relations were somehow contaminating" (68). There is no doubt that Origen (and Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, et al.) linked original sin to the act of human generation. In this sense sexual relations are "contaminating." If this is a "pessimistic" view of human sexual relations, so be it. But what is striking about Hunter's argument is the underlying assumption that this belief was held, not because it is true in itself, but because it was necessary to support other preconceived notions. Hunter's insinuation is that Origen held that Jesus was Mary's only child, virginally conceived, not because it is true, but because Origen's notions of defilement in sexual intercourse and original sin required it (68). In other words, Origen had to create a historical falsehood (e.g., Mary's perpetual virginity) to fit his preconceived notions on human sexuality and sin (e.g., that a child who is born through sexual intercourse is tainted with original sin). This is tantamount to ascribing to Origen a fundamental lack of intellectual integrity that would be appalling. An alternative, which is more consonant with what we know about Origen's character and scholarly qualities, must be considered: namely, that Origen simply knew and truly believed Jesus was Mary's only child, virginally conceived, and that from this truth he theologized about things such as original sin and human sexuality, arriving at some conclusions that perhaps some would find questionable today.

[13] Hunter concludes that "when Helvidius cited the evidence of scripture *and the tradition of the Western church* regarding Mary's other children, he had a legitimate argument which Jerome, for all his efforts, could not deny" ("Helvidius, Jovinian, and the Virginity of Mary," 70; emphasis added). Since Hunter has in mind by "the tradition of the Western church" the same sources available to Helvidius, presumably he means Tertullian and Victorin us of Pettau, the only two witnesses Helvidius could marshal for his case. It is surely an exaggeration to characterize the ambiguous testimony of two individuals (Victorinus' text is not even extant} as "the tradition of the Western church regarding Mary's other children."

Hegesippus says as historically true, but he adds that Hegesippus is "capable of distinguishing carefully between the brother, the uncle and the cousin of Jesus."[14] Meier seems to think that the simple use of the terms "cousin" and "uncle" in *Eccl. Hist.* 4.22.4 and the denotation of James as "the brother of the Lord" in *Eccl. Hist.* 2.23.4 (two texts from different contexts) are sufficient to validate his point of view.

Let us look more closely at one of the texts in question:

Kai µETcl TO TOY lHKalOV W€; Kai 0 KUptoc; foi T4' auT4J
AcSyqi ndA1v o EK 9dou mhou o wu K.AwnaKa9fomm1 fo(aKonoc; ov
npoe9EvTonavTE<; ovm avEljnov Tou Kupwu

(And after James the Just had been martyred for the same reason as the Lord, in turn Symeon [of Clopas, his uncle] was aypointed bishop whom they all proposed being a second cousin of the Lord.)[15]

The situation seems evident. James the Just-who is known in the New Testament as "the brother of the Lord" (cf. Gal 1:19)-has been martyred. To replace him as bishop of Jerusalem, Symeon (or Simon), son of Clopas, is proposed. And why is Symeon proposed to succeed James? Symeon is proposed because he is a second cousin of the Lord. That is, second with respect to another,[16] namely James, the only other possibility. In other words, James who is known to Hegesippus as "the brother of the Lord" is also one of two cousins of Jesus who have been the first two bishops of Jerusalem. For Hegesippus, therefore, James is clearly not a true sibling of Jesus, even if he is denoted as "brother of the Lord." Note also that Symeon is not really a blood relative of Jesus. Interestingly, Symeon is denoted not only as cousin, but

[14] Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 329.

[15] Eusebius, *&clesiastical History* 4.22.4 (GCS 9.1:370). Cf. Josef Blinzler, *Die Briider und SchwesternJesu*, Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 21 (Stuttgart, 1967), 105-8.

[16] *deuteros* of course means second as a point of order or rank as well as a second of two (i.e., another). Note that the accusative *deuteron* should modify *anepsion* and not the nominative *episkopos*. Compare Hegessipus in *Eccl. Hist.* 4.22.4 with Eusebius in *Eccl. Hist.* 3.32.1 where *deuteron* does modify *episkopon*. Notice how Hegessipus emphasizes the reason for the election of Symeon while Eusebius simply recounts how Symeon "who had been appointed second bishop of the church at Jerusalem" *(on deuteron katastenai tes en Ierosolymois ekklesias episkopon)* was martyred, apparently during the reign of Trajan, nearly four decades after James.

also as a so-called cousin (cf. *Eccl. Hist.* 3.11.1). Let us also observe that Hegesippus denotes Clopas as "his uncle." In the translation above, the brackets indicate that it is not clear whether Hegesippus means to say that Clopas is the Lord's uncle or James's uncle. However, in two other passages *(Eccl. Hist.* 3.32.6 and 3.11.1), Hegesippus identifies Clopas as "uncle of the Lord" *(theiou tou kyriou)* and as "brother of Joseph" *(adelphon tou Ioseph),* respectively. If Hegesippus really thought that James and Jesus were blood brothers, then it would have been natural to denote Clopas as "their uncle" and not simply as "his uncle" when he used both names ("James" and "the Lord") in the same sentence. For if James was a blood brother of Jesus (i.e., a son of Joseph and Mary), then Clopas as a brother of Joseph was a true uncle of James.

Using Hegesippus's testimony there is some further evidence to be considered, independently of this passage and its translation. It involves particular qualifiers used whenever an individual is identified as a "brother" of Jesus. Meier asserts:

> Since Hegesippus knows perfectly well how to apply the words "cousin" and "uncle" to specific relatives of Jesus, it becomes extremely difficult to claim that a precise phrase like "brother of the Lord according to the flesh" really means "cousin," or simply refers to spiritual as opposed to physical brotherhood. [17]

Meier obviously considers Hegesippus's denotation of Judas as "the brother of the Savior according to the flesh" an unambiguous indication that Judas is a blood brother of Jesus. He considers other explanations "desperation attempts at explaining away" the phrase *kata sarka.*[18] But once again he skirts over a very significant point. Judas is equally denoted by Hegesippus as he who is "said to have been his brother [of the Lord] according to the flesh" *(kata sarka legomenou autou adelphou [Eccl. Hist.* 3.20.1]). Eusebius himself denotes Judas as "the so-called brother of the Savior" *(ton pheromenon adelphon tou soteros [Eccl. Hist.* 3.32.5]) and as he "who is said to be the brother of the Savior"

[17] Meier, *A Marginal Jew,* 330.

[18] Cf. ibid., 361 n. 42 and following.

(touton d'einai adelphon kata sarka tou soteros [Eccl. Hist. 3.19.1]). Similarly, according to Eusebius, James is he *"who was called* or *said to have been* the brother of the Lord" and he *"who was named* a child of Joseph" *(tou kyriou legomenon adelphon* and *tou Joseph onomasto pais [Eccl. Hist.* 2.1.2]). Meier is aware of at least some of these phrases.[19] But he does not draw the dear conclusion that by these expressions Hegesippus (and Eusebius) are indicating that they do not consider Judas to be a blood brother of Jesus but only "so-called."[20] That the unqualified term "brother" is used equally with the qualified term seems to indicate that for these authors the phrase "brother of Jesus" did not denote a true blood brother of Jesus. In general, among extant early Christian literature it seems there are no examples in which a particular person is identified as a "brother" of Jesus without some of the qualifiers we have discussed above also arising. Such "philological" observations are at odds with Meier's assessment of probabilities.[21]

[19] Meier, "Later Questions from Later Texts," 524 n. 27.

[20] Similarly, Eusebius clearly considers James to be a so-called brother of Jesus. I have maintained a distinction between statements from Eusebius and statements from Hegesippus to avoid any charge of uncritically mixing texts (cf. Meier, "The Brothers and Sisters of Jesus," 23 n. 42).

[21] As another example, what is the probability that Mary the mother of James and Joseph in Matt 27:56 is not the mother of two of the four "brothers" of jesus listed as James, Joseph, Symeon and Judas in Matt 13:56? Meier alludes to the modern insights of redaction criticism and narrative criticism. He asserts that "most likely" the name identification between Mark 6:3 and Mark 15:40 should not be made because the phrase "the Small" *(ho mikros)* modifying the name James in Mark 15:40 does not occur in Mark 6:3. Meier does not consider a possible identification between Matt 27:56 and Matt 13:56 where that particular redaction difficulty does not occur presumably because of the commonly assumed dependence of Matthew on Mark (cf. Meier, "The Brothers and Sisters of Jesus," 11 n. 21). But by comparing the names of the women listed in Mark 15:40 (Mary Magdalen, Salome, and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joseph) with those listed in Mark 16:1 (Mary Magdalen, Salome, and Mary [mother] of James), it seems highly probable this James could be identified as one of those listed as "brothers" of Jesus. Clearly, he would not a blood brother of Jesus, although his mother is also named Mary.

We also could ask, what is the probability that Symeon of Clopas, who has been identified as a close relative of Jesus and as a significant figure in the early Christian community, is not the Symeon listed in the Gospels as a brother of Jesus? Already, Eusebius indicates the possible connection (cf. *&cl. Hist.* 3.11.1). James and Judas. known to have been significant figures in the Christian community, are mentioned as "brothers" in the Gospels. Why would the Gospels have mentioned a blood brother of Jesus called Symeon with no known historical

II

Let us now address the testimony of Tertullian, who is often considered to be a dear witness against Mary's virginity *post partum.* [22] With Tertullian, however, we have a similar problem as with the New Testament evidence. That is, we can try to decipher what he means to say whenever he deals with the New Testament texts that mention the "brothers" of Jesus or whenever he discusses a relevant topic such as virginity or marriage. [23] Tertullian, however, never asserts explicitly that Mary and Joseph had children of their own. This is somewhat remarkable if one considers that the existence of a group of men and women, born from the same womb as Jesus was born, would have provided Tertullian with an effective and elegant rhetorical weapon against his Docetist adversaries. It seems unlikely that an accomplished polemicist like Tertullian would have missed the opportunity to use that weapon in a very explicit manner. [24]

Hunter observes that Tertullian nowhere attacks Mary's *post partum* virginity explicitly. He adds, "indeed, he seems to show no awareness that such idea existed at all." [25] He wants to make an argument from silence. But arguments from silence are notorious for begging the question. If Tertullian seems to show no awareness of Mary's virginity *postpartum,* it does not follow that the Helvidian opinion must have been widely held.

significance? Is it also a coincidence that Maty of Clopas is mentioned quite distinctively in the gospel (cf. John 19:25)?

On the other hand, what is the probability that the testimony of Flavius Josephus provides anything new? Meier assigns great significance to his witness. But that Josephus denotes James as a "brother of Jesus" is perfectly consonant with the fact that at this time James, the most prominent figure in the Jerusalem Christian community, was well known as "the brother of the Lord." Obviously a nonbeliever is not going to call Jesus Lord. Unless one assumes that Josephus took the time to inquire into the exact family tree of an "insignificant" Jew crucified over thirty years before, his testimony provides nothing new.

[22] Cf. J. *Quasten, Patrology,* vol. 2 (Westminster, Md.: Christian Oassics, 1994), 329. See also Eamon R. Carroll, "Our Lady's Virginity *postpartum," Marian Studies* 7 (1956): 78.

[23] The relevant texts from Tertullian are: *Adversus Marcionem* 4.19 (CCL 1:592-94); *De monogamia* 8.1-3 (CCL 2:1239); *De came Christi* 7 (CCL 2:886-89); *De came Christi* 23 (CCL 2:914-15); and *De virginibus velandis* 6.2-3 (CCL 2:1215-16).

[24] Cf. John McHugh, *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), 458-60.

[25] Hunter, "Helvidius, Jovinian, and the Virginity of Maty," 66.

By way of comparison, the divinity of the Holy Spirit (obviously a very foundational doctrine of the Christian faith) can barely count on one witness prior to 360.[26] Before then, only Origen had developed a significant pneumatology, even if it is not free from some ambiguities by post-Nicene standards. Despite the fact that he dealt at some length with the Trinity, Tertullian-a great contributor to the Trinitarian language of the Latin Church-did not write on the Holy Spirit per se in any systematic way. And apropos, Tertullian provides some "embarrassing patristic evidence"[27] when he calls the "word of God" *(sermo Dei),* which he equates with the *Spiritus Dei,* "a portion of the whole" *(portio aliqua totius).*[28] The main point is that explicit testimony on the Person, the divinity, and the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son is remarkably sparse prior to the second half of the fourth century. It does not follow, however, that the *tropikoi* or the *pneumatomachoi* were the genuine bearers of a more ancient and widely held tradition in the Church.[29] Nor does it follow that the aforementioned teachings on the Holy Spirit-previously not part of the pre-Nicene literature-were post-Nicene "thought up" doctrines of Athanasius et al. The correct conclusion is that before the fourth century these teachings had not been seriously called into question and thus they had not taken up much space in the pre-Nicene literature. Even the symbol of Nicea limited itself to the plain assertion, "[we believe] in the Holy Spirit." But with the increasing number of challenges to the divinity of the Holy Spirit up until the council of Constantinople in 381, pneumatological

[26] Around 360 Athanasius wrote the *Epistolae ad Serapionein* (PG 26:529-676), which can be considered to be the first treatise on the Holy Spirit.

[27] Cf. Meier,A *Marginal Jew,* 362 n. 43. This is an epithet Meier uses when referring to those who defend Mary's virginity *postpartum* in view of Tertullian's witness, which in his opinion is clearly against it.

[28] Cf. *Adversus Praxean,* 26.6 (CCL 2:1197).

[29] *Tropikoi* is the term Athanasius used to describe those who Serapion had informed him were questioning the divinity of the Holy Spirit, interpreting texts such as Amos 4:13; Zech 1:9; and 1Tim5:21 in a tropical (i.e., figurative) manner. Cf. *Ad Serapionem* 1.10 (PG 26:556B), the paragraph where I found the term *tropikoi* used for the first time. Basil of Caesarea uses the term *pneumatomachoi* against the Spirit") to characterize those who denied the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son. Cf. Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 11.27 (SC 17:340), a treatise written in 376.

treatises became relatively abundant. Shortly before that time, in addition to Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Didymus the Blind, and Ambrose of Milan wrote important works on the Holy Spirit.[30] In summary, despite the lack of pre-Nicene evidence, it would be a mistake to say that belief and reflection on the divinity of the Holy Spirit had a "fragile basis" prior to the fourth century. As Henri Crouzel has observed, that would be the same mistake "that a historian of the 21st century would make if he attempted to write the history of a period in the 20th century relying solely and uncritically on newspapers that favoured the sensational at the expense of the ordinary facts of every day life."[31]

The history of the doctrine of Mary's virginity *postpartum* is perfectly analogous. Until the fourth century, it had been a relatively unchallenged doctrine and thus the pre-Nicene literature is quite sparse. Among early Christian writers, only Origen can be said to have developed a significant "Mariology." Other available testimony left many questions unanswered. But once the doctrine was seriously challenged, it was defended and widely upheld. In fact, although Jerome is the only author who wrote a separate tract on Mary's virginity-the pamphlet against Helvidius--every Father of the Church in the fourth century who addressed the issue of the "brothers of Jesus" upheld Mary's virginity *post partum.*[32]

As I have noted previously, Tertullian is often considered to be a witness against Mary's virginity *post partum,* even by some scholars who defend this teaching. But the fact is that Tertullian

[30] See Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 31, theologica quinta (PG 36:133-72), written around 380; Didymus the Blind, *On the Holy Spirit* (SC 386), written certainly before 380; and Ambrose, *On the Holy Spirit* (CSEL 79:15-222), written in 381.

[31] Henri Crouzel, *Origen,* trans. A. S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1989), 198.

The witness of other authors like Irenaeus is extremely reserved. Their pneumatological testimony-in much the same way as their Mariological testimony-left many questions unresolved.

[32] Athanasius, Hilary, Ephraem, John Chrysostom, Ambrose, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome, Augustine, and Cyril of Alexandria-all of them designated in the Catholic Church as not only as Fathers, but also as Doctors--clearly taught Mary's virginity *postpartum.* There were several other Fathers such as Epiphanius, Gregory of Nyssa, Didymus the Blind, and Zeno of Verona who also clearly upheld Mary's virginity *postpartum.* One would be hard pressed to find a doctrine that elicited a clearer consensus (no Father ever opposed it).

could be interpreted differently.[33] *As* an example, let us analyze the text of *De monogamia* 8.1-3. First of all, he is arguing against the remarriage of widows. To achieve Christian holiness, he believes, there are two options to follow: *monogamia* or *continentia.* He proceeds by developing an analogy between Zechariah and his son John the Baptist as representatives of these two options: "monogamia et continentia, alia pudica in Zacharia sacerdote, alia integra in Ioanne antecursore, alia placans Deum, alia praedicans Christum, alia totum praedicans sacerdotem, alia plus praeferens quam propheten." According to Tertullian, one should either be monogamous like Zechariah or remain unmarried like John the Baptist (and of course, in this case a Christian would be bound to practice continence). But the emphasis is on being married only once. Notice that the term used by Tertullian is *continentia,* not *virginitas.* In a sense, virginity has only an incidental character in this analogy. Tertullian adds that, due to Christ's holiness, it was appropriate that he was born of a woman who was both a virgin and married only once *(uirgine et uniuira).* This is all that Tertullian is saying. Meier assumes that since married people usually are not perpetually continent, then sexual intercourse and childbearing must have followed in the case of Mary and Joseph. But there is no reason to assume this from the text itself. That Mary must have had children is obvious to Meier by the fact that Zechariah himself had a son. But this is an irrelevant observation since only Zechariah's monogamous status is at issue in Tertullian's argument. His particular emphasis is revealed further when he mentions Anna, the female prophet in the temple (cf. Luke 2:36), who was *uidua et uniuira.* For Tertullian, it is irrelevant whether she had children or not. He is only interested in pointing out that Anna was married, that she became a widow, and that she remained a widow. Therefore, unless one begs the question by assuming what must be shown, this text of the *De monogamia-and* similarly the other four aforementioned texts from Tertullian--cannot be used as proof of Tertullian's denial of Mary's virginity *postpartum.* In fact, in the present example one could press the analogy in the other

[33] Cf. McHugh, *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament,* 448-50.

direction. It could imply that Mary belongs to both groups (continent and monogamous) permanently. After all, Tertullian compares Mary's virginity directly to John the Baptist's virginity (he does not compare Zechariah directly with Mary).

Meier writes: "It is sad to see so fine a scholar as Blinzler *(Die Brader,* 139-41) strain to water down or make ambiguous what Tertullian clearly says."[34] But a careful reading of the *Adversus Marcionem* 4.19 (in Meier's opinion, the strongest evidence against Mary's virginity *postpartum)* rejects Meier's insinuation that one compromises intellectual integrity by insisting that this long text says nothing conclusive against that teaching.[35]

Even if we grant that Tertullian denied Mary's virginity *post partum,* it would still not follow that the Helvidian opinion must have been widely held. Tertullian often rejected doctrines and customs held by orthodox Christians of his time. For instance, his purpose in writing *theApologeticum* (perhaps his most important work, written well before he joined the radical Montanists) was to convince the Roman government officials of the usefulness of Christian citizens to the state.[36] But by 207, Tertullian seems to be obsessed with the idea of Christians participating together with pagans in civic affairs and succumbing to idolatry as a consequence of that relationship. This real or perceived danger led Tertullian to condemn customs that his contemporaries held as perfectly legitimate. He even condemned Christian involvement

[34] Meier, *A Marginal Jew,* 362 n. 43.

[35] Cf. ibid. Hunter also asserts that the fact that Mary bore children to Joseph is implied in *De came Christi* 23, more clearly in *De monogamia* 8, and explicitly in *Ad.versus Marcionem* 4.19. Cf. "Helvidius, Jovinian, and the Virginity of Mary," 66 and 66 n. 77. However, the fact of the matter is that in the *De came Christi* 23 there are no statements for or against Mary's virginity beyond the birth of Christ. The brothers of Jesus are not even mentioned. Tertullian simply affirms that Mary was a virgin mother. His expression "uirgo, quantum a uiro, non uirgo, quantum a partu" reflects his anti-docetist agenda. Nothing beyond the birth of Christ is considered. The text *of* the *De monogamia* I have alreadyshown to be inconclusive at best. In *theAdversus Marcionem* 4.19, Tertullian does indeed answer the Marcionites about their interpretation of Matt 12:48 by arguing that the meaning of the text is that Jesus prefers the relationship of faith to one of blood. But once again, only by assuming what needs to be shown-namely, that the brothers of Jesus are children of Mary--can one conclude that Tertullian's rhetorical statements constitute an explicit assertion against Mary's virginity *postpartum.*

[36] *Apologeticum* (CCL 1:85-171).

in professions such as school teacher and especially teacher of literature.[37] We also have, as witnessed by his *De monogamia*, Tertullian's denial of the legitimacy of the remarriage of widows, contrary to the dear orthopraxis of the Church, which has always praised widowhood, but has never prohibited second nuptials to widows among the laity.

III

Let us turn to the last patristic source Meier discusses: Irenaeus and the so-called *adhuc* texts found in *Adversus haereses*, 3.21.10 and 3.22.4. Over six decades ago Hugo Koch attempted to reconstruct the teaching of Mary's perpetual virginity from an "original" historical form, which he theorized had passed through several revisions, until the doctrine found its final form in the fourth century.[38] This original historical form had Jesus as the eldest son among many children of Mary and Joseph. Later, the myth of a virginal conception was introduced, forcing Joseph to be presented only as the foster father of Jesus, and the idea of *post partum* virginity forced the explanation that the brothers and sisters of Jesus were Joseph's children from a previous marriage. Finally, the ideas of Mary's virginity *in partu* and the virginity of Joseph were added in the fourth century, under the influence of extreme ascetical ideals.[39] Koch's use of the *adhuc* texts to press his argument suffered from one major deficiency, which one finds again in Meier's argument. In the texts in question, neither the words nor the terms of comparison go beyond the Incarnation and the virgin birth. Irenaeus's analogy between Virgo Eva and Virgo Maria has no connection whatsoever with the issue of the

[37] Cf. *De idololatria*, 10 (CCL 2:1109-10).

[38] For the original argument see H. Koch, *Adhuc Viigo. Mariens Jungfrauschaft und Ebe in der alterkirchlinchen Uberlieferung bis zum Ende des vierten Jahrhunderts* (Tiibingen, 1929); and also his follow-up *Vngo Eva-Viigo Maria. Neue Untersuchungen uber die Lehre von der Jungfrauschaft und der Ebe Mariens in der iiltesten IGrche* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1937), 17-60.

[39] Cf. E. R. Carroll, "Our Lady's Virginity *postpartum*," *Marian Studies* 7 (1956): 77-79; see 79 n. 20 for a list of critical responses to Koch's work at that time. See also A. Eberle, *Tbeologische Revue* 29 (1930): 153-55.

"brothers" of Jesus. In the long text of *Adversus haereses* 3.22.4 [40] the analogy centers on the obedience *(obaudiens)* of the virgin Mary and the disobedience *(inobaudiens)* of the virgin Eve. To the divine commandment, the virgin Mary responded *per (idem* ("behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord ... ") while the virgin Eve responded *per incredulitatem* (that is, not believing the prohibition of Gen 2: 17). It is hardly ever noticed that Irenaeus develops the analogy even further in *Adversus haereses* 5.19.1. There, the virgin Eve is seduced *(seducta)* by the word of the (evil) angel to escape from God *(effugere Deum*), disobeying his Word, while the virgin Mary is evangelized *(evangelizata)* through the word of the (good) angel to carry God *(portare Deum)*, obeying his Word. [41]

Irenaeus continues by noting that Eve was still a virgin ("adhuc erat uirgo") at the moment she received God's commandment to abstain from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Thus, upon her disobedience she became a cause of death, not only for herself but also for the entire human race ("et sibi et uniuerso generi causa facta est morris"), as mother of all humanity. This is the only significance of virginity in the analogy. That is, if Eve had obeyed while still a virgin (i.e., while no member of the human had yet been born), then she would have become (as Mary did) a cause of salvation for herself and for the entire human race ("et sibi et uniuerso generi causa facta est salutis"). Instead, Eve disobeyed and became, ironically, the mother of all the dead (in sin obviously). By her obedience, Mary, "adhuc erat uirgo," becomes the mother of all the living, because she is the mother of the Firstborn from the dead who regenerates them to the life of God ("primogenitus enim mortuorum natus Dominus et in sinum suum recipiens pristinos patres regenerauit eos in uitam Dei"). Christ becomes the beginning of the living as Adam became the beginning of the dead ("initium uiuentium factus quoniam Adam initium morientium factus est"). It should be evident that the phrase "adhuc erat uirgo" when applied to Mary in the context

[40] See Irenee de Lyon, *Cantre les Heresies,* Livre 3, SC 34 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1952). The Latin texts of 3.22.4 and 3.21.4 quoted throughout are taken from this edition.

[41] See Irenee de Lyon, *Cantre les Heresies,* Livre 5, SC 153 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1969), 249-53.

of this analogy has absolutely nothing to do with sexuality per se, let alone Mary's virginity *post partum.* The parallel between Virgo Eva and Virgo Maria in Irenaeus's soteriology of recapitulation in Christ intends to say nothing about Mary's virginity beyond the virgin birth.[42]

The text of *Adversus haereses* 3.21.10 is shorter than 3.22.4 but very similar. Irenaeus's analogy begins with the observation that the first Adam had no human father and neither did the second Adam. The first Adam was made from the earth by the hand of God. The second Adam was also from the hand of God. But unlike the first Adam, he is born from a woman, from a "virgin." In his recapitulation scheme Irenaeus finds a somewhat forced parallel. The first Adam is also born from a "virgin," the red earth ("de rudi terra") which is still *(adhuc)* "virgin" when the first Adam is created, since God has not rained upon the earth and man has not worked it ("nondum enim pluerat Deus et homo non erat operatus terram"). There is no other reason even to mention virginity. Since Adam himself is considered a possible cause for the earth to lose her "virginity" once it is worked by him (even though he himself comes from the "virgin" earth), to press the term *adhuc* in the analogy with respect to the Virgin Mary is patently absurd.

In summary, to claim these two texts as possible witnesses against Mary's *postpartum* virginity by focusing on words such as *adhuc* and *uirgo* is simply to do violence to the texts and to their context. Irenaeus's soteriology of recapitulation in Christ has nothing to do with Mary's virginity *postpartum.* Even Meier shows himself to be somewhat tentative when he writes: "Since every analogy limps, it is difficult to say how far Irenaeus's analogy should be pressed."[43] But it is not a matter of pressing an

[42] It should be noted that Irenaeus assigns to Eve a physical causality of death for the human race. But he does not lose track in the analogy that it is Adam who is the responsible cause. Cf. Antonio Orbe, *Antropologfa de San Ireneo* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1969), 247.

[43] Meier, *A Marginalfew,* 331. In his "Later Questions from Later Texts," 525, Meier asserts: "Irenaeus' statements are ambiguous, but I think it more likely than not that they point in the direction of the Helvidian solution." As I have shown, this assertion has no basis in the texts. For more details, see the masterful exposition of Orbe, *Antropologfade San Ireneo,* esp. 244-53. It is significant that, despite his anti-docetist concerns, Irenaeus is a

analogy that limps or that lrenaeus's statements are ambiguous. The fact of the matter is that Irenaeus is quite clear in his analogy; he is simply not saying what Meier claims.

IV

Although Meier considered the witness of Tertullian (born ca. 155), he omits any reference to Origen (born ca. 185). But Origen's testimony cannot be omitted in a serious treattnent of the subject. As Henri Crouzel has noted,

> [Origen] was the first theologian clearly to teach the perpetual virginity of Mary, for the writers of the 2nd century, like Justin and Irenaeus, only did so implicitly by calling her Mary the Virgin. For Origen this is by no means, as has been suggested, an open question, with no obligation on the Christian to believe it: it is the only "healthy" view of the matter and that word is used to express a close connection with the faith; those who uphold the contrary are treated as heretics; Mary among women is the first fruits of virginity as Jesus is among men.[44]

This paragraph brings out at least two important points. First, Meier gives no historical or philological significance to the fact that in early Christian literature Mary is called "the virgin," beyond the immediate context of the virginal conception and birth of Christ.[45] Second, Meier implies that the Helvidian

witness for Mary's virginity *in partu.* Cf. *Demonstratio apost. praed.* 54 *(Patrologia Orienta/is* 12.5:700): "Praetera de nativitate eius propheta alibi <licit: 'Antequam parturiret, peperit; antequam veniret partus eius, peperit masculum [Is 66, 7].' Ipse nuntiavit modum insperatum inopinumque nascendi ex virgine."

[44] Henri Crouzel, Origen, translated by A. S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1989), p. 141. For more details on Origen's mariology see, Origene, Homelies sur s. Luc, SC 87 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1962), pp. 36-44.

[45] In addition to the fact that Mary is denoted, not as virgin, but as "the virgin," there is some other evidence that should to be considered. For example, an inscription of a certain second-century bishop named Abercius (discovered in the nineteenth century and dated before the year 216) uses the phrase *parthenos hagne* (chaste virgin). Cf. "Inscriptio Abercii" in *Dictionnaire d'archeologie chretienne et de Liturgie* (Paris, 1907-50), vol. 1, p. 83. The phrase could refer to the Church as well as to Mary. When applied to Mary, the expression in this context seems to signify virginity beyond the virginal conception and birth of Jesus. A similar denotation for Mary is found in the *troparion* known as the "Sub tuum praesidium," which is one of the oldest prayers addressed to Mary. In this prayer Mary is called *mone hagne, mone eulogemene* (only chaste, only blessed), once again indicating virginity beyond

position he defends as most probable had a genuine place in the tradition of the early Church.[46] But according to the positive historical witness of Origen, this is simply not true. Origen asserts that "no one who sanely thinks about Mary would imagine she

Christ's conception and birth. The papyrus containing this prayer has been dated from the third century by expert paleographic examination. Some have assumed a later dating, because the prayer contains the word *Theotokos.* But there is no literary or theological reason for that assumption. Cf. G. Giamberardini, "II 'Sub tuum praesidium' e ii titolo 'Theotokos' nella tradizione egiziana," *Marianum* 31 (1969): 324-61.

[46] This is an important issue also for the Church today. The article "The Brothers and Sisters of Jesus in Ecumenical Perspective" asks an interesting question: "Is the problem of the brothers and sisters of Jesus a point on which two churches in the process of uniting could agree to disagree without detriment to the foundation of the Christian faith?" (5). It is evident that for Meier the answer to this question is "yes." He warns his readers that intelligent, well-educated, and sincere Christians have differed and can differ on the question of the brothers of Jesus (cf. *A Marginal Jew,* 319). He recounts how R. Pesch "raised a fire storm of controversy among German Catholics" but "has never been officially censured or condemned by Rome for his views" (ibid., 319 and 354 n. 14). Since he stresses that these views have never been censured or condemned, does Meier mean to imply that Rome finally realized that the Helvidian opinion could be held without detriment to the foundation of the Christian faith?

Some Catholic scholars continue to down play the role of Marian doctrines in attempts to overcome the separation of Christians. Ecumenism only suffers when the concept of the "hierarchy of truths" is mistakenly used to imply that Marian doctrines could be put aside to achieve a fruitful dialogue. Mariology is not excess baggage that Catholics carry because of confessional idiosyncrasies or devotional practices. Mariology is a place where Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, eschatology, and a host of other important theological issues concretely meet. In particular, the perpetual virginity of Mary is intimately connected with the person and mission of Christ, and with the nature of the Church, which has Mary as the mother and model- hardly peripheral issues in the hierarchy of truths.

Meier never explicitly denies Mary's virginity *postpartum.* He stresses that by reason of method he prescinds from faith and Church teaching as sources of knowledge but by no means denies them (cf. "The Brothers and Sisters of Jesus," 7 n. 15). He differentiates between what one *holds* by faith and what one *knows* by reason. But the difficulties created by this differentiation are quite significant. Even at the psychological level this differentiation is problematic. For if Meier holds Mary's virginity *post partum,* then he must do so by believing what his reason has shown him to be least probable. J. Lienhard has observed that Meier's method, since it cannot provide the foundation for faith, has two choices: "either to abandon faith, or to fall into fideism" ("The Bible, the Church, and Authority," 7). Meier thinks that his differentiation is well within Catholic tradition. He attributes it to Aquinas (*A Marginal Jew,* 6). But St. Thomas would never recognize this differentiation as his. Reason could never generate an independent body of knowledge that would oppose what is known by faith.

had a son but Jesus."[47] As Crouzel points out, in the theological vocabulary of Origen, the adjective uyt the adverb translated above as "sanely" ("healthily" is also correct and perhaps gives a better connotation in our case)-implies a normative view with an obligation to believe.[48] Origen does not call the Helvidian opinion heretical, but he treats it as such. For him Mary's virginity is hardly an opinion open for debate; it is a fact identified with the rule of faith. In other words, according to Origen's witness (i.e., since at least the early third century), Mary's virginity *postpartum* has been considered part of the truth Christians should hold. Origen's explicit testimony is the more significant since he, despite his theological speculations, which led him to commit some serious errors, knew to distinguish carefully between theological speculation and the rule of faith, between an opinion open to debate and what should be held as the truth.[49]

V

In conclusion, the Epiphanian explanation for the "brothers and sisters of Jesus" provided a convenient, not fully reflective, answer to scriptural objections that could be brought against Mary's virginity *postpartum.* It is in this sense that this opinion had early supporters.[50] The idea of the virginity of Joseph as

[47] Origene, *Commentaire sur s. Jean,* SC 120 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1996), 70. D. Hunter weakly translates uyiwc; as "properly" and although he cites Crouzel's work he ignores the special significance of that terminology in Origen. Cf. D. Hunter, "Helvidius, Jovinian, and the Virginity of Mary in Late Fourth Century Rome," p. 67.

[48] In his *Homilies on Jeremiah* (5.14) Origen says: "As communicant *[koinonikos]* you conform to the rule of the Church *[kata ton ekklesiastikon kanona],* to the purpose *fprothesin]* of the sound teaching *[tes hygious didaskalias*]. You are not only circumcised but you are circumcised by God" (Origene, *Homelies sur Jeremie,* SC 232 [Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1976], 316). P. Nautin points out that a "communicant" is equivalent to one who participates in the Church as opposed to what heretics do (ibid., 317). See also Origene, *Homelies sur Luc,* SC 87 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1962), 36-37.

[49] "Only what does not differ from the ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition should be believed as the truth" ("ilia sola credenda est veritas, quae in nullo ab ecclesiastica et apostolica traditione discordat" [Origen, *De principiis* 1.praef.2 (GCS 5:8)]).

[50] It would be inaccurate to say, however, that people like Origen held the Epiphanian view. Certainly, Origen was well aware of the so-called Gospel of Peter and the Book of James. But Origen never authenticates these sources and simply recognizes in them a

spouse of the Mother of God had not been considered.[51] But the Epiphanian view was never held and defended in opposition to a Jeromian interpretation. Moreover, the claim that the Helvidian position enjoyed antiquity and widespread support cannot be sustained even under superficial scrutiny. Before the fourth century, exactly who was a supporter of the Helvidian position? There is not one single explicit witness in favor of it. Helvidius himself could produce only two potential witnesses: Tertullian and Victorinus of Pettau. I have shown that Tertullian need not be taken as a dear witness against Mary's virginity. As far as Victorinus is concerned, there is no reason to believe that his testimony is as Helvidius implied.[52] In addition, although his testimony could be considered, strictly speaking, pre-Nicene, Victorinus is still a fourth-century witness. And if Mary's virginity *post partum* has few explicit pre-Nicene advocates, one could further point out that doctrines held by the Church without attack take up much less space in the literature (in the early Church possibly none at all) than what is attacked and must be defended.[53] From a historical point of view, it is hard to see how

possibility. His belief in Mary's virginity cannot be said to depend on these apocryphal writings. Cf. Origen, *Commentaria in Evangelium secundum Matthaeum,* 10.17 (SC 162:216).

[51] Two older but useful works dealing with the "brothers of Jesus" and the person of St. Joseph are Bonifacio Llamera, *Teologfa de San Jose* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1953); and J.-M. Voste, *De Conceptione Virginali Iesu Christi,* excursus 2, *De Fratribus Domini* (Rome, 1933).

[52] I have noted that whatever text of Victorinus was available to Helvidius is not extant. Jerome asserts that Victorinus does not call "the brother of the Lord" "sons of Mary," implying that Victorinus was just following the gospel use of the terms and nothing else. Cf. Jerome, *De perpetua virginitate b. Mariae adversus Helvidium,* 17 (PL 23:211B). The only extant text from Victorinus that deals with the Virgin Mary seems to be *De fabrica mundi* 9 (CSEL 49:8): "Ut Adam ilium per septimanan reformaverit atque universae suae creaturae subvenerit, nativitate Filii sui Iesu Christi Domini nostri factum est. Quis itaque lege Dei doctus, quis plenus Spiritu Sancto non respiciat corde ea die Gabriel angelum Mariae evangelizasse, qua die draco Evam sedu:xit, ea die Spiritum Sanctum Mariam Virginem inundasse qua lucem fecit?" The text is reminiscent of Irenaeus's recapitulation analogies. With respect to possible additional witness against Mary's virginity *postpartum,* I have shown that neither Hegesippus nor Irenaeus can be counted among them. On the contrary, Hegesippus could be counted as an indirect witness for it, and lrenaeus gives evidence of Mary's virginity *in partu.* Therefore, those who wish to uphold the Helvidian position must do so, at best, with the highly ambiguous testimony of Tertullian.

[53] Cf. Henri Crouzel, *Origen,* trans. A. S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1989), 198.

Mary's virginity *postpartum*, if false, could have been asserted at all in the second century without an explicit denial. After all, the "brothers and sisters" of Jesus and their descendants are known to have occupied prominent places in the Christian community well into the second century. The Book of James is a product of that era. If belief in Mary's perpetual virginity was a falsehood promoted only by gnostic groups, then it seems unlikely that some of the early Christian apologists who wrote against the gnostics would not have denied such mendacity explicitly.

Furthermore, since history did not stop at the dose of the third century one has to explain why, if the Helvidian view enjoyed such antiquity and widespread support in the early Church, it was so widely and immediately rejected in the fourth century. Mary "ever Virgin" was taught by individuals coming from different parts of the world, with a variety of theological styles and agendas: Athanasius of Alexandria, Ephraem of Syria, Hilary of Poitiers, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, and Augustine of Hippo among several other lesser mortals.[54] After some denials of Mary's virginity in the Arianized atmosphere of the fourth century,[55] followed by the historical blips of Helvidius, Jovinian, and Bonosus (all three within the last two decades of the

[54] For more details see Candido Pozo, *Maria en la obra de la salvaci6n* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1974), 250-84; and Jose A. de Aldama, *Virgo Mater* (Granada, 1963), 213-47.

[55] I have alluded to the fact that denials of Mary's virginity often came from individuals with strong Arian credentials (e.g., Eunomius of Cyzicus). Helvidius himself was connected to the Arian Auxentius who preceded Ambrose as bishop of Milan (cf. J. Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 4 [Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1991), 239). This does not seem to be a coincidence. After the fourth century, Mary's virginity was seriously questioned only with the beginning of denials of Christ's divinity in liberal Protestantism. Meier acknowledges that "it was only with the rise of the Enlightenment that the idea that the brothers and sisters were biological children of Mary and Joseph gained acceptance among 'mainline' Protestants" ("The Brothers and Sisters of Jesus," 6). What does this historical observation say about the post-Enlightenment presuppositions that dominate Meier's method? What does it say to Protestants today who accept the Helvidian opinion? It should be more than "a startling fact" (ibid.) that the great figures of the Protestant Reformation rejected the Helvidian opinion. Martin Luther beautifully expresses the *sensus fidelium* when he declares that "after realizing she was the mother of the Son of God, [Mary] could not want to be the mother of the son of a man and remained in that gift" ("Nam postquam sensit se esse matrem filii Dei, non optavit fieri mater filii hominis, sed mansit in illo dono" *[Anton Lauterbachs Tagebuch aus Jahre 1539* (WA48:579)]).

fourth century), followers of the Helvidian opinion practically became extinct.[56]

Some have asserted that Helvidius, Jovinian, and Bonosus "sought to meet the overvaluation of the ascetic ideal partly by appealing, in line with the older western tradition, to Mary's later, natural marriage with Joseph."[57] In opposition to this attempt, "Ambrose, Jerome and many others put forth the new doctrine of the aeiparthenia and upheld it passionately. The words of Scripture no longer avail against it."[58] Thus Jerome and others are credited with the "invention" of the perpetual virginity of Mary (and if that was not enough novelty, Jerome also reinvented Joseph as a virgin). He did this supposedly to appropriate the example of Mary and Joseph for his argument on the superiority of consecrated virginity over marriage. That someone would go to such lengths in order to bolster an opinion is remarkable enough, especially since the example does not prove anything in itself. Proponents of this "invention" theory do not seem to give serious thought to its logical implications: namely, Jerome and others would have to be ranked either among the most dishonest or among the most horrendously self-deceived

[56] Actually Jovinian is said to have denied only Mary's virginity *in partu.*

[57] Cf. Hans von Campenhausen, *The Virgin Birth in the Theology of the Ancient Church,* Studies in Historical Theology 2 (London: SCM, 1964), 72. This is Hunter's basic thesis also (see "Helvidius, Jovinian, and the Virginity of Mary," 47). The connection between virginity as an ascetical ideal and Mary as a model is evident. But it is absurd to claim that the ascetics of the fourth century invented the doctrine to suit their opinions and biases and adhered to this doctrine if there was clear evidence to the contrary from Scripture and through an ancient established tradition. It is interesting that Meier asserts that Helvidius "[was] not inventing something out of thin air" when he argued against Mary's virginity *postpartum (A Marginal Jew,* 331). On the other hand, Meier has no qualms in suggesting that Jerome just "thought up" solutions to defend Mary's perpetual virginity (ibid., 324).

[58] Von Campenhausen, *The Virgin Birth,* 72. The erudite physicist/theologian Stanley Jalci has characterized with precision Campenhausen's monograph as a "'scholarly' spoofing" of Mary's virginity. Cf. S. Jaki, "The Virgin Birth and the Birth of Science," *The Downside Review* 107 (1989): 265. Apparently, the words of Scripture "did not avail" either against Campenhausen's denial of the virginal conception of Jesus, once again showing a connection between Arianizing tendencies and denials of Mary's virginity. See the list of opponents and defenders of the virginal conception in McHugh, *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament,* 457.

men in history.[59] What else can be concluded about a group of men who either could not see the reality of Jesus' true siblings in the Scriptures and in a well-established "tradition of the Western church" or purposely chose to ignore this truth and vigorously attack it because of their own biases? But one could not stop there. One would also be forced to conclude that no one in the fourth century (except Helvidius, Jovinian, and Bonosus) and no one until relatively recent times was willing to point out or capable of pointing out the inability or unwillingness of Jerome and others to see the truth.[60]

[59] Interestingly Jerome is known to be remarkably faithful even with theologically problematic translations. Rufinus--<>nce a close friend but later an acerbic critic-can find nothing worse to say about Jerome's translation of Origen's homilies on Luke than that he adds the words "and nature" to Origen's term "substance." Jerome also leaves intact "passagesthat would be theologically problematic to him, such as Origen's reference to Mary and Joseph's imperfect faith (Hom. 20.4)" (Origen, *Homilies on Luke, Fragments on Luke,* trans. Joseph T. Lienhard [Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996], xxxvi).

[60] Some notable adversaries of Jerome did not think much of the Helvidian opinion either. Pelagius in his *Ad Galatas,* 19 (PLS 1:1273) writes: "Contra eos qui dicunt beatam Mariam alios filios habuisse, quia duos Iacobos apostolos fuisse legimus, unum Alphaei et alterum Zebedaei, neminem Mariae vel Ioseph, sed fratres Domini de propinquitate dicuntur." Note that Pelagius seems to identify James the Just with James of Zebedee or James of Alphaeus.

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THE RELATION OF CULTURE AND IGNORANCE TO CULPABILITY IN THOMAS AQUINAS

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IN BOTH THE *De Malo* and the *Summa Theologiae* Thomas Aquinas asks whether ignorance can diminish sin or even excuse from it altogether. Given current discussions of multi-culturalism, his consideration of this question takes on a particularly contemporary relevance. Proponents of multi-culturalism argue at times that cultural influences can pose serious impediments to responsible agency. At the root of this contention is the belief that culture can cause in individuals an ignorance of the natural law which excuses them from sin. Through Thomas's writings on ignorance, conscience, and the natural law, we can discern a clear response to such arguments, delineating Thomas's sense of the culpability for such acts.

I

Examples of cultural practices that violate the natural law would be bride burning in India, hari-kari or ritual suicide formerly found in Japan, and polygamy in certain Arab countries. Clearly these activities are influenced by cultural norms, but can such norms be said to excuse any moral culpability *whatsoever?* The question is posed well by Michelle Moody-Adams, who asks, "But what might the link between culture and agency mean for the practice of holding people responsible for action, and for moral and legal conventions of praise and blame?"

A currently influential answer to this question-to be found in much recent philosophical psychology, as well as in the social sciences and in history-is that cultural influences can, and often do, constitute serious impediments to responsible agency, and our attitudes toward praise and-especially-blame should acknowledge the existence of such impediments. Some of these views attempt to establish that, at least sometimes, widespread *moral ign.orance* can be due principally to the cultural limitations of an entire era, rather than to individual moral defects.[1]

In the *De Malo* Thomas acknowledges that "Since it is of the nature of sin that it is voluntary, to whatever extent ignorance excuses sin either wholly or in part, to that extent it takes away the voluntariness."[2] Every act of the will, he explains, is preceded by an act of the intellect that presents the will with its object. If the intellect's act is excluded through ignorance, therefore, so too is the act of the will. Hence, Thomas concludes that "there is always involuntariness so far as concerns that which is unknown."[3]

Nevertheless, he cautions that while ignorance may at times excuse from sin, it does not always excuse from sin *altogether*.[4] To discern, then, whether Thomas would accept the notion that there can be "widespread moral ignorance" due principally to cultural limitations-and whether such ignorance would alleviate or excuse from sin altogether-we must first consider those circumstances under which he says that ignorance *fails* to excuse from sin altogether.

Thomas explains in the *Summa Theologite* that there are two reasons why ignorance may fail to excuse altogether from sin. One is on the part of the ignorance itself which determines the voluntariness of the act, and the other is on the part of the thing which is not known.[5] Regarding the first, he notes that ignorance

[1] Michelle M Moody-Adams, "Culture, Responsibility, and Affected Ignorance," *Ethics* 104 (January 1994): 291-2; emphasis added.

[2] *De Malo,* q. 3, a. 8 (trans. Jean Osterle [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995]).

[3] Ibid.

[4] *STh* 1-11, q. 76, a. 3 (trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province [New York: Christian Classics, 1981]).

[5] Ibid.

may be related to the act of the will in one of three ways: concomitantly, consequently, or antecedently. [6]

Ignorance is concomitant *(concomitanter)* to the will's act when there is ignorance of what is done, but in such a way that even if it were known the act would be performed anyway. Thomas gives the example of a hunter who unknowingly kills a foe whom he had wished to kill anyway. The act cannot be said to be involuntary because it did not cause anything contrary to the hunter's habitual desire to kill that foe. Rather, Thomas explains, such ignorance should be called nonvoluntary since what was unknown could not have been actually willed. While the involuntary signifies that the will is opposed to what is done, the nonvoluntary signifies a mere privation of the act of the will. Thus, all ignorance causes the nonvoluntary, but not all ignorance causes the involuntary. [7] Properly speaking, concomitant ignorance is not the cause of the consequent sin because the man's habitual will was sinful before the ignorant act. For this reason, Thomas explains, such ignorance neither increases nor diminishes the sin since the outcome of the ignorant act would have been willed had the man not been ignorant from the start. [8]

Thomas describes ignorance as being consequent *(consequenter)* to the will's act insofar as the ignorance is voluntary. In the *De Malo* he delineates three ways in which ignorance may be voluntary: directly, indirectly, or incidentally. In the first way, voluntary ignorance occurs when a person directly wills to be ignorant so that he may have an excuse to sin. Thomas describes this ignorance in the *Summa* as "affected ignorance" *(ignorantia affectata).* Such ignorance does not excuse sin either wholly or in part, he explains, but rather increases it, "for a person seems to be afflicted with a great love of sinning that he would will to suffer the loss of knowledge for the sake of freely engaging in sin." [9]

In the second way, ignorance can be indirectly voluntary when a person does not make an effort to know. Such ignorance Thomas calls "negligence" *(negligentia)* because a person omits

[6] *STh* 1-11, q. 6, a. 8.

[7] Ibid.; *De Malo,* q. 3, a. 8.

[8] *STh* 1-11, q. 76, a. 4.

[9] *De Malo,* q. 3, a. 8; *STh* 1-11, q. 6, a. 8.

what he is obliged to do, namely, consider that which he can and ought to consider. In the *Summa,* Thomas refers to this ignorance as "ignorance of evil choice" *(ignorantia malce electionis)* and notes that it arises from some passion or habit or when one does not make the effort to know what he is obliged to know.[10] The third manner of voluntary ignorance, the incidental *(per accidens),* is similar to the second.[11] Such ignorance occurs when a person directly or indirectly wills something from which ignorance follows. Thomas gives as an example of direct incidental ignorance the drunkard who wills to drink too much wine and hence deprive himself of reason; indirectly, Thomas explains, incidental ignorance occurs when one does not resist rising passions which will bind the use of reason in a particular choice.[12]

Like direct ignorance, both the indirect and incidental forms are voluntary and as such do not cause involuntariness in the act that follows since the voluntariness of the ignorance makes that act to be in some measure voluntary. "But nevertheless," Thomas explains, "the preceding ignorance *lessens* the voluntary nature of the act, for that act is less voluntary which proceeds from ignorance of this sort than if a person knowingly would choose such an act without any ignorance, and so such ignorance does not excuse the following act altogether but only to some degree."[13]

Finally, ignorance is antecedent *(antecedenter)* to the will's act when it is not voluntary but is nonetheless the cause of a man's willing what he would not will otherwise. Thus, as with concomitant ignorance, a man may be ignorant of some circumstance of his act which he was not obliged to know. However, in contrast to the man with concomitant ignorance, he would not perform that act if he knew those circumstances. For example,

[10] *SI'h* 1-11, q. 6, a. 8.

[11] While Thomas considers indirect and incidental ignorance as two distinct forms of ignorance in the *De Malo,* in the *Summa Theologite* he considers them together in opposition to direct ignorance.

u De Malo, q. 3, a. 8; *SI'h* 1-11, q. 6, a. 8.

[13] *De Malo,* q. 3, a. 8 (emphasis added). Thomas adds, "it must be noted that sometimes both the act itself that follows and the preceding ignorance are one sin just as the will (to do a thing) and the external act are called one sin; hence it can happen that the sin is no less increased by the voluntariness of ignorance than it is excused by the diminished voluntariness of the act" (ibid.).

after taking proper precautions, a hunter may be unaware of the presence of a passerby and shoot him, regretting the accident. "Such ignorance," Thomas explains, "causes involuntariness simply." [14] Consequently, antecedent ignorance excuses from sin altogether.

In summary, then, Thomas describes the relation of ignorance to sin as follows: *directly voluntary* ignorance increases sin, *concomitant* ignorance neither increases nor diminishes it, *indirect* and *incidental* ignorance diminish sin to some degree, while *antecedent* ignorance excuses from sin altogether. Since ignorance excuses from sin only insofar as it removes voluntariness, and since it removes voluntariness only inasmuch as it is *itself* involuntary, Thomas describes only two instances of antecedent ignorance. "If the ignorance be such as to be entirely involuntary," he explains, "either [1] through being invincible *[invincibilis*], or [2] through being of matters one is not bound to know, then such like ignorance excuses from sin altogether." [15]

Thomas defines invincible ignorance as that which is unable to be overcome by study. [16] Given this fact, we see that ignorance excuses from sin altogether only when it is an ignorance of that which one either (1) cannot know, or (2) is not bound to know. [17] And since that which a man cannot know he is also not bound to know, in order to answer the question whether the influences of culture can excuse moral evils, we must first consider what everyone is obliged to know regardless of his cultural identity.

II

"Because a person is said to be negligent only when he omits what he is obliged to do," Thomas explains, "it does not seem to pertain to negligence that he fails to apply his mind to know anything whatsoever but only if he fails to apply his mind to

[14] *STh* I-II, q. 6, a. 8.

[15] *STh* I-II, q. 76, a. 3.

[16] *STh* I-II, q. 76, a. 2.

[17] Thomas notes an exception that "If the ignorance be such as to exclude the use of reason entirely, it excuses from sin altogether, as is the case with madmen and imbeciles: but such is not always the ignorance that causes the sin; and so it does not always excuse from sin altogether" (*STh* I-II, q. 76, a. 3, ad 3).

know those things he ought to know."[18] Thomas makes dear that not all "non-knowing" is properly called ignorance. There are some things that man by nature does not have the aptitude to know (e.g., he cannot know the nature of God or of angels in this life). Such "non-knowing" Thomas calls "nescience" *(nescentia)* which denotes a simple negation or absence of knowledge. Hence, even a stone or a tree can be called nescient inasmuch as-<lue to its very nature-it has an absence of knowledge. For this reason, nescience has neither the nature, nor is the cause, of sin.[19]

In contrast to nescience, ignorance denotes a privation of knowledge that a person has a natural aptitude to know.[20] Nevertheless, as we have seen, not all ignorance is sinful or is the cause of sin. As Thomas notes, "ignorance considered in itself signifies the nature of punishment, but not all ignorance has the nature of fault, for ignorance of those things a person is not obliged to know is without fault."[21] It is dear, then, that those things of which one is nescient one is not obliged to know. Similarly, those things of which one is invincibly ignorant one is not obliged to know; for example, pre-Columbian Indians were invincibly ignorant of the articles of faith since, as Thomas notes, man cannot judge on such matters without help from divine instruction.[22] Since their ignorance could not be overcome by study, it would have been of an invincible nature. Furthermore, there are some things for which man has a natural aptitude and can learn through study but which he is still not obliged to know (e.g., geometrical theorems). Nor, as a general rule, is one obliged to know contingent particulars, (e.g., that it is now raining).[23]

What, then, are we obliged to know? Thomas answers this question in the *Summa* by saying that "we are under an obligation to know those things, to wit, without the knowledge of which we are unable to accomplish a due act rightly."[24] In the *De Malo* he

[18] *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 8.
[19] *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 7; *STh* 1-11, q. 76, a. 2.
[20] *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 7.
[21] Ibid.
[22] *STh* 1-11, q. 100, a. 1.
[23] *STh* 1-11, q. 76, a. 2.
[24] Ibid.

states that "everyone is obliged to know those things by which he is directed in his own acts."[25]

To begin with, Thomas explains that one ought to know certain details which direct one's acts "in a particular case." He gives the example of the hunter who shoots his arrow in a place where men customarily pass. If the hunter does not make the effort to know whether someone is passing when he intends to shoot his arrow, Thomas explains, then this man is guilty of negligence. Should his arrow hit someone, the hunter would be guilty of that act as well. Thus, while the presence of a passerby is a contingent particular, the hunter is nonetheless obliged to know whether the passerby is present.[26]

More generally, anyone in a position of authority is bound to know those things pertaining to his office. While Thomas gives as examples those things pertaining to the offices of clerics, this manner of obliged knowledge would seem to apply to any office-even such roles as motherhood and fatherhood.[27] More generally still, Thomas explains that *everyone* is obliged to know those matters that regard his duty to the state. Here, he is apparently referring to a citizen's civic duty to know and abide by the law.[28] "For before a civil judge, also, one who thus appeals to ignorance of a law which he should know is not excused."[29] Hence the legal maxim that ignorance is no excuse for breaking the law.

Thomas notes, furthermore, that one is obliged to know the artides[30] or truths of faith "because faith directs intention."[31] Nevertheless, as we have noted, there may be situations in which a person is invincibly ignorant of these truths because of circumstances; hence, such knowledge may be considered to be obliged

[25] *De Malo,* q. 3, a. 7.

[26] *De Malo,* q. 3, a. 8.

[27] *De Malo,* q. 3, a. 7. Thomas does not mention this species of obliged knowledge in the *Summa Theologiae.*

[28] *STh* I-II, q. 76, a. 2. Thomas does not explicitly refer to this form of obliged knowledge in the *De Malo.*

[29] *De Veritate,* q. 17, a. 4, ad 5 (trans. Robert W. Mulligan, S.J. [Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994]).

[30] *STh* I-II, q. 76, a. 2.

[31] *De Malo,* q. 3, a. 7.

in a qualified sense-obliged to those who have the opportunity to acquire it and not to those who absolutely have not. While such obliged knowledge may be qualified, however, Thomas does list one form of obliged knowledge which all men-regardless of time or place-are obliged to know: what he terms "the universal principles of right" *(universaliaiuris prtecepta)*.[32]

III

The universal principles of right, Thomas explains, are found in the practical reason, that is, the intellect directed towards practical matters. As the speculative reason argues about speculative matters, so the practical reason argues about practical ones. Thus, Thomas concludes, we must naturally have an understanding not only of speculative principles but of practical ones as well. While the first speculative principles belong to the habit which Aristotle had called *the understandingof principles*,[33] the first practical principles belong to the natural habit called *synderesis*.[34] Such principles are what Thomas terms the universal principles of right.

This habit of first practical principles is, he tells us, "bestowed on us by nature."[35] Nevertheless, it is not natural to man as though these principles were impressed upon his soul as intelligible species are impressed in angels. Rather, Thomas explains, their existence is due partly to nature and partly to some extrinsic principle.[36] To make this fact dear, he gives an example from the speculative principle that "every whole is greater than its part."

> For it is owing to the very nature of the intellectual soul that man, having once grasped what is a whole and what is a part, should at once perceive that every whole is larger than its part: and in like manner with regard to other such

[32] STh1-11,q. 76, a. 2. Thomas refers to these principles as the Ten Commandments in the *De Malo* (q. 3, a. 7), not simply inasmuch as they are part of revelation but inasmuch as they are naturally known.

[33] Aristotle, *Nichomachaean Ethics* 6.6.

[34] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 12.

[35] Ibid.

[36] *STh* 1-11, q. 51, a. 1.

principles. Yet what is a whole, and what is a part-this he cannot know except through the intelligible species which he has received from phantasms: and for this reason, the Philosopher at the end of the *Posterior Analytics* shows that knowledge of principles comes to us from the senses.[37]

The first principles of practical reason are instilled in the same way. In this respect, then, the habit of synderesis is a natural one.

Whereas the habit of these principles is synderesis, the act whereby these principles are applied to particular actions is conscience. As Thomas explains, "the precepts of the natural law are to the practical reason what the first principles of demonstrations are to the speculative reason."[38] Conscience, therefore, is nothing other than "a judgment of reason derived from the natural law."[39]

Hence, those universal principles of right which man is obliged to know he knows naturally. But what are these principles? Thomas begins by explaining that the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the intellect simply is *being,* for this notion is included in everything that is apprehended. Consequently, the first principle of the speculative intellect is the principle of noncontradiction: that the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time. Now the practical reason is directed towards action, so the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason is *good,* for every act is performed for some end under the aspect of good. Thus, while the first principle of the speculative reason is founded upon the notion of being, the first principle of the practical reason is founded upon the notion of good; this principle is that "good is that which all things seek after." The first precept of the natural law is therefore that "good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided.""[40]

All the other precepts of the natural law-Qr first principles of practical reason-follow from this first principle as all the first principles of the speculative reason follow from the principle of noncontradiction. Thus, as Thomas explains, "whatever the practical reason naturally apprehends as man's good (or evil)

[37] Ibid.

[38] *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

[39] *De Verit.,* q. 17, a. 1, *sed contra* (first series) 1.

[40] *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

belongs to the precepts of the natural law as something to be done or avoided." [41] The other secondary general precepts follow from the first according to the order of natural inclinations. The first of these secondary precepts follows from man's inclination to the good in accordance with his nature simply as a substance. Thus, since each substance seeks to preserve its own being according to its nature, "by reason of this inclination, whatever is a means of preserving human life, and of warding off its obstacles, belongs to the natural law."[42]

Secondly, inasmuch as man is an animal, he has an inclination according to the nature he shares in common with other animals. Thus, Thomas explains, "those things are said to belong to the natural law *which nature has taught to all animals,* such as sexual intercourse, education of offspring and so forth."[43] But man is more than simply an animal, he is a *rational* animal. Hence, Thomas concludes that, thirdly,

> there is in man an inclination to good, according to the nature of his reason which nature is proper to him: thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society: and in this respect, whatever pertains to this inclination belongs to the natural law; for instance, to shun ignorance, to avoid offending those among whom one has to live, and other such things regarding the above inclination. [44]

While the precepts of the natural law are founded upon one common foundation, they are nonetheless many. Man is obliged to know these precepts inasmuch as they are the universal principles of right, but he naturally knows them inasmuch as they are the first principles of the practical reason. Consequently, knowledge of these precepts transcends culture: one cannot be invincibly ignorant of them.

These precepts of the natural law are thus self-evident to everyone. Nevertheless, not everything which belongs to the natural law is self-evident. As every judgment of the speculative reason proceeds from natural knowledge of first principles, so

[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

every judgment of the practical reason proceeds from first principles. Now there are some matters that the practical reason judges are "so evident" that one needs little consideration in order to approve or disapprove of them according to the general first principles. Some, however, require more careful judgment regarding the various circumstances; and these matters, Thomas explains, only the wise are competent to deal with carefully-as with certain matters of the speculative reason only the wise are competent (e.g., metaphysics). Finally, some matters one cannot judge at all without assistance from Divine instruction. Thomas gives as an example the articles of faith.[45]

What judgments, then, can be deemed to be so evident that *everyone* is able to approve or disapprove of them from the first principles? Is it possible because of cultural influences for one not to know, for example, the basic moral precepts outlined in the Ten Commandments? In discussing whether all the moral precepts of the Old Law belong to the natural law, Thomas gives examples of the three types of moral judgments that can or cannot be made through natural reason alone.

It follows, of necessity, that all the moral precepts [of the Old Law] belong to the law of nature; but not all in the same way. For there are certam things which the natural reason of every man, *of its own accord and at once,* judges to be done or not to be done: e.g., "Honor thy father and thy mother," and, "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal": and these belong to the law of nature absolutely.-And there are certain things which, after a more careful consideration, wise men deem obligatory. Such belong to the law of nature, yet so that they need to be inculcated, the wiser teaching the less wise: e.g., "Rise up before the hoary head, and honor the person of the aged man," and the like.-And there are some things, to judge of which, human reason needs Divine instruction, whereby we are taught about the things of God: e.g., "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything;" "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."[46]

Thomas considers the precepts contained in the second tablet of the Decalogue, then, to be known of their "own accord and at once." Consequently, all men naturally know that it is wrong to kill, to steal, to commit adultery, etc. The knowledge of these

[45] *STh* I-II, q. 100, a. 1.

[46] Ibid. (emphasis added).

precepts, he maintains, man has immediately from God.[47] Unlike the precepts that must be "inculcated" in all by wise men, these precepts are naturally and immediately acquired. With the speculative reason, when one first understands the nature of a whole and that of a part he immediately recognizes that the whole is always greater; so too with the practical reason as soon as one recognizes the nature of a man he recognizes of his "own accord and at once" that it is wrong to steal or kill.

In order for there to be probity in these judgments, however, it is necessary that "there be some permanent principle which has unwavering integrity, in reference to which all human works are examined, so that that permanent principle will resist all evil and assent to good."[48] The habit of synderesis or practical first principles therefore can never be in error;[49] hence, no one errs regarding these first principles.[50] And since the precepts expressed in the second tablet are known immediately in light of these principles, no one can err regarding these principles either.

As synderesis is not learnt, furthermore, neither can it be lost. Synderesis, like the habit of the first principles of understanding, is caused immediately by the active intellect; consequently, it is incorruptible either directly or indirectly. And so, the habit of the first practical principles "cannot be corrupted by any forgetfulness or deception whatever."[51]

If one cannot err regarding either the first precepts of the natural law or the evident judgments which follow immediately from them, it might seem as though there should be no error regarding our actions. Nevertheless, when Hindus practiced suttee-the ritual of burning a bride upon the death of her husband-they did so in the belief that the act was a good one; but this act nonetheless violates the precept of the natural law which forbids killing. Similarly, when Nazi soldiers executed millions of Jews, they did so in the belief that their actions were justified. Given the fact that everyone is possessed of an

[47] *STh* 1-11, q. 100, a. 3.
[48] *De Verit.*, q. 16, a. 2.
[49] Ibid.
[50] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 12, ad 3.
[51] *STh* 1-11, q. 53, a. 1.

immediate and unerring knowledge of the first precepts of the natural law, one may ask how such violations of the natural law could occur. The answer, Thomas explains, lies in the nature of these precepts as universal.

IV

Reason, Thomas notes, directs all human acts according to a twofold knowledge: both universal and particular. When presented with a choice, the reason confers about what should be done through the use of a syllogism, the conclusion of which is a judgment or choice made. The precepts of the natural law are universal judgments, but actions concern singulars: viz., that *this* act should or should not be performed. Consequently, the conclusion of a practical syllogism is a particular proposition. But a particular proposition follows from a universal one only through the medium of another particular proposition. Thus, one rejects the sin of parricide by considering the universal proposition that it is wrong to kill one's father as well as the particular proposition that *this* man is one's father. "Hence ignorance about either of these two propositions viz. of the universal principle which is a rule of reason, or of the particular circumstance, could cause an act of parricide."[52]

As we have seen, there can be no ignorance regarding universal propositions from either synderesis or the other evident precepts of the natural law. Consequently, the error in such matters originates from ignorance of the particular judgment.[53] Error can result, furthermore, when the practical reason does not make a correct application of the universal principle to particular acts, just as the speculative intellect can neglect to construct a syllogism according to the proper form of argumentation, thereby arriving at a false conclusion.[54]

As we have noted above, it belongs to conscience to apply the principles of synderesis to particular acts. Thus, while synderesis

[52] *STh* I-II, q. 76, a. 1.

[53] Thomas notes in the *De Veritate* that the erroneous minor premise may result from an error in the judgment of either the higher or the lower reason (De *Verit.,* q. 17, a. 2).

[54] Ibid.

never errs, conscience can. Thomas explains, however, that the fallibility of conscience does not threaten the probity of the first principles of practical reason precisely because conscience is not the first rule of human activity; rather, synderesis is. "Conscience, however, is a kind of rule which is itself regulated. Hence it is not strange that it can make mistakes."[55] Nevertheless, Thomas emphasizes that conscience can never err when the particular act to which it is applied has a universal judgment about it in synderesis.[56]

What significance does this fallibility of conscience have regarding the natural law, though? In matters of action, truth is not the same for all in matters of detail but only as regards the general principles; "and where there is the same rectitude in matters of detail, it is not equally known to all."[57] Thus, while the truth or rectitude regarding the general principles of the natural law is the same for all and known equally by all, the proper conclusions from these principles are not.

> Consequently we must say that the natural law, as to general principles, is the same for all, both as to rectitude and as to knowledge. But as to matters of detail, which are conclusions, as it were, of those general principles, it is the same for all in the majority of cases, both as to rectitude and as to knowledge; and yet in some few cases it may fail, both as to rectitude, by reason of certain obstacles ... and as to knowledge, since in some the reason is perverted by passion of evil habit, or an evil disposition of nature; thus formerly, theft, although it is expressly contrary to the natural law, was not considered wrong among the Germans, as Julius Caesar relates.[58]

In Thomas's example, he acknowledges that culture can cause a certain ignorance regarding the natural law. When he notes that the ancient Germans did not consider theft to be wrong, however, Thomas is not suggesting that they were ignorant of the precept "Thou shalt not steal." As we have seen, one cannot be ignorant of either the first principles of the natural law or those precepts which "the natural reason of every man grasps of its own accord

[55] *DeVerit.,* q. 17, a. 2, ad 7.
[56] *De. Verit.,* q. 17, a. 2.
[57] *STh* 1-11, q. 94, a. 4.
[58] Ibid.

and at once" from these principles. Thomas notes at the start of this passage that knowledge of such a general principle is the same for all; rather, it is as regards the details that ignorance may result. Hence, the German acceptance of theft which Caesar described was not an ignorance regarding the substance of the Fifth Commandment; rather, it was an ignorance that theft is wrong regarding certain details: for example, that it is wrong to steal from *these* tribes or from non-Germans. Again, such ignorance is an error concerning the minor premise of the practical syllogism.

The pervasive cultural ignorance among the early Germans regarding the evil of theft, or that of Hindus regarding the practice of Suttee, is not simply the result of individual error. In the *Summa,* Thomas explains that regarding the detailed precepts of the natural law which follow from the general ones, "the natural law can be *blotted out* from the human heart, either by evil persuasions ... or *by vicious customs* and corrupt habits."[59] He seems to allude to the consequence of such cultural influences in the *De Malo* as well. There Thomas notes that while ignorance generally signifies a privation of knowledge, "sometimes ignorance is something opposed to knowledge, and this is said to be ignorance resulting from a perverse frame of mind, for instance, when a person has a habit of false principles and false opinions by which he is impeded from knowledge of truth."[60]

When Hindus would burn widows or when the Nazis would kill Jews, they did so following certain false principles which custom and law had taught them-which is to say, they did so *believing* these principles to be true. Thomas explains that while these acts are essentially evil, inasmuch as reason *apprehends* them as good they accidentally receive the character of goodness; for the object of the will is proposed by reason. And so, such acts are performed according to conscience-albeit an erring one. When a Hindu burned his brother's widow, he did so following his conscience. Similarly, when a Nazi killed a Jew he did so following his own. The question arises, therefore, whether an

[59] *SI'h* 1-11, q. 94, a. 6 (emphasis added).

[60] *De Malo,* q. 3, a. 7.

erring conscience binds, and if so whether it is capable of excusing one from such cultural sins.[61]

V

Conscience, as we have seen, directs human acts inasmuch as it applies universal precepts to particular actions. Now any precept of law is only said to bind insofar as it is known or is required to be known. Consequently, conscience binds by the power of a precept.[62] Since one is bound by a precept which conscience dictates, Thomas concludes that one is bound by one's conscience no matter how false it may be, even though it contradict the natural law.[63] As Thomas explains, "Although that which a false conscience dictates is out of harmony with the law of God, the one who is mistaken *considers* it the law of God. Therefore, taking the thing in itself, if he departs from this, he departs from the law of God, although it would be accidental that he does not depart from the law of God."[64]

The Hindu whose conscience dictates that "All widows should be burned" and the Nazi whose conscience dictates that "All Jews should be killed," then, *are* bound by their consciences. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily excuse from sin. The question whether an erring conscience excuses from sin returns to the question whether one's ignorance is voluntary or not. For this reason, Thomas explains that if the ignorance of an erring conscience concerns some circumstance and is without any negligence thereby causing the act to be involuntary, then such a conscience does excuse from sin. If, however, conscience errs from an ignorance which is either willed directly, or willed indirectly through negligence, then it does not excuse the will.[65]

Accordingly, one who acts against such a conscience becomes a kind of transgressor of the law of God, although one who *follows* such a conscience

[61] *STh* I-II, q. 19, a. 5.

[62] *De Verit.*, q. 17, a. 3.

[63] *De Verit.*, q. 17, a. 4, *sed contra* 5.

[64] *De Verit.*, q. 17, a. 4, ad 1 (emphasis added).

[65] *STh* I-II, q. 19, a. 6.

and acts according to it acts against the law of God and sins mortally. For there was sin in the error itself, since it happened because of ignorance of that which one should have known. [66]

As we have seen, Thomas acknowledges that custom can inculcate false principles, thereby causing an erring conscience. To discern whether such a conscience excuses from sin, then, we must first consider the character of the ignorance which custom can cause. If the Hindu possessed of the false principle that "All widows should be burned" and the Nazi that "All Jews should be killed" truly possess such false precepts as principles, then their ignorance of the truth cannot be said to be directly voluntary. As we have seen, directly voluntary ignorance is willed because the individual desires to sin. Such cultural evils, however, are performed under the belief that they are really good. Thus, the Hindu burns his brother's widow in the pious belief that the couple will be reunited in the next world, while the Nazi kills Jews because of the benefits he sees for the "master race."

We must consider, then, whether such cultural ignorance is indirectly voluntary, involving negligence concerning what ought to be known and hence involving culpability. Now because of their particular nature, such precepts as "No widow should be burned" and "No Jew should be killed" are not among the first principles of the practical reason which consist of the most universal principles. Nor are they among the first evident precepts of the natural law which are also more universal in character. Neither do such precepts fall under the articles of faith which Thomas says everyone is required to know. And they do not necessarily fall under those matters regarding one's duty to the state, since human law as well as custom is capable of being contrary to the natural law-as is evidenced by India and Nazi Germany which had sanctioned their respective evil practices. [67] It remains to be considered, then, whether such precepts constitute that which is obliged to be known in particular cases.

It will be recalled that, in his discussion of knowledge which is obliged in a particular case, Thomas gives the example of the

[66] *De Verit.*, q. 17, a. 4, ad 3 (emphasis added).

[67] *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 6, ad 3.

hunter's duty to know whether anyone is present in an area where there are customarily passersby. Because such knowledge concerns a particular case, it is itself particular knowledge, namely, whether someone is passing by at that moment. Now, a precept, insofar as it is a precept, is *universal* knowledge. Thus, when the Hindu acted according to the precept "All widows must be burned" and the Nazi according to the precept "All Jews must be killed" they acted according to false principles which formed universal propositions. These precepts would thus act as major premises in practical syllogisms (e.g., "All widows must be burned, this woman is a widow, therefore she must be burned").

The fact that such false precepts-and their contrary true ones-are themselves universal, however, does not suggest that such cultural sins preclude an obliged particular knowledge. While a false precept is universal and forms the major premise of a practical syllogism, the act which follows from that precept is not referable to it alone. Both the Hindu who burns his brother's widow and the Nazi who kills a Jew *do* act according to the false precepts inculcated in them by custom; but they also act in light of the evident precept "Thou shalt not kill." Thus, in both instances, these acts also follow from a practical syllogism which includes the Fifth Commandment as the major premise. For the Hindu or Nazi to perform such an act in good conscience, then, he must provide a minor premise for a syllogism by which he judges that these acts are *not* murder; thus, the Hindu would have judged that "Widow burning is not murder," and the Nazi that "Killing a Jew is not murder."

The universal judgments that "Widow burning *is* murder" and that "Killing Jews *is* murder" in and of themselves do not fall under obliged knowledge insofar as they are universal; yet the cultural belief in the contrary judgments nevertheless does not result in an involuntary ignorance of the truth, for the particular circumstances which result from culturally false precepts *do* involve obliged knowledge. Just as the hunter is obliged to know whether passersby are present when he shoots, so too anyone who kills.a creature is obliged to know whether *this* creature is a man. But what a man is is evident to anyone who has encountered human beings, just as part and whole is evident to

anyone who has previously encountered parts and wholes. Such particular judgments, therefore, are obliged in light of the universal precept "Thou shalt not kill."

The Hindu or Nazi is culpable for his actions regarding a particular judgment precisely because he is able to change a universal one. Thus, while the Hindu must abide by his conscience which dictates that "All widows must be burned," he is culpable for burning his brother's widow precisely because he can change his conscience. Hence, Thomas explains that an erring conscience "does not oblige in every event. For something can happen, namely, a change of conscience, and, when this takes place, one is no longer bound. "[68]

Thus, when Thomas says that a person who has a habit of false principles and opinions is "impeded from knowledge of truth," he does not mean that that person is impeded absolutely so that he can *never* have knowledge of the truth. A false principle impedes knowledge inasmuch as the intellect does not admit of contraries. Thus, the Nazi who judges that "All Jews should be killed" is impeded from the knowledge that "No Jews should be killed" insofar as it is not possible for the intellect to affirm and deny the same thing *at the same time.* It is for this reason that Thomas describes such ignorance as being opposed to knowledge of the truth rather than a mere privation of it.

If such erroneous judgments are removed, however, so too is the impediment to knowledge. The Nazi possessed of his false precept is capable of learning that a Jew is a man inasmuch as he is capable of discerning the nature of a man. Insofar as he is capable of making this particular judgment, so too is he capable of changing his conscience. Unfortunately, despite man's ability to change his erring conscience, such cultural sins frequently persist for generations and longer. As Moody-Adams suggests, "Sometimes-perhaps most of the time--cultures are perpetuated by human beings who are uncritically committed to the internal perspective on the way of life they hope to preserve. "[69] Because conscience can be changed, however, it is impossible for custom to cause ignorance of an invincible character.

[68] *De Verit.,* q. 17, a. 4; cf. ad 8.

[69] Moody-Adams, "Culmre, Responsibility, and Affected Ignorance," 296.

Inasmuch as such cultural ignorance regarding secondary precepts of the natural law is indirectly voluntary, however, it nonetheless does excuse from sin to some degree. As Thomas explains, "Even ignorance which is a sin insofar as it is voluntary diminishes the voluntariness of the following act, and by reason of this diminishes the following sin; and it is possible that such ignorance makes the following sin less grave than its own gravity." [70] Thus, while such cultural acts are not excused from sin altogether, their sinfulness is diminished insofar as they are performed according to conscience.

VI

Contrary to Moody-Adams, Thomas does not deny that a "widespread moral ignorance" can be due principally to cultural influences. But neither does he deny the role of individual responsibility. A habit of false principles *can* be caused by perverse custom, but it can also be changed. Hence, according to Thomas, the false conscience inculcated by cultural mores does not excuse from sin altogether. Even when custom does prevail over an individual's choices, the moral agent nonetheless remains responsible for his individual acts.

[70] *De Malo,* q. 3, a. 8, ad 4.

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ANALYTICALTHOMISM

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NALYTIC PHILOSOPHERS have become increasingly nterested in the thought of Thomas Aquinas. Several actors help to explain this phenomenon. A remote cause is the work of Peter Geach, who both modeled and validated serious analytic study of Thomas; many of those writing in the analytic tradition today owe an obvious debt to Geach. Another remote cause has been the renewed interest in medieval philosophy among analytic philosophers. More proximately, the emergence of philosophy of religion as an accepted analytic speciality has also spurred interest in Thomas. As a result, Aquinas is now taken seriously as a philosopher by many trained within the Anglo-American tradition that previously would have been inclined to consign him to the pre-Frege dustbin of benighted thinking.

Indeed, analytic interest in Aquinas has now reached the point where some writing in this vein consider themselves to be "Analytic Thomists." A recent issue of *The Monist* (vol. 80, no. 4 [October 1997]) is entirely devoted to Analytical Thomism and a forthcoming volume in the Oxford Companion to Philosophy series will explore the same topic. While Thomists of every stripe should be glad to see Aquinas get his analytical due, many traditional readers of Aquinas will doubtless wonder whether "Analytical Thomism" is oxymoronic in the same way that "Transcendental Thomism" seemed so. Can one really be both a *Thomistand* an analytic philosopher? Are the basic philosophical commitments of the one compatible with those of the other? A

close look at *The Monist* volume, which is the purpose of this essay, will hopefully shed some light on this topic.

The obvious first question to be considered regarding Analytical Thomism is *Quid sit?* The advisory editor, John Haldane, offers the only definition in the volume:

> Analytical Thomism is not concerned to appropriate St. Thomas for the advancement of any particular set of doctrines. Equally, it is not a movement of pious exegesis. Instead, it seeks to deploy the methods and ideas of twentieth-century philosophy-of the sort dominant within the English-speaking world-in connection with the broad framework of ideas introduced and developed by Aquinas. *Form, matter, existence, individuation, concepts, mental utterances, good* and *evil* all get some treatment in the pages that follow.

Each of Haldane's sentences raises some important questions. Right off the bat the negative contrasts make it clear that Analytical Thomism understands itself to be offering some kind of alternative or nontraditional reading of Aquinas; no names are named, but it is clear that Analytical Thomists have some problems with nonanalytical Thomists. First, it is claimed that Analytical Thomism is not committed to "the advancement of any particular set of doctrines." What does this mean? Are the doctrines in question religious or philosophical? How could one possibly identify oneself as a Thomist and not thereby be committed to certain particular doctrines of St. Thomas himself? Are there no basic doctrines ingredient in Thomism of any kind? Second, Analytical Thomism does not involve "pious exegesis." Is this meant to exclude piety and exegesis or just the former? Can there be a Thomism without at least some intellectual piety? Can one be a Thomist without the ability to do textual exegesis informed by a knowledge of medieval philosophy and theology? Third, is Analytical Thomism a methodological approach to Aquinas or is it rather an attempt to reinterpret Aquinas in the light of the leading ideas of analytic philosophy? Fourth, is it enough to be a Thomist that one discuss some interesting central concepts in Aquinas? Haldane does not provide answers to these questions and it is not at all clear that the other contributors to the volume would agree on a common answer.

Hilary Putnam opens the volume with "Thoughts Addressed to an Analytical Thomist." Putnam acknowledges that he is not an Analytical Thomist because he is outside the Roman Catholic tradition and because he has a different approach to philosophy; the former reason is noteworthy as an example of how Thomism is perceived by some to entail a religious commitment. Putnam's remarks are offered as friendly questions meant to engage Analytic Thomists in dialogue. Presumably the friendly nature of the queries originates in a common opposition to certain antimetaphysical, antirealist, and antireligious strains in contemporary philosophy.

Putnam's first set of questions concerns arguments for the existence of God. Putnam rejects the formerly widespread and facile analytic dismissal of the classical proofs as patently invalid, while acknowledging that the premises are questionable because of their metaphysical presuppositions. He argues, however, that the conception of reason embodied in the arguments reflects deep intuitions that have not been refuted by modern science and so need to be taken seriously. But after having defended the traditional project in this way, Putnam goes on to pose a problem that Thomists do need to pay greater attention to: How do these philosophical "proofs," and the resulting conception of God as at the head of the metaphysical line, connect up with religious belief? Surely for Aquinas such argumentation is not foundational for belief, so how does it relate to belief? A step towards answering this question in a way that takes into account contemporary analytic discussion can be found in Lubor Velecky's underappreciated *Aquinas' Five Arguments in the Summa Theologiae la 2,3* (Kampen, The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1994).

The second set of questions posed by Putnam concerns predication with respect to God. Putnam wants to argue that religious language is incommensurable with empirical description and scientific theorizing without, however, getting trapped in language-game compartmentalism, because he believes there is a universal potentiality for religious questioning. What is needed, then, is a way to account for meaningful religious language about God that respects its religious context without thereby sealing it

off compartmentally from all other kinds of discourse. Putnam sees Aquinas's theory of analogical predication as trying to do just that. He is dubious, however, that Aquinas really improves on Maimonides, specifically regarding how a simple God can be meaningfully said to have attributes. I would argue that Putnam does not fully understand Aquinas's doctrine of analogy, but it is more important here to acknowledge how someone sympathetically reading Aquinas from outside the tradition can offer fresh perspectives and raise critical questions. Putnam is surely right, for example, that Thomists need to recognize the way in which "univocal" and "literal" are context-dependent terms that have no simple meaning and that the nonliteral use of religious language cannot be readily explained in terms of a scientific theory.

The next contribution, by Brian Davies, O.P., on "Aquinas, God, and Being," is the most significant in the collection because it bears on the central doctrine of God as *esse per se subsistens* and the degree to which the metaphysics underpinning that claim can be made credible analytically. Davies wants to salvage the analytic respectability of Aquinas's teaching by steering what he takes to be a middle course between traditional views (e.g., Gilsonian) of *esse per se subsistens* as the crown jewel of Thomistic metaphysics on the one hand and the analytic dismissals of the doctrine as either symptomatic of sophistry or evidence of pre-Fregeau confusion on the other. Davies' middle course, however, steers quite closely along the analytic bank. He begins by endorsing the Kantian claim that existence is not a predicate in the following sense: to say that ___ exist(s) can never serve to tell us anything about any object or individual (i.e., something that can be named). He offers three arguments in favor of this view. First is a *reductio ad absurdum* claim that to deny his view, to claim that existence does tell us something about something, leads to the conclusion that all positive predications of existence must be true and all negative predications must be false. Second, he argues that the phrase _____ exist(s) is really equivalent to saying that some X are *Y;* for example, to say that "Some fun-loving Welshmen exist" is equivalent to "Some Welshmen are fun-loving." So just as "some" does not ascribe a property to

something, neither does "exist(s)." Davies' third argument borrows from Frege and C. J. F. Williams and presumes a parallel between the ascription of existence and the ascription of number. Affirming the existence of something is really nothing other than the denial of the number nought to whatever object or concept is said to exist. Statements of existence are really statements of number, and just as the assertion of number does not ascribe a property to some object, neither does the assertion of existence.

Davies then entertains and dismisses four possible objections to this interpretation of existence in a somewhat cursory and sometimes problematical way, but these objections are not relevant here. The objection that matters most, of course, is that this post-Frege understanding of existence seems *prima facie* far removed from Aquinas' doctrine of *esse.* The bold, central, and to me utterly incredible claim of Davies, however, is that if we dig a little deeper into what Aquinas says about God as *ipsum esse subsistens* and the source of the *esse* of creatures, we will discover that his understanding of *esse* is quite compatible with the post-Frege understanding of existence! Davies purports to find textual evidence for this reading of *esse* in the opening chapter of the *De ente et essentia,* where he claims that Aquinas holds that "the verb 'to be' is used in at least two distinct ways" (509). What is actually in the text, however, is a standard reference to the Aristotelian doctrine of how *ens* (not *esse* or "to be") is said in two ways: either according to the ten categories or as joining the subject and predicate in a true proposition; in the latter sense even privations can be said "to be" in some sense, as when we say that "blindness is in the eye." Davies asserts that this distinction is tantamount to a distinction between "sentences which tell us something about a distinct individual and sentences which look or sound as though they were doing this, though in fact they are not" (510). Before considering how Davies construes Aquinas on existence-statements regarding individuals, it is important to note two serious flaws in Davies' procedure. The first is the failure to attend to the distinction between *esse* and *ens* in Aquinas's Latin texts; the two terms are not interchangeable, since Aquinas thinks every created being *(ens)* is composed of two distinct principles: *esse,* as the fundamental actuality making the *ens* to be; and

essentia, as a potency for *esse* that formally determines the kind of existence the *ens* exercises. Davies' use of English translations sometimes occludes these important distinctions; as already noted, Davies implies that Aquinas is going to explain "to be" in the sense of existence or *esse* when it is really *ens* that he is talking about. This leads to a second and related difficulty. In his footnote (n. 23 on p. 517) regarding the distinction between the two senses of being, Davies refers to three putatively parallel passages where he claims that Aquinas is making the same distinction: *Commentary on the Metaphysics,* book V, lectio 9; *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 3, a. 4, ad 2; and *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 48, a. 2, ad 2. The first and third passages concern how *ens* is said in two ways, but the second passage is really about something else. There Aquinas explains how *esse* can be said in two ways: as *actus essendi* or as signifying composition in a proposition. It is the former sense of *esse,* as *actus essendi,* that Davies cannot easily account for and his strategy therefore seems to be to ignore it by citing texts where Aquinas is discussing Aristotle's doctrine of being. It hardly seems fair to Aquinas, however, to explain his doctrine of being in terms of the Aristotelian distinction between the categorical and predicational senses of being.

Davies argues that, for Aquinas, statements about an individual do not tell us that it exists because genuine statements can only be in terms of the categories and being is not a category. Hence if being and existence are interchangeable, and neither is categorical, then statements of existence tell us nothing genuine about an individual. The only genuine ascriptions that we can make about individuals are in terms of the categories and hence in terms of *form.* The ultimate reduction of all genuine predication to form is really at the root of Davies' interpretation of Aquinas. In Davies' own words:

> On Aquinas's account, the existence of Thor is reportable by saying what Thor is. "No entity without identity," says W. V. Quine. Or, as Aquinas, puts it, existence is given by form *(forma est essendi principium).* "Every mode of existence," says Aquinas, "is determined by some form" *(quodlibet esse est secundum formam).* For Aquinas, we cannot describe something by saying that, as well as being feline, intelligent and so on, it also exists. To exist is to be or have form. Hence, for instance, Aquinas can only make sense of statements like

"Thor exists" *(Thor est)* on the understanding that they tell us what something is. *Thor est,* said of Thor the cat, means, for Aquinas, "Thor is a cat." (511)

Davies accords primacy to form or essence as determinative of *esse; esse* is just the denial of the number nought with respect to what can be described by form. Although I cannot make a long case here, I believe that Davies misrepresents Thomas's doctrine of the relationship between *esse* and essence. While it is true that Thomas does speak of form or essence as causing *esse iforma dat esse),* Cornelio Fabro and others have taught that such sayings need to be read carefully in the light of the more fundamental doctrine of *esse* as foundational act and form as potency to that act. Form is a real co-principle of being and constitutes every being as a specific kind of being with specific causal powers, but it is related as potency in the transcendental order to the *esse* that it receives from God. Davies' treatment obscures the differences (1) between the transcendental (God-creature) and the predicamental (creature to creature) orders, (2) between efficient and formal causation, and (3) between concept formation and judgments of existence.

Davies goes on to show how this reading of the *essence-esse* relationship allegedly illuminates Aquinas's doctrine of God as *esse per se subsistens* and the *causa esse.* To describe creatures as having *esse* is not to attribute a property to them. All that we do when we ascribe *esse* to something is to say that the thing in question is more than the meaning of words, that we are saying what is the case. Davies says that Aquinas's "idea is that in truly knowing what, for example, a cat (as opposed to a unicorn) is, we are latching on to the fact that cats have *esse"* (514). Davies thus concludes that "Aquinas's teaching on *esse* is decidedly matter of fact and even pedestrian. For him, we lay hold of the *esse* of things by living in the world and by truly saying what things are" (ibid.). When we ask the question "Why is there any world at all?", as opposed to what accounts for this or that particular thing, we get to God who, as *ipsum esse subsistens,* explains how creatures are more than the meaning of words. To say that God is *ipsum esse subsistens* is ultimately just a shorthand way of saying that God is not created because God is not composed; it is

an exercise in the *via negativa.* Whatever accounts for particular beings must somehow transcend those beings.

Davies concludes his essay:

> I have tried to expound Aquinas's teaching so as to indicate that, if nothing else, it is something of which a modern philosopher might well take account since it accords with what a modern philosopher might well want to say on the topic of existence. I am tempted to say that it is something of which a modern *analytical* philosopher might take account; but I cannot really claim to know what makes a philosopher analytic. (517)

In these words surfaces the major problem facing the entire Analytical Thomist project: the tendency to domesticate Aquinas metaphysically so that he fits neatly into analytic categories. Without referring explicitly to Davies, Stephen Theron nonetheless aptly characterizes the import of an approach like Davies' in the concluding essay: "What emerges, after all, is a view of the medieval colossus as not out of harmony with the later, supposedly more sophisticated researches of Frege and the tradition in which Frege stands, at the same time as Frege himself can by this route more easily appear as the continuator of an original *philosophia perennis"* (614). To use the language of Gilson, Frege-friendly readings of Aquinas end up as some form of essentialism. Aquinas's authentic doctrine of being-with its emphasis on *esse* as the *actus essendi,* the act of all acts and the perfection of all perfections-simply cannot be harmonized with post-Frege analytical dogmas. It is rather the case that Aquinas challenges those dogmas. What is really called for in Analytical Thomism is a thoughtful and critical confrontation with prevailing analytic dogmas on existence as in David Braine's *The Reality of Time and the Existence of God* (Oxford, 1988). Any version of Analytic Thomism that gives up defending the uniqueness and richness of Aquinas's decidedly pre-Frege notion of *esse* has given up the game. The best of the essays in this volume, and the model for the kind of Analytical Thomism that would be salutary, demonstrate not how Aquinas fits neatly onto the analytic map, but rather how he does not.

John Lamont's "Aquinas on Divine Simplicity" begins with an interesting discussion of form. He argues that we can make good

sense of Aquinas on the distinction between form in *esse naturale* and form in *esse intentionale* through Frege's distinction between *Eigenschaft* (property} and *Merkmal* (characteristic). The form as thought *(esse intentionale)* is the same as the form in the material object *(esse materiale);* there is no difference in the characteristics of the form, but rather the form as thought takes on a property. Lamont argues that Aquinas's doctrine of form is superior to Frege's doctrine of concepts because Aquinas does not have to account for abstract objects. Lamont rightfully stresses, in the face of persistent misunderstanding, that the form as thought for Aquinas is not a mental image; knowing involves formal identity, not a representational matching of image and original. Overall Lamont's discussion of form is intriguing, yet it is flawed by his failure to respect Aquinas's distinction between form and essence.

Lamont goes on to apply this account of form to the question of divine simplicity, but it turns out that his main interest is what divine simplicity implies for divine necessity. The *crux interpretatum* is whether God's existence is necessary in a logical sense. Brian Davies and Patterson Brown want to argue that necessary existence can be attributed to God (as in the *tertia via)* without that entailing a commitment to the thesis that "God exists" is logically necessary. But as Lamont shows, Aquinas argues that the identity of essence and *esse* in God does entail that "God exists" is logically necessary, only we cannot see this because the divine essence is beyond our grasp; it is true *per se,* but not *quoad nos.* Lamont asserts that Brown and Davies' denial of this claim is rooted in their underlying adherence to Frege (and Geach). According to this view, "God exists" cannot be logically necessary because existence is a property of concepts, an assertion that there is an object answering to the concept. Since existence is not a property of objects, it cannot be a logically necessary property of God. As we have already seen, Fregean metaphysical commitments skew the interpretation of Aquinas. Lamont argues that there is a modified Fregean way of understanding how existence can be a necessary to God if we see being actual as a unique characteristic mark *(Merkmal)* of God rather than as a normal property *(Eigenschaft).*

Aquinas's notion of form is central also to Jonathan Jacobs and John Zeis's "Form and Cognition: How to Go Out of Your Mind." While it is unfortunate that Jacobs and Zeis lump Aristotle and Aquinas together in what they describe as an "Aristotelian-Thomistic" approach to cognition, they rightly stress the centrality of formal causation in both cases. It is formal causation that obviates the modern problem of how the mind gets back to the world. Jacobs and Zeis point out that Aquinas's doctrine of abstraction is radically different from post-Lockean doctrines. It is not a matter of empiricist abstraction wherein the input is a set of particular ideas and the output is some kind of general image or idea. The authors argue that the doctrine of formal causation, and so formal identity in knowing, that is ingredient in Aquinas's notion of concept formation allows Aquinas to avoid the skeptical problems endemic to modern doctrines of abstraction as typified in Hume, Putnam, Quine, and Kripke. Jacobs and Zeis then discuss how to place Aquinas's doctrine of cognition on the contemporary epistemological map. They argue that it is primarily externalist, non-evidentialist, and natural, but that it also incorporates elements of foundationalist, coherence, internalist, and normative theories of cognition. This leads to the simple but important conclusion: "The standard dichotomies in the contemporary discussion of the justification of belief do not apply to the A{f [Aristotelian-Thomistic] theory of knowledge" (553). Contrary to Davies, who interprets Aquinas as confirming contemporary presuppositions, Jacobs and Zeis find him challenging them.

Eleonore Stump comes to rather the same conclusion in her "Aquinas's Account of Freedom: Intellect and Will." Stump wants to argue that Aquinas's view of freedom is not voluntaristic because he associates freedom not with the will alone, but rather with will *and* intellect: "the dynamic interactions of intellect and will yield freedom as an emergent property or systems-level feature" (576). This aspect of Aquinas's account is often obscured by a narrow focus on *liberum arbitrium* that neglects the complex interplay of intellect and will in the various other moments of a human act. While I think Stump's aversion to voluntarism inclines her too far in the opposite direction of intellectualism, she

nonetheless does an excellent job of highlighting how both freedom of action and freedom of will are systems-level properties.

Stump argues that Aquinas is not a compatibilist because he believes the causal chain resulting in a voluntary act has to originate in principles intrinsic to the agent. She holds that "if something extrinsic to the agent were to act on the will with efficient causation, then the tie of the will to the intellect, from which acts of the will get their voluntary character, would be broken, and so the act of the will wouldn't be voluntary" (585). This is a debatable claim, however, given what Aquinas holds about the relationship between God and the will. Stump considers the God-will problem to be restricted to theology's consideration of grace, but it is clear from many passages in Aquinas that God is operative in the will quite apart from grace. This would imply that while Aquinas is surely not a compatibilist in the normal sense of the term, he does think that human freedom is compatible with divine causation. Aquinas does not fit neatly into either compatibilism or incompatibilism. As for the other contemporary category, libertarianism, if it is understood to entail the principle of alternative possibilities or the freedom to do otherwise, then Aquinas does not really fit here either. As Stump shows, Aquinas does hold that *liberumarbitrium* entails the ability to do otherwise, but ultimately that freedom is rooted in a freedom that does not involve the will's ability to do otherwise. We are not free with respect to alternative possibilities when its comes to the will's natural inclination to the *bonum commune* or ultimate end. When confronted with God the ultimate Good, the will cannot nill; the blessed in heaven freely will God, but they cannot do otherwise. Stump argues that what really matters then for freedom is not the presence or absence of alternative possibilities, but rather that the agent's volition causally originate internally from his own intellect and will. Stump therefore concludes that Aquinas does not fit neatly into any preexisting libertarian mold. Ultimately the will is free in Aquinas not because of its independence from intellect, but rather precisely because of its relationship to intellect.

The title of Stephen Theron's concluding essay reveals a negative verdict on the project of Analytical Thomism: "The Resistance of Thomism to Analytical and Other Patronage." Theron considers Analytical Thomism as a capitulation to the *Zeitgeist* that is incompatible with Thomism's claim to be a *philosophia perrennis.* He roundly and harshly condemns a long list of analytic *corrumptores.* Theron seems to think that one cannot be a Thomist without abandoning analytic philosophy altogether. While I am sympathetic to some of Theron's worries, I do not share his deep pessimism about Analytic Thomism. Thomists not trained in analytic philosophy can learn much from analytical readers of Aquinas. Analytic Thomists can help non-Analytic Thomists to see new themes in Aquinas, to pose new questions to him, to push his thought in new directions, to acknowledge areas where his thinking is no longer tenable, and so bring his thought into the contemporary arena. The logical and argumentative rigor of the best of analytic philosophy can indeed be a necessary corrective to overly pious expository readings of Aquinas; St. Thomas himself can stand such scrutiny, even if some of his followers cannot.

The influence needs to go in both directions, however, because one of the principal flaws in many analytic readings of Aquinas is an astonishing unfamiliarity with nonanalytic treatments. One often has the impression that Analytic Thomists are writing only for each other, oblivious to the fact that many of their points have already been made by nonanalytic scholars; they often merely reinvent the Thomistic wheel. They need to read more non-English, nonanalytic literature. They need to become more historically informed. They need a greater familiarity with Aquinas's larger theological picture. Analytic and non-Analytic Thomists have much to teach each other if only they would listen. Together they would have much to offer current analytical philosophy by offering a way of thinking that transcends the standard problematic by challenging the dogmas and idols of the age.

There is cause for optimism then about the stimulus to Thomism that could come from Analytical Thomism. As noted in this discussion, however, the major cause for concern is

metaphysical. At the heart of Aquinas's philosophy is his understanding of being as ultimately rooted in *esse* as *actus essendi*. This does not fit with analytical metaphysical dogmas. Here then is where the ultimate test of allegiance lies. It is possible, of course, to be an analytic philosopher who offers interesting readings of Aquinas without any commitment to his doctrine of being. But I would not call such a one a Thomist, nor, I presume, would he call himself one. What I am arguing is that to be a Thomist of any stripe requires some primary commitment to Thomas's metaphysics; without that commitment, one may be an interpreter or even a specialist, but one is not a Thomist. It is a matter of debate, of course, what other doctrines of St. Thomas one must adhere to in order to be a Thomist and surely the items are broader than the metaphysics of *esse*. But however one draws the Thomistic circle, the core must be *esse* in St. Thomas's sense, not Frege's.

BOOK REVIEWS

Thomas Aquinas, Theologian. By THOMAS F. O'MEARA, O.P. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997. Pp. 302. $36.00 (doth), $16.95 (paper). ISBN 0-268-01898-7 (cloth), 0-268-04201-2 (paper).

O'Meara's treatment is impressive. Most books nowadays aim to be all things to all readers; they seek especially to address the uninitiated and the specialist. Few succeed. O'Meara's book is in this regard a happy exception. Because of its accessible style and its comprehensive approach to its topic, it will serve as an introductory text. Because of the author's far-ranging knowledge of the texts of Aquinas and his success at combining attention to an array of specific passages with a synoptic vision of texts and themes, long-time scholars of Aquinas will find the book a profitable read, even as they may disagree with some of the book's underlying assumptions. O'Meara offers a remarkably broad approach to Aquinas: he locates Aquinas's work within its historical context, expounds some of the basic themes and structures of his thought, provides an introduction to the history and main lines of dispute in the interpretation of Thomas, and ends with suggestions about the contributions of Aquinas to contemporary issues and debates. What unifies these topics is the insistence that Aquinas must be read as preeminently a theologian; thus O'Meara's book stands in an impressive, if relatively recent line of interpretation that stresses the primacy of theology in Aquinas and sees itself as correcting the neo-Scholastic emphasis on Aquinas as philosopher.

O'Meara opens by situating Aquinas in the context of medieval monasticism and of the novel functions of the friars in the cities and nascent universities. Some of the most suggestive historical observations underscore the parallels between the style and structure of Aquinas's texts and those of Gothic architecture. He applies to the *Summa Theologiae* the principles of Gothic art enunciated by Arnold Hauser, where the accent is on "expansion ... not concentration, coordination . . . not subordination, ... the open sequence rather than the closed geometric form" (47-48). Instead of reading the *Summa* in a linear, discrete, and static manner, as a sort of deductive encyclopedia, we must attend to the multiple connections among the parts, to their dynamic interaction, and to the relationships of parts to structural wholes (54).

Building on Chenu's famous reading of the structure of the *Summa Theologiae* in terms of the neo-Platonic motif of the *exitus-reditus,* O'Meara notes passages where Thomas speaks of the work of creation as a circle. The

reditus is not simply a "collapse backward" or merely a recovery of what was latent in the beginning. "The goals of being and grace draw creatures not backward but upward and forward. Aquinas spoke not of a return but of a journey" (58). Echoing, with Aquinas, Dionysius's preference for the image of the spiral over the circle, O'Meara holds that the spiral hints at the role of history and freedom rather than mere process in the depiction of human destiny. At the center of this conception lies the distinctively anti-pagan teaching on the Incarnation. O'Meara's suggestions here are fertile, not just for reading the *Summa* but also for the distinctively Catholic approach to history, an approach that explodes the pagan, cyclical view of time while avoiding the modern, linear conception of progress.

Throughout, O'Meara makes use of some of the best recent literature on Aquinas: Pesch on principles of exegesis and the theology of grace, Patfoort on the structure of the *Summa Theologiae*, Torrell on the integration of Thomas' s thought and life within his spirituality, and Boyle on the historical setting of the *Summa Theologiae*. He is especially helpful in drawing out the theological implications of Boyle's claim that the *Summa* was Thomas's distinctively Dominican work, an attempt to correct the disorganized and excessively casuistical methods in early Dominican textbooks for the care of souls. O'Meara outlines a reading of the unity of the three parts of the text. The culmination of the first part (on the *imago Dei)* "serves as a bridge to the graced anthropology of the second part" (107), while the simultaneous insistence on divine sovereignty and the dignity of creatures provides the basis for a view of nature as infused and perfected by grace. This in turn reaches its pinnacle in the "Incarnation as the fulfillment of the God's loving plan for the human race" (128-36).

O'Meara applauds the freeing of Aquinas from the hold of neo-Scholasticism. Although interest in Aquinas may have diminished immediately after the Second Vatican Council, appreciation of his work has increased steadily in recent years, especially among non-Catholics. This is indisputable and to be welcomed. Nonetheless, one wonders whether the neglect of synthesis to which O'Meara attributes the failure of Thomism in the early modern period does not equally bedevil recent exegesis of Aquinas. Since most of those now writing on Aquinas lack the sort of training in the reading of Aquinas that was characteristic of O'Meara's generation, they are often unable to transcend a piecemeal appropriation of his texts. Indeed, O'Meara's own style and method are anomalous today. With his attention to historical context, to the multiple genres in which Thomas composed, to the analogically rich use of terms, and to the complex structure of Thomas's pedagogy, O'Meara's work recalls the best of neo-Thomism. (O'Meara would of course object to this alignment on the grounds that neo-Thomism attempted to extract an autonomous philosophy from what was properly a theological project and thus truncated and eviscerated Aquinas's thought.)

O'Meara approves Pesch's depiction of neo-Thomism as holding Aquinas "under house arrest" up to 1962 (197). He rather sweepingly disdains what he calls the neo-Scholastic reaction against all things modern and contemporary. Not surprisingly, for him the two heroes of twentieth-century Thomism are Rahner and McCool. The latter's history of Thomism celebrates an emergent pluralism, both as the most accurate description of the diversity of Thomistic schools and as normative for the appropriation of a thinker as complex as Aquinas. Such an interpretation has the apparent advantage of quelling the internecine warfare among different schools of Thomism and of accommodating Thomas to an age of diversity. Of course, McCool's pluralistic interpretation arises not from some position of neutrality among the competing schools but from a specific branch of Thomism, namely, transcendental Thomism, which he thinks can better explain the fact of pluralism. Yet, if O'Meara can flippantly dismiss Gilson for his "eccentric metaphysics" (181), transcendental Thomism is at least equally open to the charge of basing its reading in an eccentric epistemology, which gives too much ground to Kant (in the case of Lonergan) or Heidegger (in the case of Rahner).

This is precisely where O'Meara's neglect of the properly philosophical dimension of Aquinas's thought becomes problematic. As we have noted above, the great contribution of O'Meara's project is his restoration of the primacy of theology in Aquinas; this allows for a more historically accurate understanding of the context and motivation for Aquinas's writings and for a comprehensive reading of his mature writings. Yet this should not lead us to a neglect of the importance of philosophical pedagogy and disputation for Aquinas. To many of the philosophical disputes of his day, Aquinas sought to give properly philosophical responses. Lack of attention to these disputes, in Aquinas's time and in our own, engenders a philosophically naive theology, unaware of its philosophical presuppositions or implications. It was only natural that in the sustained philosophical assault on ancient and medieval philosophy in the modern period followers of Aquinas would focus on the underlying philosophical disputes. How many contemporary, theological approaches to Aquinas provide us with a philosophically thin and unsatisfying Aquinas? Indeed, O'Meara himself rather uncritically adopts the philosophical principles of transcendental Thomism. In his survey of modern Thomists, O'Meara gives inordinate attention and praise to Rahner. He quotes, with apparent approbation, Rahner's claims that Catholic theology must embrace the "transcendental-anthropological turn of modern philosophy" and that modernity is itself a "moment in Christian philosophy and theology" (190). As much as one wants to insist that modernity must be engaged, not simply dismissed, one wonders whether such a depiction of modernity does not fail to allow its distinctive voices to be heard. In the interest of accommodation, the elements of modernity that are deeply anti-theological and especially anti-Catholic are suppressed. And so the dialogue never really begins.

O'Meara is right to see the goal of reading Aquinas as twofold: (1) to acknowledge, in the words of Pesch, the "basic distance" between Aquinas's thought and that of our time-not just in terms of conclusions but in terms of the kinds of questions posed and the shape of the inquiry itself; and (2) to find in Thomas a way of addressing contemporary issues and concerns. Without the former, we will have only superficial, fashionable applications of Aquinas to contemporary problems; without the latter, Thomas ceases to be a living interlocutor. The supposition of all serious reading of old books is that by underscoring their otherness we allow them to put into question the unreflective dogmas of our time. Thus we may be freed from the tyranny of the present. When O'Meara turns to the present, his Aquinas too often speaks in terms that confirm rather than unsettle current assumptions. This is especially true when it comes to ethical and political matters. At times we are given platitudes about the need to embrace "process, historicity, and individuality" (249) and bland descriptions of postmodernism as seeking a "union of theory and life" and as respecting "past cultures and present diversity." O'Meara aptly notes the complexity of the political world of Aquinas's time and of Aquinas's own political thought, which distinguishes between faith and politics, law and morality (221). While he notes that not freedom of choice but the common good (219) is the ultimate standard of good government, the tenor of the discussion leads the reader to see Aquinas as an anticipation of modern political insights, albeit one whose thought might help temper certain of its excesses. Nowhere do we get the sense that modern conceptions of the common good, be they conservative or liberal, are diametrically opposed to that of Aquinas.

If O'Meara's book does not quite fulfill the twofold task, this is sobering testimony to how difficult that accomplishment is. But O'Meara is right. We must do both. We cannot settle for less.

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History of Vatican II, vol. 2, *Formation of the Council's Identity, October 1962-September 1963*. Edited by GIUSEPPE ALBERIGO and JOSEPH A. KOMONCHAK. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1997. Pp. 654. $80.00 (cloth). ISBN 1-57075-147-1.

I have previously written an extended reflection on the first volume of this series under the title "Vatican II as a Program in Applied Philosophy" *(The Modern Schoolman* 75:4 [May. 1998] 315-27). Even though the council is a

religious event, I agree with Rocco Buttiglione's statement: "To interpret the Council is par excellence to do the work of Christian *philosophy.* But that does not imply an effort only of *aggiornamento* of Christian culture but much more progress in the general self-understanding of man, a step forward in the *philosophical consciousness of all humanity"* (emphasis added). However, as Alberigo makes clear, any discernment of the metamorphosis that took place in the ecclesial consciousness at Vatican II is no easy matter.

In introducing this second volume Alberigo points out that the historiographical and literary norms shaping the first volume had to be radically changed for this second one. The work of the central and preparatory commissions (1959-62), described in volume 1, organized the preconciliar schemata along generally accepted neo-Scholastic (conceptualistic) lines. This second volume, however, narrates the maelstrom of the bishops' abreaction to such unimaginative thinking. One of the simpler ways to cope with this complex chaos would have been to tease out various issues from the first session's controversies and treat them thematically. The editorial board voted against this and decided to follow historical-critical method in a professional way. In this process priority has been given to the concrete development of the conciliar undertaking in all its twists and turns. The editors have made every effort to move beyond mere chronicle in order to achieve a multidimensional understanding of the conciliar event at its various levels.

Let it be known from the start that the crux of this investigation is the council as *event.* The Resurrection of Christ, Pentecost, and the explosion of the atomic bomb are all *events,* spectacular change-agents that have irrupted into human reality and existence in a largely unanticipated way; it sometimes takes years, even centuries, to gain an insight into their authentic meaning and implications. The basic thesis of this book's editorial board is that only present-day historical-critical research can reveal Vatican II in depth as an *event:* that is, a great existential change-agent for the Catholic Church. In such a context to equate the council with its corpus of texts not only impoverishes the hermeneutics of these texts but forecloses any authentic knowledge of Vatican II as a journey whereby the assembly gained its self-identity. In Alberigo's opinion the really paradigmatic events (i.e., Vatican II's "New Pentecost") took place in the council's first session and its 1963 intersession, and these are the topic of this second volume.

The ten chapters of this book have been written by seven authors. (1) Andrea Riccardi (Rome): I. "The Tumultuous Opening Days of the Council." (2) Gerald Fogarty (Charlottesville): II. "The Council Gets Under-Way." (3) Mathus Lamberigts (Leuven): III. "The Liturgy Debates" and VI. "The Discussion of the Modern Media." (4) Hilari Raguer (Montserrat): IV. "An Initial Profile of the Assembly."(5) Giuseppe Ruggieri (Catania): V. "The First Doctrinal Clash" and VII. "Beyond an Ecclesiology of Polemics: The Debate on the Church." (6) Jan Grootaers (Leuven): VIII. "The Drama Continues Between the Acts: The 'Second Preparation' and Its Opponents," and IX. "Ebb and Flow Between Two Seasons." (7) Giuseppe Alberigo (Bologna): Preface and X. "The

Conciliar Experience: 'Learning on Their Own'." The book is completed by a fulsome Index of Names and Index of Subjects.

It would be rather futile in such a short review as this to try to summarize the contents of the above chapters. Suffice to say, they are all competently researched and written. However complex these chapters may be, certain "red threads" run through them like woof to warp. It is only in the last chapter, as in some detective story, that Alberigo unravels the underlying plot. The broad scenario shapes up like this. The pre-Vatican II Church, ghettoized by modern thought and culture, had become introverted and self-absorbed. Its authoritarianism and outmoded Scholasticism not only choked off large elements of creativity but also magnified the ecclesial self-identity at the cost of aggravating separations and contrasts. In the popular mind (as propounded mainly by intellectuals of Northern Europe) John XXIII called the council to remedy such problems and open the Church to the "new horizons" of the modern world. As a result of the confrontations provoked early in the council by Cardinals Frings and Lienart, a *new freedom of action-the* primordial *event* of the council-was enjoyed by the bishops in developing their conciliar self-identity and expression. The way, it seemed, had been opened for a radical and apparently unconditioned reshuffling of the "certainties" grounding the preparation for Vatican II. In this new climate the movements that irrupted before the council unexpectedly became the lode-stars of renewal. The liturgical movement, ecumenism, *ressourcement,* the return to the Bible-movements often suspect and only tolerated in previous years-exploded in conciliar reflections like chain-reaction events out of the primordial event of the bishops' newfound freedom of action.

Emphasizing *event* like this leads us into a religious "world" where charismatic dynamisms-under the guidance of the Holy Spirit-communicate a "fuller" doctrinal attunement superior to any later verbal formulations. This is an early case of an emotive orthopraxis taking precedence over a conceptualistic type of orthodoxy. Alberigo offers an enlightening example of the implications of such a situation:

> Some [bishops] had perhaps not been entirely aware of the doctrinal significance of some crucial passages in the schema on the liturgy (the liturgical celebration as "source and summit" of the Church; the central place of the local church; the importance of episcopal conferences; the equal emphasis placed on the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the Eucharist), yet these were gains that, as would be seen later on, constituted meaningful guidelines for ecclesiology and had the potential to condition all the subsequent work of the Council.

Inasmuch as the introduction to the liturgy schema stated that the document did not intend to issue dogmatic definitions but gave priority to the renewal of the liturgical life as such, apart from any theological debates, it seems somewhat odd that such significant doctrinal implications are so readily

discerned embedded in essentially pastoral formulations. No doubt Alberigo would here appeal to *"Lex orandi, lex credendi."* However, even today the great, unresolved question of Vatican II is, how are significant *doctrinal* tenets or shifts generated out of the matrix of an essentially *pastoral* council?

On the assumption that such is the case, Alberigo recognizes that the logic of the situation caused the bishops no small dilemma. At Vatican II they were faced with some daunting challenges: for example, how to transcend the old Scholastic anthropology, how to reintegrate pneumatology into ecclesiology, how to get beyond the Church-State problematic of the past, and how to promote the unity of Christians without uniformism or "return." The past supremacy of Scholastic theology had been so oppressive as to hamper any creative efforts to cope innovatively with such problems. As a result, Vatican II was not able to draw upon preexisting and mature doctrinal statements. One has the impression that during the 1962-65 period the bishops found themselves having to address new problems or new perspectives on old problems as a "work in progress." This accounts in some degree for the widespread opinion that the council's documents are more a springboard into the future than anything chiseled in granite. In such an environment there tends to be a much greater reliance on the human sciences to read the signs of the times accurately. All of these factors tend to fit or accommodate the Church to our modern age of worldwide cultural and intellectual pluralism.

What are the implications of this radical adjustment to contemporary modernism? Modernism, as I view it here, is related to five ideas (cf. William R. Everdell, *The First Moderns* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997], 347). (1) There is embedded in every system for arriving at truth a recursiveness or self-reference that automatically undermines the consistency of the system. (2) Objectivity, the possibility of mutual agreement on "reality," gets no closer to truth than its contrary, a radical subjectivity bordering on solipsism. (3) Every truth implies the subjective perspective from which it was derived and no one of these perspectives is privileged. (4) Any "objective" truths there are to be found are inductive in the extreme, seeming all to lie in statistical regularities. All of the above ideas derive from (5) the assumption of ontological discontinuity-of atoms and void. If we may assume the hypothesis of our traditional Catholic beliefs for a moment, all of these problems exist outside the Church as do such global issues of war and peace, the imbalances of world poverty, and widespread moral indifference. My own research convinces me that John XXIII called a *pastoral,* not a doctrinal, council to confront such world problems in an efficacious way. It is somewhat ironic that the bishops grappled with the renewal of the world and humanity by a massive program of religious introversion such as it has been described in this essay. Possibly our understanding of the council needs much more rethinking than offered thus far.

Whatever may be my reservations about the hermeneutics of the council presented in this volume, I wish to endorse it wholeheartedly as a much-needed

academic reflection on a watershed event in the Catholic Church. At the same time I look forward eagerly to volume 3 where John XXIII's council becomes that of Paul VI. My own research on Vatican II has given me an enhanced appreciation of Paul Vi's understanding and monitoring of the council's religious dynamics. He understood the epistemological techniques whereby a pastoral vision of a new humanity was being constituted by the council. It is interesting to note that there is no science in any modern sense employed in the council's style of reflection and analysis. This is a quite significant point in terms of the dominant phenomenological philosophy in Northern Europe. The new strategic vision is based on the Church's religious appreciation of the Whole Christ as the Whole Man. As embodying a *concrete universal,* this vision of a renewed humanity transfigured by the Glorified Christ projects an image of the new People of God as the global Good Samaritan ministering to the wounds of present-day mankind. It is this type of ecclesial self-identity, rather than that projected for the bishops by this volume, that displays Buttiglione's important insight into the council's "step forward in the philosophical consciousness of all humanity." I hope this type of catalytic notional exchange in the future volumes of this series will stimulate the excitement of anticipation and satisfying enjoyment to be had from research into the nature of the Second Vatican Council.

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Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas. By JANA.AERTSEN.Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996. Pp. 454. $152.50 (cloth). ISBN 90-04-10585-9.

The title of Jan Aertsen's *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas* does not quite convey the ambition of this book. In the first place, Aertsen's book offers us yet another hermeneutical key to the thought of Aquinas, to be added to the ranks of such twentieth-century themes as analogy, participation, and the primacy of *esse.* Aertsen wants to show that Thomas's doctrine of the transcendentals is foundational for his thought. In so doing, he means both to fill a lacuna in Thomistic scholarship and to rescue the medieval doctrine and its name from Kantian appropriations and misinterpretations. The book's second ambition is to show that medieval philosophy is distinguished by a transcendental way of thought absent in antiquity and

modernity. Aertsen offers this conception of medieval philosophy as a correction of Gilson's existential medievalism, the Analytic school's linguistic medievalism, and Alain de Liber's ethical medievalism, all three of which his transcendental conception seeks to incorporate.

In his introduction, Aertsen announces that he wants to show that "philosophy in the Middle Ages expresses itself as a way of thought which can be called 'transcendental'" (xi) in answer to the ever-pressing question, what is philosophy in the Middle Ages? He takes Thomas as a representative of medieval thought and his metaphysics as one example of medieval transcendental thought. He criticizes Gilson's notion of "Christian philosophy" for not doing justice, on the one hand, to the historical pluriformity of medieval thought, which includes both alternatives to and criticisms of the metaphysics of being, and, on the other hand, to the independence ascribed by Thomas to philosophy both in method and in principle, notwithstanding the thoroughly theological nature of his own overall synthesis. Aertsen criticizes the new medievalism of the *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (1982) for the logico-semantic skew that results from its editorial criterion of philosophical recognizability to the modern (Analytic) mind. He criticizes De Libera for confining the medieval experience of human intellectuality to the faculty of arts and for introducing a separation between philosophy and Christian faith alien to the age.

Aertsen prepares the way for his own representation of medieval philosophy as transcendental thought by citing ego-statements of Bonaventure, Aquinas, Scotus, and Eckhart on the resolution of the intellect's concepts to *prima, communia,* or *transcendentia.* He then makes an ego-statement of his own: "The doctrine of the *transcendentia,* among which 'being,' 'one,' 'true' and 'good' are reckoned, is not just another doctrine alongside many others, for it concerns what is the first and the foundation of thought. Over time, my conviction has grown that medieval philosophy can be regarded as a way of transcendental thought, as a *scientia transcendens"* (19). Aertsen maintains that the object of medieval philosophy is the result of a modern hermeneutical intervention which wrests texts from their contexts, and he proposes epistemological reduction as the proper viewpoint for the reconstruction of a medieval philospohy. He sees in the medievals' reduction of human thought to self-evident transcendental concepts their answer to the challenge posed to Christian theology by Aristotle's comprehensive philosophical explanation of reality. In their doctrines of the transcendentals they sought to give a proper foundation to philosophy by uncovering "the conditions for all thought and the basis of philosophical reflection" (20).

One might wonder whether Aertsen's epistemological medievalism has escaped the sort of skew for which he criticizes Analytic interpreters of medieval philosophy, namely the hermeneutic criterion of "philosophical recognizability to the modern mind," where the minds at issue are Kantian. However, Aertsen is insistent on the difference between Kantian and medieval

transcendental thought. The former is transcendental-logical and concerned with the a priori constitution of objects of cognition, whereas the latter concerns the primary attributes of being that *run through* all the categories of being and the concepts of which arise a posteriori in the intellectual apprehension of sensible objects of experience. Against transcendental Thomism, Aertsen emphasizes that for Thomas the knowledge of being is not an a priori condition or formal category of the intellect, but rather a relation to being that is potential and receptive. Against L. Honnefelder's Scotistic critique of Thomas, he argues that Thomas's account of this relation is sufficient to ground a transcendental openness of the human intellect to being in general and to God as the cause of all being.

Aertsen employs three contexts for his interpretation of Thomas's doctrine of the transcendentals: the medieval conception and development of the doctrine, the historical sources that occasioned this medieval innovation, and a systematic framework ofThomas's own thought. In chapter 1, Aertsen locates the beginning of the doctrine of the transcendentals in Philip the Chancellor's *Summa de bona* (ca. 1225-28). Philip begins, "The understanding of questions is extracted from the commonness of principles," without which "the rest falls into darkness." Aertsen takes this as expressive of Philip's intention to go into the ground of thought, motivated by a desire to defend the transcendentality of the good against the Manichean dualism of the Cathari. Aertsen consistently renders Philip's account of the *communissima* or the *prima* as a resolution to first concepts. For the first time in the history of Western philosophy, Philip brings together the four basic notions of "being," "one," "true," and "good," and explicates their mutual relations: they are convertible according to their supposits, but differ according to their concepts; they may be ordered according to the notion of indivision; and they are founded on the threefold causality of God's creative action. Alexander of Hales takes over Philip's sketch of the transcendentals and elaborates a threefold systematization of them according to three orders of being: an ontological determination of being in its own domain, a theological determination of being in relation to divine causality, and an anthropological determination of being in relation to man. Albert the Great elaborates two systematizations, an ontological one based on the dual act of an entity's form (i.e., form both gives being and determines matter), and a theological one based on the creative causality of God. The problem that emerges from this early history of the transcendentals is to say what the other transcendentals positively "add" to "being" if they are at once convertible but not synonymous with it. This is the state of the question when Thomas takes it up and begins what Aertsen calls a new phase of transcendental thought.

In chapter 2, Aertsen gives an interpretation of Thomas's general account of the transcendentals in terms of three basic texts-I *Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3; *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1; and *De Verit.*, q. 21, a. 1-and in terms of three basic issues-the resolution into something first, the idea of being as the first known, and the problem of the addition. Of the three basic texts, *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1 is central

to Aertsen's epistemological reading of Thomas's general doctrine, as the other two basic texts do not include any resolution of human knowledge to its foundation. When Thomas raises the question in *De Verit.,* q. 1, a. 1, "What is truth?," and approaches it with the assertion, "Just as in demonstrable matters a reduction must be made to principles known to the intellect *per se,* so likewise in investigating what something is *[quid est],"* Aertsen sees him as inquiring into the conditions for all inquiry into what something is (74). "This approach could be called 'transcendental' in the Kantian sense because according to Kant, in transcendental science the point is no longer to go forward but to go backward. Thomas's *resolutio* is a going back to that first which is presupposed in all knowledge" (79).

According to Aertsen, *De Verit.,* q. 1, a. 1 shows that for Thomas what is first is a conception of being: "That which the intellect first conceives, as best known, and into which it resolves all its conceptions, is being *[ens]."* Aertsen does not say much about what this conception consists in, except to argue against existential Thomism that the concept of being is attained first of all in simple apprehension and that it is conceived of immediately upon the human intellect's beginning to act. In his close analysis of the ensuing text, he does not distinguish in translation between *ens* and *esse,* so that he does not make anything of Thomas's calling an Aristotelian category a *modus essendi* and a transcendental a *modus entis.* In any case, Aertsen emphasizes that the medieval transcendentals are called such because they transcend the Aristotelian categories in the direction of being in general, that is, because they run through all of them and are common to them. What is distinctive in Thomas's account is his argument that being is primary because it is first known and best known and because nothing else can be conceived without it. Aertsen remarks, "Being is so familiar to us that it usually remains hidden to us that human knowledge is principally a conception of being. Only in reflexive analysis, in the *resolutio,* does it become clear that 'without being nothing can be apprehended by the intellect"' (84).

Aertsen makes much of the fact that in *De Verit.,* q. 1, a. 1 Thomas gives an account of the transcendentals *verum* and *bonum* relative to the human soul-to intellect and will respectively-and so assigns a "special place" to man among other beings in the world. "This acknowledgment," Aertsen suggests, "resembles Heidegger's thesis of the priority of *Dasein* over all other beings. Heidegger actually refers to Thomas's exposition" (105). Besides stressing the "noetic" character of Thomas's *resolutio* in this text, Aertsen emphasizes that in none of the basic texts is there is a theological grounding of the transcendentals, as there was in Thomas's predecessors. Lastly, Thomas's transcendental explication of being in terms of *modes* that add determinations in concept rather than in reality is his distinctive solution to the "problem of the addition" he inherited from Albert.

In chapter 3, Aertsen takes up the theme of the relation of the doctrine of the transcendentals to metaphysics in general. He argues that Thomas

transforms the concept of metaphysics from a theological conception based on transmateriality to an ontological conception based on commonness. For Thomas, first philosophy is transcendental in that it concerns being and its properties, rather than transcendent divine being. God enters into the science of metaphysics at the end, as the cause of its subject. The method of the science is twofold: a *resolutio secundum rationem* to intrinsic forms or principles, and a *resolutio secundum rem* to extrinsic causes. This twofold resolution leads to a twofold commonness: commoness by predication and commonness by causality. There is, moreover, a Thomistic resolution of the first principle of demonstration to the concept of being, as well as a parallel resolution of the first principle of practical reason to the concept of the good.

As the *maxime primum,* being is Thomas's Archimedean point, that is, the condition of the possibility of cognition and science. Although Aertsen is concerned to emphasize against Kantian interpretations of Thomas that his transcendental *resolutio* is concerned with the things themselves and not with logical concepts, with modes of being and not with modes of expression, it is not always clear that Aertsen's nearly exclusive reading of Thomas's expositions in terms of a cognitive firstness does not capitulate somewhat to modern transcendental thought. After all, as Thomas says in *De Verit.,* q. 1, a. *1,* the name *ens* is taken from the *actus essendi,* and presumably the primacy of this *actus essendi* in and for the being has something to do with the priority of the concept *ens* for the human intellect. Moreover, it is by no means clear whether the first conception of the intellect is a concept of "a being" or of "being in general," of *ens particulare* or *ens universale,* an important distinction in *De Verit.,* q. 21, a. 1, one of Aertsen's three basic texts. In any case, Aertsen states clearly that he understands Thomas's metaphysics to be a transcendental consideration of each thing that resolves it into that which is and its being *(id quod est* and *esse),* and as a second beginning of metaphysics that transcends the Aristotelian accounts of substance and the categories.

Equipped with the hermeneutic framework sketched above, Aertsen goes on in the next five chapters systematically to explicate five transcendentals: *ens, unum, verum, bonum,* and *pulchrum.* Although Aertsen notes that Thomas is unique among his contemporaries for naming *res* and *aliquid* as transcendentals, and that half of the times that Thomas uses the word *transcendentia* it is in connection with *multitudo,* these notions do not receive a separate treatment in the book or in the conclusion. Rather, Aertsen treats *res* with *ens* (ch. 4), and *aliquid* and *multitudo* with *unum* (ch. 5). Although *pulchrum* receives its own chapter, Aertsen concludes that it is but a specification of *bonum* and not a proper transcendental, *pace* more than one prominent Thomist. The book's ninth chapter deals with the transcendentals in theology, and in particular the transcendentals as divine names and the divine foundation of the transcendentals. The concluding chapter summarizes well the book's contents and conclusions.

In the course of his explications and commentary Aertsen gives much attention to the historical sources for Thomas's reflection. He considers Thomas's use of Aristotle's remarks on being and the one in *Metaphysics* 4.2, on being and the true in *Metaphysics* 2.1, and on being and the good in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.6. He shows Thomas's debt to Avicenna's discussions of the notion of *scientia* and the subject of metaphysics, the primary notions or "seeds" of scientific knowledge, the relation of being and the one, and his transcendental notion of "thing." He also explores the profound influence on Thomas of Boethius's axiomatic treatment of the question whether things are good by substance or by participation. Lastly, he points to the influence of Dionysius, whose discussion of the order of the divine names provided Thomas with the context of his first discussion of the transcendentals in I *Sent.,* d. 8, q. 1, a. 3.

For Aertsen, the theory of the transcendentals reveals the properly philosophical dimension of medieval thought. It constitutes an innovation in the history of philosophy and a second beginning of metaphysics. The most original aspect of Thomas's doctrine is its anthropological motif, namely the account in *De Verit.,* q. 1, a. 1 of the good and the true in relation to the human soul rather than to God. "When the *transcendentia* are the *prima* of human intellectual knowledge, and the first intelligible are *communia,* the distinctive mark of human beings must consist in their transcendental openness" (431). Aertsen emphasizes this anthropological perspective to the prejudice of Thomas's accounts of ontological truth in the rest of *De Verit.,* q. 1, accounts in terms of a twofold relation of things to the divine as well as to created intellect; Aertsen gives attention to this in the latter part of chapter 6 on *verum* but it is otherwise absent from the book, including the conclusion. In any case, Aertsen argues that Thomas's doctrine of the transcendentals metaphysically grounds his theories of knowledge, morality, and divine causality. His effort to show that the transcendental way of thought is foundational for Aquinas's philosophy is an impressiveand informative venture not to be passed over by any serious student of Thomas, metaphysics, or the history of philosophy.

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Walking with Faith: New Perspectives on the Sources and Shaping of Catholic Moral Life. By WALTER}.Woons. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1998. Pp. xvi + 528. $39.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8146-5824-5.

This book's primary concern is "moral life in the faith community" (xii). It is an ambitious work, one that seeks "to illuminate the sources of moral life in faith, show how moral life in the Church has developed over the centuries, and encourage a more integral, comprehensive view" (xv). As such, it is a welcome addition to the mounting body of literature that demonstrates the ongoing historical interplay of the Christian faith with the ethical conduct of believers and their official worship from the pews and in the sanctuary.

The author shows particular interest in the temporal, contemporary, and transcendent factors that went into the shaping of Catholic moral life. He orders his presentation in a chronological sequence of eleven balanced and well-written chapters. He reflects on the scriptural, historical, intellectual, and liturgical dimensions of this important walk with faith and provides a helpful summary of his findings in the closing Epilogue.

The book has many strengths, not the least of which is the author's competent and judicious use of the principle of correlation, the historiographical assumption that a complex web of interrelated sociological and cultural factors must be taken in account when examining the way ideas arise, develop, and function through time. It is exceedingly difficult to study any particular facet of Church life in this manner for any single historical period, let alone the entire span of its existence. Although his selection and presentation of the material is not beyond reproach (as will soon become evident), the author maintains a largely convincing level of scholarly discourse that conveys not only a sense of the great complexity of factors which must be taken into account when examining the relationship between morality and faith in the Church's life, but also a sensitivity to the continuities and discontinuities that such an organic relationship necessarily entails. For this reason alone, the book can be read with interest and to great benefit. While it does not qualify as a "history" of moral theology as such (nor does it purport to be), the perspectives it offers into the shaping of Catholic moral life-both historical and otherwise-will need to be examined and reckoned with by all future historians of Catholic moral theology. This reader was also impressed with the methodological consistency with which the author constructs his chapters (enabling less expert readers to navigate the often turbulent waters of the Church's history with a relative degree of calm), his ability to find common threads in the Church's doctrinal and moral teachings (some of which have not been explicitly adverted to until now), and his balanced integration of the history of Christianity with the general history of Western civilization (especially in chapters 9 through 11, where he maps out the Church's response to the modern Western outlook). If that is not enough, his "Reflections" at the end of each chapter summarize the salient points regarding the impact of the

faith on the Church's moral life and offer many astute insights into why the Church's teaching developed the way it did.

The author's penchant for method and his high level of scholarly discourse, however, do not dispel a number of serious concerns resulting from certain lacunae in his historical presentation. Although this is to be half-expected in a large synthetic work of this kind (it would be virtually impossible to investigate *every* instance in the Church's life where the faith has contributed to a deeper understanding of the believer's moral responsibilities), the number and scope of the author's omissions tend to weaken and, at times, even blemish this otherwise outstanding effort of historical inquiry.

It seems strange, for example, that the author would spend so much time in chapters 1 and 2 outlining the relationship between faith, moral conduct, and worship in the Old and New Testaments and say hardly anything at all about the evolution of the canon of Scripture itself, that is, how *these* particular texts became a part of the Christian Scriptures and why others were deliberately excluded. Questions pertaining to canonicity bear directly on the faith and worship of the believing community, highlight the evolution of the structures of authority in early Christianity, and have important consequences for the community's understanding of acceptable moral behavior. By failing to treat this topic at any great length, the author misses an important opportunity to demonstrate his thesis on one of the foundational levels of early Church history.

At various times in his presentation, the author discusses the role heresy (and orthodox reactions to it) played in the development of the Church's faith (e.g., 100-103, 123-26, 157-59), but misses yet another opportunity to spell out the far-reaching influence such reactions had on the worship and moral vision of the believing community. The Church's reaction to Arianism is particularly relevant in this regard. Nicea's depiction of Christ as a single divine person with two natures successfully countered on a dogmatic level the Arian threat of Christ's creaturely or only semi-divine status. This same threat was countered liturgically, however, by emphasizing the *divinity* of Christ and then de-emphasizing anything that might be seen as having Arian overtones. The eventual result was the separation of the sanctuary from the congregation, the turning around of the altar, and the priest celebrating with his back to the people. Christ became increasingly seen as the divine Pantocrator and devotion to the saints filled the void left by the liturgy's neglect of Christ's humanity. The influence of this neglect in the popular piety and moral outlook of the period is hardly referred to by the author.

On another front, the author admits the allegorizing tendencies in the biblical interpretation of the patristic period (in Ambrose, Augustine, and elsewhere), but fails to develop the underlying philosophical principles supporting this approach or to refer in any great detail to the enormous impact it had on succeeding centuries. When read in its appropriate historical context, the allegorical interpretation of the Bible ("Christian allegoresis," as it is also

termed) reveals itself as one of the dominant ways in which theologians of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages integrated their understanding of history, dogma, morality, and spirituality with the dramatic movements of the Christian narrative. The fourfold sense of Scripture (i.e., the literal, the allegorical, the moral or tropological, and the anagogical) preserved for them a deep sense of the richness of God's revelation to humanity and was able to sustain a unified vision of sacred doctrine. The allegorizing tendency in the liturgy during the latter part of this period can be understood as a natural extension of this vision and as yet another example of how the Church sought to sustain an integrated vision of faith, life, and worship.

In chapter 7, the author mentions the importance of Anselm of Canterbury's satisfaction model of redemption for theology (288-93), but does not say much about the impact this theory had on the moral life and worship of the Church. By replacing the ransom model, which had been dominant in the preceding centuries, the satisfaction model initiated a shift in Christian spirituality that can best be described as a movement from a baptismal spirituality to a penitential-Eucharistic one. This shift came about by the renewed emphasis Anselm's model gave to the suffering and death of Christ (and thus to his humanity). The directives of Lateran IV (1215) for yearly confession and communion during Easter time can be traced to this paradigmatic shift in the Church's understanding of the doctrine of redemption. If the mendicant orders such as the Franciscans and the Dominicans were instrumental in implementing these directives for the Church, Anselm's refutation of the ransom model and his proposal that, in Christ the God-Man, the infinite demands of God were satisfied by his infinite mercy was a major catalyst in the rise of this fundamental shift in Church life and worship.

It is within the context of the development of the doctrine of redemption that the author's reflections in chapter 6 on the impact of Peter Abelard's *Scito te ipsum* need to be examined (256-67). There can be little doubt that Abelard's ethics played an important role in giving a "subjective turn" to the Church's developing understanding of the sacrament of reconciliation. This influential role, however, needs to be tempered by the fact that Abelard's subjective model of redemption which supports it (and which rejected both the ransom model of the Fathers *and* the satisfaction model of Anselm) was judged not comprehensive enough to stand alone and could be invoked only in an ancillary way. When taken together with the inadequacies of Abelard's stance on the moral indifference of external acts, the combined effect of the condemnations of Soissons (1121) and Sens (1140), and the subsequent hesitation by later Scholastic theologians such as Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure to refer to him explicitly in their texts, one has to wonder, first, if Abelard's influence on the development of sacramental penance was as pervasive as the author makes it out to be and, second, how such a conclusion can be verified through a critical examination of the relevant texts. For this reason, it might have been better for the author to have depicted Abelard more as an early Scholastic thinker whose fundamental insights into the theology of forgiveness

were accepted by a small group of followers, reacted against by others, tempered by still others, and, in time, quietly refined by later Scholastic thinkers.

The author's presentation of the intellectual thought of the high Middle Ages in chapters 7 and 8 also leave something to be desired. For one thing, he says very little about the impact of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* on theological thought and pedagogy from early history of the universities up to the Council of Trent (1545-63). To become a master of sacred doctrine, it was necessary for the university student to write a detailed commentary on all four books of this influential work. The impact of this work on Catholic faith, morality, and worship cannot be underestimated and deserves much more than the mere passing mention given it in the book (cf. 300, 308). The author's treatment of the theology of Thomas Aquinas (cf. 308-20), moreover, is limited mainly to the *Summa Theologiae* and gives little indication of the evolution in Thomas's thinking during his long career as a university professor in Paris and Naples and as a lector in the Dominican order's Roman Province. Even within the treatment of the *Summa*, little is said about Thomas's understanding of the basic structures of moral cognition and how he uses these structures to create a synthesis between a morality of law and a morality of virtue. As far as the penitential literature is concerned, the author fails to bring out the already well-documented continuity between the early medieval penitentials and the *summa confessorum* of the high and late Middle Ages (cf. 203-5, 356-60). This failure shows that, at least this instance, the author is more concerned with depicting the history of the Church's penitential practice in terms of "periods" or "stages" rather than of ongoing transitions.

Space does not permit pointing out the other lacunae which diminish the work's claim to be a comprehensive treatment of moral life in the Catholic faith community. This reviewer, however, cannot conclude without first pointing out the near-total absence in chapters 10 and 11, of the life, thought, and impact of St. Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787) and the tradition of moral theology he proposed and championed. What is disturbing about this particular omission is that St. Alphonsus, a doctor of the Church and the patron saint of moral theologians and confessors, demonstrates time and again in his more than one hundred works how the life of faith impacts upon the moral life of the Christian believer. His *Theologia Moralis*, which underwent nine editions in his own lifetime, was developed largely out of his own pastoral experience, and sought to present the abundance of Christ's redemption to the poor and those distanced from the Church. Within the largely casuistic mind-set that was prevalent in his day, he developed a system of equiprobablism to demonstrate when and where freedom had priority over the law and how conflicting moral traditions in the Church could be digested, evaluated, and refined for the benefit of the believing community. Not to mention the enormous impact his moral theology had throughout the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and for much of the twentieth century, but to bury him in an obscure footnote on page 454, cannot possibly serve the author's goals of providing a comprehensive historical presentation of moral life in the faith community.

These omissions in the author's presentation are pointed out not to denigrate his powers of synthesis (which are substantial), or to deflate the relevance of his own penetrating insights into Christianity's walk in faith through the last twenty centuries (which are themselves highly creative), but to point out the difficulties involved in writing a truly comprehensive account of the developing moral outlook of the believing community, the Church. Any attempt to write such an account must, of necessity, be selective. The present work is no exception. For this reason, those interested in getting a better idea of "the bigger picture," as the author puts it (505), would do well to read this work in the light of others of similar scope and purpose, most notably Louis Vereecke's *De Guillaume d'Ockham à saint Alphonse de Liguori* (1986); John Mahoney's *The Making of Moral Theology* (1987); John Gallagher's *Time Past, Time Future* (1990); and Servais Pinckaers's *The Sources of Christian Ethics* (Eng. trans. 1995). While these works have their own weaknesses, are selective in their own right, and are not as comprehensive in scope, they will help to fill in some of the gaps left by the present work and, in some instances, go much further

This book is worthy of notice and deserves to be read by a variety of audiences: academic, pastoral, even popular. It helps the reader move from a general reading of the history of Western Christianity to a more focused look at how that same history has influenced some of the broadest themes of the Church's theological vision. It would serve as a useful historical point of departure for courses in the Christian faith and moral life offered in colleges, seminaries, and, if the above precautions are taken into account, even as introductory material for doctoral level courses.

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Christians among the Virtues: Theological Conversations with Ancient and Modern Ethics. By STANLEY HAUERWAS and CHARLES PINCHES. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997. Pp. xvii + 230. $29.95 (cloth), $16.95 (paper). ISBN 0-268-00817-5 (cloth), 0-268-00819-1 (paper).

Hauerwas and Pinches collaborate in this engaging series of essays, developing further a number of themes for which the former is now widely recognized. The notions of "narrative," "character," and "community" are consistently drawn upon throughout the text; nonetheless the reflections

offered here mark an advance in the conversation, focusing more specifically on the concept of "friendship" as treated in both Aristotle and Aquinas.

Aquinas's treatment of our "friendship with God," or charity, becomes the authors' central point of departure as it is this notion, they argue, that sets Christian ethics apart from both Aristotelianism and other contemporary traditions of modern liberal (read: Enlightenment) moralities. In this sense they display their indebtedness to the efforts of Paul Wadell who, among others, has contributed to the revitalization of the study of charity in Thomistic ethics.

The text is divided into three major sections, the first of which is dedicated to a careful reading of Aristotle's account of the virtues in the *Nicomachaean Ethics.* Among the more provocative insights of this section are the authors' reflections on the "magnanimous man" in Aristotle's ethics. The "magnanimous" person is identified not so much through a painstaking analysis of metaphysical niceties and teleological considerations as through an appropriation of the public, communal understanding of what constitutes human excellence. An Aristotelian discernment of the life of virtue, the authors contend, occurs within the life of a *polis* and among the common bonds of friendship. By focusing on this political dimension of moral reflection Hauerwas and Pinches open the way to a genuine consideration of the importance of friendship and community and the narratives that inform them in the life of moral reasoning. This signals, in their estimation, an implicit recognition of the importance not so much of "human nature" and other metaphysical notions as the community in which one's moral reflections take shape. "Reading Aristotle this way makes it easier for Christians to remember that the moral life does not derive from some general conception of the good, nor even from an analysis of those skills or excellences that allegedly allow human nature to flourish" (29). Scholars familiar with Hauerwas's work in the area of narrative ethics will recognize a renewed defense of the primacy of community and historical experience in the formation of moral character.

In the last part of the first section the authors turn their attention to the notion of friendship as treated in Aristotle, noting especially the distinctive difference between Aristotelianism and Christianity on the significance of human suffering. In contrast to Aristotle's account in which the magnanimous man is expected to insulate his friends from his own misfortunes and bear his suffering alone, the Christian (in imitation of Christ) sees the happy life as involving being drawn to the suffering of others and being willing to bear one another's burdens. The contrasts developed in this section are striking and particularly well developed.

The second section of the book addresses the works of contemporary virtue theorists, especially Alasdair Macintyre, Martha Nussbaum, and John Casey. Scholars conversant with these figures will find much in this section to grapple with. Of particular interest is the authors' criticism of Casey's work, for one begins to get a better insight into the kinds of presuppositions operating in Hauerwas's and Pinches's own minds.

In the third section, the authors take up an analysis of various virtues normally associated with the Christian life: prudence, hope, obedience, courage, and patience. These last essays could just as easily be understood to be meditations on the primacy of the virtue of charity, or the primacy of God's befriending us in Jesus. Indeed, while the initial chapters speak of Aristotle's and Aquinas's treatments of human friendship specifically, these later chapters drift from these considerations and allow the theological concept of charity to carry the weight of the discussion. Chapter 8, on "obedience," is especially well done.

All throughout these reflections is the now familiar critique of "standard accounts of morality" in which the abstract formulation of Enlightenment models of morality (especially Kantian) are said to be inadequate in the face of the embodied, historical character of Christian faith and living. It is not always clear, though, what precisely is the problem as the authors' critique often runs broad enough to include claims very close to the Thomistic tradition. Though Hauerwas and Pinches themselves think there is a difference here, their account of that distinction is not always played out successfully.

One of their strategies of saving Thomas from the charge of employing "formalistic and universalistic presuppositions" is to bypass much of his metaphysics, choosing instead to concentrate on his psychology and theology of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But it is open to challenge whether such an approach to Thomas would be considered adequate-notwithstanding the question as to whether formal and universal reasoning is indeed as problematic as one is led to believe. Thomas's theology of the gifts as well has his psychological portrait of human virtue is in large measure dependent upon his philosophy of nature and his theology of God. The God of the five ways *is* the God who befriends us in Jesus; such "formalistic" considerations of God and human nature are related analogously to the scriptural narratives.

The divisions the authors seem to wish to establish between these more metaphysical considerations and the lived Christian experience influences other areas of their analysis. Consider, for example, their interpretation of St. Thomas's dictum (S7h 1-11, q. 66, a. 6, ad 1) that in matters that are "above us" it is better to love them than to know them. Hauerwas and Pinches suggest that this is so because "Knowledge grasped solely by intellect (as Aquinas understands it in faith) is susceptible of a certain objectification, as here with God. By contrast, charity demands participation with what is known." (105) If I am reading them correctly, it seems clear that for Hauerwas and Pinches the intellect's penchant for "objectification" is something to be avoided. Granted that Aquinas will concur that our knowledge of God in faith is limited and may be strengthened by charity, it is not clear that his observations are rooted in any antipathy to "objectification."

One also wonders whether similar charges cannot be leveled against these newer approaches. Granted there are richer and poorer accounts of rational human nature, such that the latter seem to lack any useful resemblance to lived

human experience, could not the same be said of such notions as "community," "narrative," or even "Christian"? It is not always clear how appealing to the notion of "Christian" is much more helpful than the appeal to "rational agency" when the questions concern holy orders, the Eucharist, war, marriage, divorce, contraception, homosexuality, revelation, Scripture, and authority-in short, all of those areas of vital importance to embodied, historical Christian life. A more extensive account of the issues of authority and the "Christian life" would be very helpful. The chapter on "obedience" offers one of the most compelling beginnings.

Such questions are hardly new to scholars in these conversations. They simply affirm that Hauerwas and Pinches are to be counted among the more engaging Christian thinkers of the age.

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Monad to Man: The Concept of Progress in Evolutionary Biology. By MICHAEL RUSE. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996. Pp. 628. $49.95 (cloth). ISBN 0-674-58220-9.

No concept has caused more difficulties for the philosophy of biology than that of progress. For "progress" (from the Latin for "going *toward"* some direction) implies a goal, and goal conjures up the dread specter of teleology, that supposedly revanchist relic from the days of Aristotle and his medieval commentators. In fact much of the historiography of science in the West couches its narrative in terms of modern science's gradual weaning from teleology toward a more mechanical framework, as in the abandonment of Aristotle's "push" explanation of motion as motion toward a goal (that is, something falls because, as Aristotle once said, it is seeking its natural place) in favor of Newton's "pull" model of bodies moving toward other objects by virtue of their mutual gravitational attraction operating by a mechanical law that knows nothing of goals or "natural" places for objects.

Inside this narratology Darwin takes pride of place, for according to the standard interpretation Darwin freed the world of biology from William Paley's (and Aristotle's) explanation for organs and organisms as obvious objects of design in favor of his theory of *natural* selection: a process that seems designed (as the word "selection" implies) but is in fact blind and unthinking (in contrast with the "artificial" selection of professional breeders who breed with an end in mind).

An everyone knows, Darwin's hypothesis revolutionized not just the world of biology but also that of culture at large. However, there is an irony to his wider influence: for to the extent that one denies any role for teleology in evolution, the less applicable the theory is to other philosophical issues (especially ethical ones, but also extending to other areas), whereas if evolution displays a record of increasing progress in its history of increased complexification, then one is able that much more easily to apply that record to human behavior by extrapolating that directedness into the future.

This is because, however blind evolution might be, man is certainly an animal who designs things all the time (in fact, so ubiquitous is the human species' design-making habit that it misled Paley to apply it everywhere). Therefore, if evolution is as blind as many theorists hold, then it cannot by definition be of much use in helping to guide the goal-determined behavior of humans, especially in their ethics, an inherently teleologically determined form of reflecting and behaving. But if evolution does have a goal "in mind," so to say, then the way is at least open to using that extrapolated goal as an end in view for determining our own undeniably goal-driven activities.

This fusion of the notion of progress with applied Darwinism is strikingly obvious in the case of the career of social Darwinism, the failed attempt to base ethics on Darwinian principles. For without the notion that evolution is *going somewhere,* there was no way to generate a norm for judgment out of the zigzagging that would otherwise characterize evolutionary tracks. As is well known, this initial foray of evolutionary theorists to generate an evolutionary ethic, now called social Darwinism, ended in a total failure. This collapse of social Darwinism as an influential option in political economy and ethics is usually attributed to the rise of Progressive politics in England and America, which eventually succeeded in mitigating some of the worst features of laissez-faire capitalism (whose apologists, like John D. Rockefeller, were strong advocates of social Darwinism; indeed Darwin only came to his theory of natural selection after reading Malthus's *Essay on Population,* itself one of the classics of apologetics for laissez-faire capitalism, so that in a sense Rockefeller was merely returning the favor).

This story of how social Darwinism met its demise, however, is really not quite accurate, as emerges from Michael Ruse's fascinating tale of how the concept of progress keeps cropping up even in theorists who most loudly complain of the idea, either because of their well-earned phobia against social Darwinism (as in the case of Stephen Jay Gould) or because of their fear of bringing Aristotle in through the back door after he had been rejected at the front (as in the case of Richard Dawkins, at least in his earlier writings). As Ruse makes clear, one reason progress is hard to expel from the repertoire of biological thought is not just the obvious point that increasing complexification *is* the story of evolution, but also because of the sheer plasticity of the theory: in the second half of the nineteenth century, abolitionists and slaveholders,

socialists and capitalists, believers and atheists not only supported Darwin's theory but *appealed* to it as justification for their views!

The historiography of Darwinian theory tends to stress the support given to social Darwinism by capitalists but downplays Karl Marx's support for the theory (not to mention the large amounts of social-Darwinian elements in *Mein Kampf).* The reason for the wide-ranging appeal to Darwin by such contradictory theories is that all one has to do is to choose one's own favorite group within the species (Aryans, the proletariat, captains of industry, etc.) as the predestined favorite of evolution in the future and then seek to help that process along.

Of course that is thereby to introduce our own goals into the process, not evolution's! Moreover, the process of natural selection is so relentlessly unforgiving that any attempt to apply that same process to some hypothesized future in order to benefit the favored group leads to an "ethic" of mind-numbing criminality, as the careers of both Nazism and Communism amply testify. So really, it was Hitler and Stalin, and not so much the Progressivists of the turn of the century, who defeated social Darwinism by showing the twentieth century its real implications.

But again, as Ruse makes clear, the temptation to apply evolutionary theory in biology to ethics and philosophical anthropology cannot be that "easily" exorcised, precisely because evolutionary theorists are themselves still so ambivalent about how to place the notion of progress in their theories; and so the last decade has seen a remarkable resurgence of Darwinian theorists trying to apply Darwin's principles to human society, of which E. 0. Wilson's recent best seller *Consilience* is but the latest example and Daniel C. Dennett's *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* one of the most influential (Wilson's book was published too recently for inclusion by Ruse, but Dennett's book has been out for some time, making it puzzling why Ruse never treats Dennett or his theories-one of the few lacunae in this remarkably comprehensive book).

The largest part of this quite large book is a comprehensive treatment of the concept of progress in a vast array of evolutionary biologists and philosophical Darwinians, but perhaps its most fascinating feature is the set of interviews that comprise much of the treatment of the most recent thinkers. Both parts of the book, the historical and the topical sections, bring to the reader the same fascinating result: no matter how hard the antiteleologists try to expel the notion of purpose from their thought, this pesky notion keeps cropping up.

This is most evident in Gould, whose interview is a painful backing-and-forthing around the notion of progress-and scarcely for biological reasons, as he openly avers (502). In fact, among almost all the figures treated in this teeming book one notices how much prior ethical or political convictions determine the biology (or at least the philosophical implications of the biology). Gould might be the most obvious in his ambivalence but J.B. S. Haldane, the brilliant mathematical biologist and son of the noted Scottish physiologist J. S. Haldane, must certainly be the most oblivious: after obtaining

his undergraduate degree at Oxford, he "converted" (in his case, the word is not too strong) to Communism, supported the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War, and wrote copiously for the *Daily Worker*. But weirdest of all, this brilliant geneticist defended the Stalinist biology of T. D. Lysenko, the Soviet biologist who insisted, against all the Mendelian evidence of modern genetics and neo-Darwinism, that evolution operated by the inheritance of acquired characteristics. (Lysenkoism holds, in effect, that bodybuilders give birth to more muscle-bound babies and makes human nature that much more malleable, if only it were true, for fashioning the New Soviet Man, which is why it was so popular with Stalin.)

In perhaps the finest pages of the book, there is noted sociobiologist E. O. Wilson, whose office at Harvard is adorned with a portrait of the founding father of social Darwinism, Herbert Spencer! Nothing daunted by Marx, Rockefeller, or Hitler, Wilson is quite sure that evolution provides the key that can unlock all the mysteries that make human existence so enigmatic. Although *Consilience* appeared after Ruse's book, all of the elements of Wilson's biological reductionism are on view in Ruse's excellent *tour d'horizon* of this latest reviver of social Darwinism.

In the midst of the vast and teeming encyclopedia of biological thought it might seem to be mere cavilling to express regret that Ruse has not discussed Etienne Gilson's fine book *From Aristotle to Darwin and Back Again*, but my regret is not based on a desire to have Ruse's catalogue be even more complete than it is. Rather, my lament is because Gilson was the one who saw how much man's own goal-driven behavior *says something about the nature that selects*. Moreover, he did not assert this in the manner of Bergson or Spencer or Teilhard de Chardin, that is, by assuming a notion of progress merely by virtue of the emergence of *homo sapiens*. Like Aristotle before him, he saw human designs and human goals as but a more elaborate version of what we have inherited from nature in any case. In his recent book *Kinds of Minds* Daniel Dennett speaks of how easily we may spot an implied intentionality when we see natural processes speeded up (for example, a five-minute film of a day in a plant's life shows the plant bobbing and weaving almost like a boxer). And it is this implied intentionality that Gilson has illuminated so well:

> In nature the end, the *telos*, works as every artist would wish to be able to work: in fact, as the greatest among them do work, or even the others in moments of grace when, suddenly masters of their media, they work with the rapidity and infallible sureness of nature. Such is Mozart, composing a quartet in his head while writing down its predecessor. Such is Delacroix, painting in twenty minutes Jacob's cap and cloak on the wall of Saint-Sulpice. A technician, an artist who worked with the sureness of a spider weaving its web or a bird making its nest would be a more perfect artist than any of those that anyone has ever seen. Such is not the case. The most powerful and the most productive artists only summon from afar the ever-ready forces of nature which fashion the tree, and, through the tree, the fruit. That is

> why Aristotle says that there is more design, more good, and more beauty in the works of nature than in those of art.

Although he is a noted philosopher of biology in his own right (next to Ernst Mayr perhaps the premier philosopher of biology in the world), Ruse has given us in his latest book more history than direct philosophical reflection. But as one reads through all these biologists and thinkers as they thrash about trying to exorcise, or baptize, the notion of progress, one sighs and wonders how different things could have been if they could only have discussed the idea of progress in biology with, not against, Aristotle.

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Robert Grosseteste: On the Six Days of Creation. Translated by C. F. J. MARTIN. Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi 6 (2). New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. Pp. ix + 373. $55.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-19-726150-7.

In the decade before the great English Scholastic Robert Grosseteste received consecration as bishop of Lincoln he turned his energies increasingly to the study and teaching of theology and to learning Greek so as to read in the original the classics of the Greek Fathers and the antique philosophers, especially Aristotle. The combination of these activities yielded, at the very end of this period, between 1232 and 1235, his extraordinary commentary cum rumination on the first chapters of Genesis, a work that can stand as introduction to the state of science as well as theology among the intellectual luminaries of Latin Europe in the first half of the thirteenth century.

Fifteen years ago the critical edition of the Latin original of Grosseteste's commentary appeared under the title *Hexameron*, expertly edited by Richard C. Dales and Servus Gieben. Now Christopher Martin of the University of Glasgow has done us the favor of making the text available outside the circle of Latin readers by translating it into a clear, sometimes even elegant English. Since this work deserves the attention not only of medievalists of all stripes but also of philosophers, theologians, and anyone interested in the history of European thought, its translation with such obvious attention and care-and Martin confesses in his preface how exhausting the task proved to be-was surely worth the effort. Scholars and students alike can rely on his rendering to be both faithful to the original and sufficiently explanatory to provide a

modern readership with all that is needed to comprehend it. Though Martin has not ventured farther than Dales and Gieben in searching for sources and references-indeed, on the infrequent occasions where the original editors failed to annotate a quotation he has simply replicated their silence-the critical edition was so well supplied with citations that the most curious of readers will be satisfied with the result.

There are, to be sure, a few typos as well as a number of spots where the translation is dubious or imprecise, but for the current world of expedited publishing the instances are delightfully rare, almost always inconsequential. The only cases in which the reader might be seriously misled come in the following places: page 4, where the heading for chapter 9.1-2 ought to read that "by means of signification he (i.e., Moses) overthrows various errors claiming that there are many principia"; page 18, paragraph 16, where Grosseteste talks about the solicitude required for illness serving to break the onslaught of libido; page 83, paragraph 2 of chapter 23, where he argues not against "darkness" as having been "created together with heaven and earth" but rather against its having existed, uncreated, alongside them from the start; page 148, chapter 23, which should read that the order of production of herbs existed *only naturally* if they arose all at once, not that it "existed naturally . . . only if" such was the case; and finally page 298, paragraph 5, where Grosseteste prescribes that flesh should serve and obey *the spirit,* not, as the translation reads, "the body." Against these few examples must be balanced, of course, the numerous occasions where Martin's insight into the Latin opens the way to understanding where the text might baffle even the best Latinist.

As for Grosseteste's work in itself, it is, as Martin's rendition makes abundantly clear, the product of a perspicacious and exceptionally learned mind. Grosseteste knows he sits upon the shoulders of giants, whose work he amply quotes, convinced, no doubt, that his readers would rather draw from the source than receive the authorities in paraphrase. Not surprisingly Augustine heads the list, for his two commentaries on Genesis made him the explicator of first resort in the medieval and early modern West, but Jerome and Ambrose are also frequently cited among Latin authors as well as Bede and Isidore, the latter particularly serviceable for Grosseteste's purposes, and, of non-Christians, the famous natural historian Pliny the Elder. More telling in light of Grosseteste's efforts at the time to improve his Greek is the plentiful use and quotation of Fathers of the Eastern church, most of all Basil of Caesarea, whose own *Hexameron* made him second only to Augustine as guide, but also time and again Gregory of Nyssa and John Damascene. Aristotle appears continually as well, being of all Greek writers certainly the most familiar to anyone educated in the Western universities after the second decade of the thirteenth century, but here again Grosseteste betrays his exceptional linguistic bent, warning readers that the common Latin text was more than a little corrupt and yearning for an Aristotle resplendent in the pristine Greek.

From all these sources and from his own ingenuity Grosseteste fashioned a most complicated and multivalent work. Befitting the Scholastic who wrote the first Latin commentary on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics,* he was from the outset insistent on defining the epistemic character of the discourse in which he was engaged. The *Hexameron* was not a work of science in anything like the Aristotelian sense, an apodictic presentation of certain and universal truths grounded in equally certain, and evident, universal principles, but instead a rational presentation of subject matter received through faith and developed further sometimes with the nonevident certainty of belief, sometimes with only probabilistic argument. It was, in short, sacred wisdom, or what was becoming known technically in the schools as theology. But science in the technical sense-"rational knowledge" as Martin translates it on page 52, "sciencia racionalis" in the literally more precise Latin of Grosseteste himself-was not entirely excluded either, for as a work seeking to explain through God himself the foundations of all things created by him, the *Hexameron* laid out not only what was supernaturally revealed but also the basis for morality and the natural rules and reasons upon which human science was built.

Indeed, while writing this work Grosseteste clearly thought of himself as sometimes scientist and natural philosopher, sometimes theologian, sometimes moralist, sometimes even preacher or Christian apologist, never doubting that all these roles were at heart congruent with the ultimate goal of bringing the reader closer to the divine truth fully available only in the beatific vision, the glory toward which Christian virtue was designed to lead. As he himself made clear in part 7, chapter 12, acquisition of scientific learning was, at its best, directed toward "the building up of the spiritual life," thus not foreign to theology but presupposed by all theologians and something to which they set themselves even in their most religious compositions. We can consequently treat the *Hexameron* as a treasury of Biblical exegesis and Christian teaching in the high-medieval university, even an exemplar of homiletics for a church increasingly committed to the apostolate in the challenging atmosphere of an urbanizing Europe, but we can equally well mine it for what it teaches of the philosophy and science of Grosseteste's day.

Whatever approach we take, Grosseteste does not disappoint. For so accomplished an ecclesiastic, who would become a prelate deeply engaged in politics, both clerical and secular, he retained an astounding flexibility of mind. Willing to investigate opinion even when he could not be certain of the truth, he surveyed the field of Christian and pagan learning with an equanimity hard to find in the centuries of Scholastic debate after his death. Part 3 reveals him at his most nimble, prepared for instance to tolerate ambiguities about the structure of the cosmos, even about the precise manner God deployed in creation, whether operating formally in an instant or successively over days, rather than to attempt to reconcile opinions, reasons, and authorities that were patently discordant and none more clearly resonant of divine inspiration than the next. Thus his discussion of the heavenly spheres and the motions of the

planets presents a compendium of key opinions from antiquity up to his day, holding in equal regard the reasonings of the church Fathers, the pagan philosophers, especially Plato and Aristotle, and astronomers like Ptolemy as well. No argument short of absolute evidence-or in rare instances the requirements of faith, as with the principle of a beginning of the world in time-could prompt him peremptorily to decide such matters, whether they be regarded as scientific or as theological, and thus derogate from the true complexity of reason and the seriousness of intellectual honesty as he conceived it.

Moreover, neither worldly philosophers nor celebrated divines escaped his critical gaze, which restricted each to no more than he could prove, by reason or by faith, and demanded confession of ambiguity wherever it was rightfully due. "I am not," he said in chapter 8 of part 3, "ashamed to admit my ignorance about the number of the heavens, and about their movements," for the state of knowledge being what it is, "no-one can say anything with certainty" about them, "even though worldly philosophers pride themselves vainly on knowing" more than they really do. Or in a more theological vein, to expound on the goodness, and the allegorical and moral import, of all the particular actions of each of the separate days of creation would, as he explained in part 2, chapter 6, far exceed his, or perhaps any human's, abilities, though such revered authorities as Basil and Ambrose had tried their hand at it, more with ostentation than any realistic hope of success.

There is of course much in this work one would associate with the Grosseteste of the earlier scientific works or that would live on in followers such as Roger Bacon and many Parisian Franciscans: the emphasis on number and calculation, the conviction that the material and mathematical properties of light lay at the heart of most basic attributes of nature, a fierce opposition to astrology sitting alongside absolute confidence that the movement of stars and planets played a critical role in the generation of animate and inanimate objects here below. For these as well as so many other topics examined by Grosseteste throughout his life, the *Hexameron* bears study and ought to be included in classroom readings for the history of philosophy, science, and theology. Composed when its author was at the height of analytic powers, it often presents his ideas as concisely and clearly as anywhere in his work. Martin could hardly have chosen a more interesting text to translate. He deserves our thanks not just for doing it but also for doing it so well.

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Werke in acht Biinden. By JOSEF PIEPER. Edited by BERTHOLDWALD. Vol. 3: *Schriften zum Philosophiebegriff* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1995). Pp. vi + 345. DM 76.- (cloth). ISBN 3-7873-1223-4.
Vol. 4: *Schriften zur Philosophischen Anthropologie und Ethik: Das Menschenbild der Tugendlehre* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1996). Pp. vi + 442. DM 96.- (cloth). ISBN: 3-7873-1224-2.

The third volume of the complete works of Josef Pieper assembles diverse writings spanning a period of several decades and systematically treating the notion of philosophy *(What is Philosophy?, In Defense of Philosophy),* as well as interpretation, tradition, language, the Platonic concept of philosophy, and the future of philosophy. Among these the reader will discover two previously unpublished essays: a discussion of the Heideggerian notion of truth and an essay on intellectual work and philosophical formation. This volume also contains an instructive postface written by the editor which brings out the originality of Pieper's point of departure against the backdrop of contemporary (especially analytic and hermeneutical) philosophy.

Pieper defines the philosophical act as a reflection upon the totality of that which the subject experiences, both sensually and intuitively. This totality of reality is considered in its ultimate significance, in its deepest roots, and in all its aspects. In contrast to the scientist who, at least theoretically, is able to find definitive responses to the questions he raises, the philosopher treads upon an unending path. Unable to emerge from the state of astonishment which is natural to him and which determines his vocation, he never entirely understands the aspect of the real upon which he focuses his attention. "The philosophical act begins at the boundary where knowledge and the unfathomable touch; it begins with the grasping of the incomprehensibility of the world and Dasein" (125; cf. 80, 119ff., 128ff., 17, 51ff., 53, 56).

This unfathomability of the world follows as a consequence of the distinction between *res naturalis* and *res artificialis.* Referring to the Sartrean position according to which "there is no human nature, because there is no God to conceive it" (173ff.), Pieper affirms the intrinsic relation between the nature of a *res* and an intellect, between existence and a will, and maintains that the intellect and will at the origin of the *res naturales* are those of God. It is certainly natural to the human being to know all things insofar as his intellect is *capax universi.* Having thereby access to the essence of beings, he seizes their "after-forms." He cannot, however, know the analogy between the after-forms and the pre-form which lies in the creating intellect: *rerum essentiae sunt nobis ignotae.* The impossibility of fully comprehending the ultimate foundation of the world and of existence-which Pieper explains in terms of a metaphysic of the creation, the heart of his philosophy-does not require that the search of wisdom be conducted with agnostic resignation or despair, but that *hope* be its certain guide (38-39, 51ff., 128f., 135f., 151).

Pieper desires to preserve a metaphysical dimension of being and gift present not only in the philosophical act but also in celebration, poetry, leisure, art, etc. In a world that is increasingly dominated by the categories of utility, efficiency, and production and that, by the exclusion of all nondirected activity, threatens to become totalitarian, the true philosophical question takes on the character of an intellectual luxury, a useless activity; senseless, at best, it is regarded as possibly harmful or even dangerous, since it neglects or even prohibits the concrete and practical goals of daily life (86, 90ff.).

Philosophy is not the "knowledge of a servant" but the "knowledge of a gentleman" (Newman). The existential astonishment that it necessarily implies is opposed to the *embourgeoisement* of thought which accepts the nearest reality as ultimate and no longer perceives the world of essences and the ultimate sense of encountered realities. It is characterized by a total or partial calling into question of one's comprehension of the world, of one's place therein, and of the significance of one's life. This "anti-bourgeois upheaval," which Pieper likewise refers to as a "de-proletarianization," can be effected in many ways, but especially in the confrontation of death and/or *eros.* The "banalizing" of these contributes, meanwhile, to the further enclosing of the human person within the world of utility and work (for the sake of work itself), in the *Umwelt* (as opposed to the *Welt).* Philosophical astonishment, by contrast, implies the loss of certitude, an uprooting that enables a more profound rooting. It expresses a new consciousness of the world which suddenly appears more profound and larger than the familiar framework of daily life. One realizes that being is, in itself, incomprehensible.

Pieper also discusses the legitimacy of integrating into philosophical discussion information about the world and existence that is obtained from a tradition, a belief, or a theology. The last, as an act of thought, presupposes a God who speaks *to* the human being, a *theios logos,* bearing a message whose content cannot be known from an analysis of the world. Pieper conceives theology uniquely in relation to revelation, a message of a speaker-author addressed to a listener. Here we return to his interpretation of Plato's *ex akoes,* as well as to his interesting analyses of the notions of tradition, transmission, and interpretation (156-72, 212-35, 236-99). Revelation and theology are not confined to Christianity but extend, according to Pieper, to every attitude expressing a willingness to accept (i.e., by an act of "faith") information revealed outside of Christianity (e.g., Plato's myths). In this, Pieper admits the possibility of a primary revelation (57f., 265, 283ff.), a notion accepted by certain Fathers of the Church and by some modern thinkers such as Newman, Mohler, and Scheeben. Theology, so understood, strives to interpret the content of a message the subject accepts as true-that is to say, to which he assents by faith-and that is transmitted by a tradition proceeding from a revelation of the Other (for Jews and Christians) or of the Ancients (for Plato). In both cases, it is admitted that human subjects are the recipients of a divine word (264ff.).

Philosophy is, by nature, necessarily open to all of reality-however it be perceived or analyzed-provided that the perception or analysis is faithful to that reality (i.e., does not falsify or misinterpret it). If the philosopher reflects on love, for example, he should consider all the information on this subject that may be obtained not only from psychology and history, from medicine and from biology, from sociology and culture, but also from theology. If he would disregard the information furnished by the latter or any other facts that are known either by experimental demonstration or a priori, or believed (i.e., obviously not without due consideration and critical sense, which is to say, not without a rational foundation), he can no longer claim to philosophize, given that he no longer considers love in all of its possible aspects so as to seize its ultimate foundation. This does not mean that a systematic philosophical exposition should contain theological phrases, but that the philosopher should consider in his reflection those aspects of faith which he bears in himself. Here Pieper does not address philosophy but the person who philosophizes with implicit reference to the Maritainian distinction between the nature and state of philosophy, as such, in its order of specificity and exercise.

This recourse to prephilosophical data does not mean that the philosopher ceases being a philosopher to become a theologian-nor, for that matter, that the philosopher who seriously considers the facts of psychology should be considered a psychologist. The requirement that the philosopher not formally exclude from his reflection any accessible knowledge concerning the subject treated is intrinsic to the structure of the philosophical act itself. All truly philosophical reflection-an activity that represents a type of fundamental relation to reality and that is only possible when proceeding from the totality of human existence-implies, at least unconsciously, a certain knowledge, an a priori orientation, a taking of position (even an ultimate position) with regard to being in its totality, a taking of position which is not only of the order of knowledge, but also of the order of belief, whether positive or negative (as, e.g., in Sartre). Philosophical reflection finds its impulse and its vivacity from an interpretation of the sense of the world that is initially accepted without criticism. It is not enclosed within an attitude of *academic sophism* having as its ideal absolute neutrality. "To philosophize requires a fully unbiased regard which can only exist in the absence of all prejudice. Philosophy is abandoned the very instant in which it takes itself for an academic discipline. The one who philosophizes is not characterized by the fact that he is interested in the discipline of 'Philosophy'; it is the totality of the world and the totality of wisdom which interests him" (160).

Although Pieper repeatedly discusses and applies to his philosophic discourse this *"kontrapunktischen Polyphonie"* (154) between philosophy and theology, this necessary complementarity between *logos* and *mythos* (Plato), he nonetheless fails to enter fully into the often tumultuous debate concerning the question of Christian philosophy. Devoting very little attention directly to this question, he asks instead if there can be a non-Christian philosophy. Given (if

one grants his assumption) that the philosophical act is by nature orientated to theology (understood in a large sense), Pieper-referring to a careful analysis of the texts of Plato, as well as to the occidental philosophical tradition-asks which "theologies" occidental philosophy is turned toward *post Christum natum.* Since, Pieper reasons, the diverse mythic revelations *(Ur-Offenbarung* of the Greeks) have been replaced by Christian revelation, the unique "theology" within the occidental tradition is the Christian one. That is to say, *in concreto* there is, since the birth of Christ, no longer a non-Christian philosophy within Western culture. This position, it must be admitted, is as original as it is worthy of criticism. "A philosophy that is both living and true will either never be realized (and it is altogether possible that we must wait in vain!) or, *if* it is realized, then (and in just this sense!) it is a Christian philosophy" (63).

A Christian philosophy does not thereby possess neat, predetermined, and certain solutions-a false characteristic for which it is often reproached (e.g., by Heidegger)-but is, rather, correctly characterized by its relation to the mystery of being as a relation of astonishment, thereby surpassing a superficial, rational harmonization of the world and of the human being The Pieperian concept of the loving search of wisdom, which Hegel wished to transform into certain knowledge, is explicitly opposed to a scientific philosophy, to a philosophy of a speculative system, and to historicism.

The analysis of the virtues undertaken by Pieper in the fourth volume of the complete works and his elaboration of an ontological foundation are at least in part-that is, with the help of certain of his contemporaries (Scheler[1915], Hartmann [1925])-responsible for the recent renewed interest in the virtues in moral and political philosophy and in law (e.g., Anscombe, *Philosophy,* 1958 [33]; Jankelevitch, *Traite des vertus,* 1968; Geach, *The Virtues,* 1977; Macintyre, *After Virtue,* 1981; Comte-Sponville, *Petit traite des grandes vertus,* 1995). This volume, which assembles diverse studies edited between 1934 and 1972, constitutes not only an excellent philosophical synthesis of his theory of the cardinal and theological virtues-which he analyzes in a brilliant and original manner-but also a marvelous reference work, the only one of its kind. Pieper develops his theory within the Greek-Christian tradition, clarifying certain of its interpretations in the context of modernity and integrating this tradition in the life-situation of the contemporary human person including its particular challenges. This reinterpretation is not conducted in an all-inclusive manner, but each virtue is treated within a precise historical context: courage, against the Hitlerian regime; prudence, against an extreme casuistic tradition; justice, against a priority of right over good (cf. the actual liberal-communitarian debate); temperance, against the curiosity, or *verbositas* which Heidegger has so well described; hope, against the despair resulting from such historical events as Hiroshima and Auschwitz as well as from the end of the ideology of progress; love, against its misunderstanding and the separation

between *eras* et *agape;* belief/faith, against its negation within a rational and scientific discourse.

Pieper does not try to follow the latest philosophical fashion. Rather, he seeks to reactualize an ethic of virtues opposed to that of a nineteenth-century bourgeois conception of the same, as well as to a formal Kantian ethic of laws and obligations, to a Stoic ethic, and to a utilitarian ethic. To this end, he does not refer to a Schelerian notion of value, but to the concept of the "total life," of the Aristotelian architectonic good, of *eudaimonia.* This ethic of virtue is, for Pieper, integrated in his conception of the universe as reflecting a precise (divine) order in which the human being is himself conceived in a non-mechanical, nonreductionist manner, open to the totality of the real, to transcendence, to God. Such a comprehension of the human person is opposed to that of the individual conceived as a self-sufficient conscience whose freedom, understood as absolutely autonomous, is independent of every preestablished conception of the good (principle of neutrality). Following the Thomistic tradition, Pieper sustains an ontological realism whereby the good (that which is conformed to reality) presupposes the true; that is to say, the realization of the good presupposes knowledge of the real-of being-in which moral law is inscribed. The virtue of prudence (intellectual and moral) realizes that which it conceives. Pieper's thesis is that all obligation has its origin in *being.* He thus maintains an essentialist interpretation of nature and a naturalization of ethics-a delicate position, rejected by Hume's law and submitted to much criticism in contemporary context of metaethical discussion-whereby it is possible to deduce an obligation from a being and ethical values from ontological ones.

Pieper develops an ontology of the *not-yet-being* of Dasein with its categories of possibility and of temporality. The human being is not perceived with regard to his deficiencies but with regard to his positive development towards fulfillment (or perfection) by means of his own action, as taught by Thomas Aquinas. He constantly surpasses himself, transcending his present state in a movement towards the actualization of his *possibility-to-be (Sein-konnen),* towards the full accomplishment of his person which is that towards which he is projected. Virtue, for Pieper, constitutes the ultimate perfection of potentiality, the *summum* of that which the human being *can* be by his nature. (Translated by Michele Schumacher)

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