The Thomist 63 (1999): 173-90

"GIFTED KNOWLEDGE": AN EXCEPTION TO THOMISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY?

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THE PROBLEM that the following essay aims to explore concerns the knowledge treated by Aquinas as one of the intellectual gifts of the Spirit, and its relation to the much-better-known types of natural human knowledge. Aquinas accepts that the intellect's natural power is strengthened by a graced gift of spiritual illumination, and therefore that "we have a more perfect knowledge of God by grace than by natural reason."[1] For convenience, the knowledge made possible by spiritual gifts, although differentiated by Aquinas into specific functions, may be designated by the generic term "gifted knowledge."[2] What is at issue here is the coherence, or lack thereof, between natural and supernatural types of knowledge, which as a matter of consistency must be expected of any thinker who admits both. I shall argue that, without forgetting the limitations of natural cognition, Aquinas shows how intellectual gifts make a distinctive contribution to knowledge of God.

In previous scholarship on Aquinas, the intellectual gifts-wisdom, understanding, and knowledge-have usually been treated in their own right or in the larger context of the life of

[1] *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 12, a. 13: "Dicendum quod per gratiam perfectior cognitio de Deo habetur a nobis, quam per rationem naturalem." Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the *Summa Theologiae* are my own.

[2] The concept that there are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit has a biblical source in Isaiah 11:2-3. The intellectual gifts of the Spirit comprise wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. In the precise but artificial Scholastic categorization of the gifts, each gift is linked to a power of the soul and characterized as contemplative, practical, or both. Aquinas treats all seven gifts in detail in *STh* 1-11, q. 68.

faith.[3] Only rarely has their relevance to his theory of knowledge been explored.[4] In contrast to this tendency, I shall focus on Aquinas's epistemological claims for gifted knowledge, especially as these appear in light of the most basic of conditions that he accepts for all human knowledge: namely, that no knower can actually understand without recourse to an image.[5] As we shall see, Aquinas incorporates into gifted knowledge the suggestion made by some of his Neoplatonic predecessors that there can be a type of cognition that, while requiring images, remains unaffected by certain limitations typically attributed to knowledge by images. The precise textual evidence that I shall cite pertains to the gift traditionally designated by the term *intellectus,* usually translated as the "gift of understanding" *(donum intellectus).*

Even among the intellectual gifts, the gift of understanding seems especially to promise a mode of knowledge exceeding the cognitive limits ordinarily imposed by the analysis of mind Aquinas accepts from Aristotle. This forcing of noetic limits seems especially apparent in the *Scriptum on the Sentences,* and if it were found only there, it might be dismissed as a forgettable instance of youthful overstatement. Yet essentially the same claims made for gifted knowledge in that early work reappear in the mature *Summa Theologiae.* Without forgetting the development in Aquinas's thought between the two works, I shall treat these

[3] Aquinas's thought on the gifts has been studied in O. Lottin, *Psychologieet Moraleaux Xlle et XIIIe siecles* (Gembloux, 1954), vol. 4, pp. 667-736; M. M. Labourdette, "Dons du Saint-Esprit: Doctrine Thomiste," in *Dictionnairede Spiritualite,* vol. 3, cols. 1610-35; M. Llamera, "Unidad de la teologfa de los dones seglin Santo Tomas," *Revista Espanola de Teologfa* 15 (1955): 3-66, 217-70; M. M. Philipon, "Les dons du Saint-Esprit chez St. Thomas d'Aquin," *RevueThomiste* 59 (1959): 451-83; and A. Kelly, "The Gifts of the Spirit: Aquinas and the Modern Context," *The Thomist* 38 (1974): 193-231. On the gift of understanding in particular, see J. McGuiness, "The Distinctive Nature of the Gift of Understanding," *The Thomist* 3 (1941): 217-78.

[4] A discussion remarkable for integrating the gifts into a theory of knowledge is found in Jacques Maritain, *The DegreesofKnowledge,* trans. Gerald B. Phelan (New York: Scribners, 1959), ch. 6, sect. 2. Particularly striking is the remark that "when, in the act of infused contemplation, the gift of wisdom ... frees faith from the human mode of concept and analogy ... it suppresses in some way ... that distance from its object, which is the case in faith all alone" (264-65). I argue for the same point in terms of the gift of understanding.

[5] *STh* I, q. 84, a. 7: "Dicendum quod impossibile est intellectum nostrum, secundum praesentis vitae statum, quo passibili corpori coniungitur, aliquid intelligere in actu, nisi convertendo se ad phantasmata."

discussions as composing a unified account, and ask how gifted knowledge sheds light on the possible range of human cognition, especially when assisted by principles originating outside its normal, empirical context.

The question, then, is whether gifted knowledge is subject to or exempt from the rule that one cannot think, know, or acquire knowledge without an image. Consequently, it will be necessary to ascertain how this Aristotelian rule is interpreted by Aquinas and applied to natural cognition, and to clarify how exactly Aquinas characterizes the knowledge made possible by supernatural cognition. Yet before attempting to locate gifted knowledge in its unknown relation to the processes of natural knowing, it will be useful to review its known relation to the total structure of cognition, as Aquinas conceives it.

I. GIFTED KNOWLEDGE IN THE SCHEME OF HUMAN COGNITION

As is well known, Aquinas holds that all human knowledge attainable by natural means begins from sensible things external to the knower, which become known through their reception into the bodily senses and thereafter into the intellect. He does not hold, however, that all knowledge humanly attainable is attained through natural means and processes. For beyond natural, or acquired, habits of knowledge he recognizes also supernatural, or infused, habits, which do not derive from human cognitive operations, but must instead be superimposed on such processes. In this light, the twofold distinction between gifted and natural knowledge becomes threefold: cognition by the gift differs both from natural knowing and from the infused habit of theological faith.[6] As will become clearer, gifted understanding is for Aquinas the proper complement of faith, as in the Anselmian slogan "faith seeking understanding" *(fides quaerens intellectum).* The understanding attained amounts to penetrating insights into revealed

[6] Faith as an infused ("theological") virtue is discussed in *STh* II-II, qq. 1-8, which culminates in a discussion of the gift of understanding (q. 8). The other theological virtues, hope and charity, are also infused, yet as their perfection is assigned to the gifts of fear *(timor)* and wisdom *(sapientia),* respectively, they may be omitted here. For Aquinas's discussion of the gift of fear, see *STh* II-II, q. 19; on the gift of wisdom, see *STh* II-II, q. 45.

doctrine, which nevertheless always fall short of total comprehension. Consequently, such understanding as any type of gifted knowledge makes possible is not itself the end sought, but serves a means to an end attainable only after this life, the direct (or "beatific") vision of the objects of faith. The total structure of possible human cognition requires, then, a fourfold distinction; but the fourth and final mode of beatified knowledge lies outside the focus of the present study.

Gifted knowledge differs from natural knowledge and faith in distinct ways, yet it exceeds them both. As already noted, the objects of natural cognition are material things subject to sensory apprehension, while the objects of gifted knowledge are supra-empirical inasmuch as they are spiritual. Faith, on the other hand, shares with gifted knowledge the same objects, and arises as a supernaturally caused, or infused, virtue. Yet the human mode in which faith operates renders it liable to all the limitations of natural human knowledge. Indeed, Aquinas suggests that without the cognitive strengthening provided by gifted knowledge, faith would likely give way to the pressure of contradictions[7]—a problem familiar to theologians of every epoch.

The operative distinctions that distinguish gifted from natural knowledge and from faith can be further clarified only if the relevant texts are now broached. It should be clear already, however, that knowledge by the gift exceeds natural knowing with respect to both object and mode of knowing. Nevertheless, it may appear that supernatural cognition has nothing at all to do with our usual processes of knowing, and that discussion of this higher form of knowledge will be unintelligible to all but those mysteriously endowed with it. This would be to misconceive what Aquinas means by a cognitive strengthening beyond the human mode. For though a suprahuman mode of knowing remains to be

[7] In *STh* II-II, q. 8, a. 2 Aquinas cites the case where someone might draw away from things held on faith "on account of things which appear outwardly" *(propter ea quae exterius apparent)*. Although gifted knowledge is unable to grasp the essential meaning of doctrinal faith, such knowledge suffices on Aquinas's account to defuse the temptation to apostasy, since it can show that "those things which appear outwardly are not contrary to the truth" *(ea quae exterius apparent veritati non contrariantur)* of faith. For a different rendering of this passage, see M. D. Jordan's translation of *STh* II-II, qq. 1-16 in *On Faith* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 153-54.

explained, the strengthening is precisely of human intellects, in their native condition and subject to their usual limitations. I turn first, then, to the overlap of the gift of understanding with natural understanding; second, to the discrepancies between them; third, to the effect of cognitive strengthening on the otherwise human mode of faith; and fourth, to the reconciliation of gifted knowledge with the conditions of natural knowing.

II. GIFTED AND NATURAL UNDERSTANDING

The continuity of natural understanding with its supernatural counterpart becomes apparent when simple understanding *(intellectus)* is distinguished from reasoning *(ratio).* Though careful not to suppose these to be distinct powers, Aquinas insists that understanding and reasoning are different operations of the intellect.

> For to understand *[intelligere]* is to apprehend the intelligible truth simply. But to reason is to proceed from one thing understood to another, so as to know the intelligible truth. [8]

Reasoning therefore presupposes simple understanding as the condition for its discursiveness. The objects of natural understanding so understood comprise the first principles of reasoning, grasped immediately by their terms, and the essences of material things. It is by no means accidental, then, that gifted knowledge as apprehensive of the objects of faith is called a gift of understanding, and not a gift of reason. For gifted understanding *(donum intellectus)* takes its name from natural understanding *(intellectus),* on the grounds that it reproduces the simplicity and immediacy of the latter's activity. The most conspicuous continuity of natural and gifted knowledge consists in the parallelism of their modes of operation; gifted understanding may in this respect be thought of as simple understanding transposed to the

[8] *SI'h* I, q. 79, a. 8: "Intelligere enim est simpliciter veritatem intelligibilem apprehendere. Ratiocinari autem est procedere de uno intellecto ad aliud, ad veritatem intelligibilem cognoscendarn." Consequently, simple understanding is a more perfect activity than reasoning: "Patet ergo quod ratiocinari comparatur ad intelligere sicut moveri ad quiescere, vel acquirere ad habere: quorum unum est perfecti, aliud autem imperfecti" (ibid.).

apprehension of purely spiritual objects. Indeed, the reason Aquinas cites for speaking of a gift of understanding (rather than a gift of reason, in keeping with the characteristically human discursive mode) is that this superadded light relates to things known supernaturally exactly as the natural light of *intellectus* does to things known "primordially" *(primordialiter).*[9] In both cases, the things known are principles of further cognition, and the mode of knowing them is simple apprehension.

Both penetration to the essence of things and immediate assimilation of first principles are replicated in the gift's activity. In the *Scriptum,* Aquinas asserts that the gift of understanding "illumines the mind about things heard so that things heard might be approved immediately in the manner of first principles."[10] Likewise, the parallel with natural penetration to the depths of things *(ad intima rerum)* is explicitly reprised, in terms indebted to Dionysius the Areopagite. For

> just as the human mind does not enter into the essences of a thing except through accidents, so also [it] does not enter into spiritual things except through bodily things and likenesses of sensible things.[11]

The work of understanding, gifted no less than natural, thus presupposes abstraction from particulars. After all, the recognition of first principles depends on the intelligibility of the terms in which such principles are exemplified, just as the discernment of a thing's essence requires a likeness in which the thing's essential nature is implicitly present.

Of course, the objects that specify the gift's acts are unmistakably different from those of natural understanding. The latter power is suited to know temporal objects, their essences (or at least their "depths"), and the conditions that govern their

[9] *STh* II-II, q. 8, a. 1, ad 2; that is, by way of abstraction from particulars, but without discursiveness.

[10] III *Sent.,* d. 35, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 1; ed. M. F. Moos (Paris: Lethielleux, 1933), 4 vols., 3.141 (p. 1199): "Et hoc facit intellectus donum quod de auditis mentem illustrat, ut ad modum primorum principiorum statim audita probentur, et ideo intellectus donum est." The reference to "things heard" is an echo of the Pauline phrase *fi<ks ex auditu* (Rom 10:17).

[11] III *Sent.,* d. 35, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 1; 3.139 (p. 1198): "Sicut autem mens humana in essentiam rei non ingreditur nisi per accidentia, ita etiam in spiritualia non ingreditur nisi per corporalia et sensibilium similitudines, ut dicit Dionysius."

existence in the world. To protest that what natural *intellectus* knows is the formal, hence nonmaterial, dimensions of material things is true enough, yet this objection merely reinforces the distinction being drawn between nonmaterial objects that are temporal and nonmaterial objects that are supratemporal, although represented by temporal objects. These latter are classified by Aquinas as "spiritual things" *(spiritualia),* of which more specifically "divine things" *(divina)* are a subset. Because these objects are assembled under the aspect of being revealed, they presuppose faith on the part of one aiming to know them. Even if it were appropriate to speak of them as known by natural under-standing, Aquinas has a reason why natural cognition would certainly fail to penetrate them: as the lowest and least· powerful of intellects, human cognitive power cannot shed sufficient light on the darkness in which supratemporal, "spiritual" objects appear, at least from a human point of view.

Yet neither can faith. For even faith stands in need of illumination by the amplified light of gifted understanding, inasmuch as faith by itself beholds spiritual things "as if wrapped in darkness." The knowledge afforded by faith *(cognitiofidei)* "is beyond the natural knowledge of God not only of a human being, but even of an angel."[12] If elevated by the gift, however, the mind of the believer may be "introduced to seeing spiritual things *[spiritualia]* themselves."[13] And while apprehension by faith remains at the human level of cognition, gifted knowledge is beyond the human mode *(supra humanum modum),* precisely because it can cognize *spiritualia in se,* instead of relying (as faith does) solely on

[12] *STh* II-II, q. 5, a. 1: "Cognitio enim fidei est supra naturalem cognitionem de Deo non solum hominis, sed etiam angeli." Though I translate *cognitio* above as "knowledge," it is a vague term for cognitive awareness falling short of scientific knowledge, which is called *scientia* by Aquinas. As implied above, *cognitio fidei* may be taken as a subjective genitive; the assertion seems to be that faith's knowledge of God is higher than natural knowledge of God, both in discursive knowers (human beings) and in intellectual knowers (angels).

[13] III *Sent.,* d. 35, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 1; 3.140-41(p.1199): "Unde fides quae spiritualia in speculo et aenigmate quasi involuta tenere facit, humano modo mentem perficit; et ideo virtus est. Sed si supernaturali lumine mens intantum elevetur ut ad ipsa spiritualia aspicienda introducatur, hoc supra humanum modum est." In speaking of spiritual things as "in a mirror" and "as if wrapped in darkness," Aquinas is echoing the Pauline phraseology of 1 Corinthians 13:12, the Vulgate version of which reads, "Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate; tune autem facie ad faciem."

the authority of *spiritualiaquoadnos*, that is, as depicted in the signs and figures of revealed doctrines.

III. GIFTED KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH

Thus far, it has been said that gifted knowledge surpasses the human mode of knowing, and that it is this feature that divides such knowledge from faith. That the gift of understanding supplies the believer with an aptitude for an understanding of spiritual objects not otherwise possible further appears in Aquinas's most basic characterization of the gift as a supernatural light. For gifted knowledge allows one with faith to "penetrate further to knowing certain things which one cannot know through natural light." [14] The "certain things" to be known are again *spiritualia* as described above, of which there can clearly be no abstractive cognition as they are in themselves. Instead, these spiritual things are introduced through signs and figures, [15] sensible symbols of which the mind can form images to assist its comprehension of the supraempirical order.

Here arises the perennial inadequacy of approaching transcendent reality with faith alone: to the mind whose every concept is necessarily an effect of abstraction from sensory images, there can be no adequate concept of the spiritual. Confined to the human mode of knowing, the believer cannot fail to reduce the symbolized to the symbols themselves, and so confine the transcendent to the categories of the mundane. For Aquinas, this may be called the problem of the "overshadowing of images" *(obumbratiophantasmatum)*, and it presents itself whenever and wherever a spiritual object is eclipsed by the sensible (and especially visible) objects to which our minds are habituated. And yet if the psychology that Aquinas accepts from Aristotle is correct in specifying the object and mode of human knowledge, it seems

[14] STh11-11,q. 8, a. 1: "Indiget igitur homo supernaturali lumine ut ulterius penetret ad cognoscendum quaedam quae per lumen naturale cognoscere non valet. Et illud lumen supernaturale homini datum vocatur donum intellectus."

[15] Aquinas alludes to this Dionysian terminology in order to point out that the use of such "coverings" for divine things is a necessary concession to the human mode of knowing. See III *Sent.*, d. 35, q. 2, a. 2, qcla. 2 arg. 2 and sol. 2; 3.130, 146 (pp. 1197, 1200).

to follow that "it is impossible that in the present life *[in statu viae]* we might know without the overshadowing of images."[16] Can a suprahuman mode of knowledge exercised in an embodied human knower overcome this problem?

It is important to recall that this problem is not purely theoretical for Aquinas, since it arises inevitably when people subscribe to beliefs for which there is no naturally knowable, publicly accessible means of verification. The recourse to gifted knowledge should at least underscore once more that the natural grasp of revealed doctrines is insufficient to meet the demands of religious belief and practice. In light of these exigencies, gifted understanding must constitute a new intellectual perspicacity with respect to the first principles of faith, including the "First Truth"-God, as presented propositionally. In the *Summa* Aquinas says that

> the gift of understanding is about the first principles of graced cognition, but otherwise than faith is. For it pertains to faith to assent to these principles, but it pertains to the gift of understanding to penetrate mentally those things which are said.[17]

The explication of this key statement will provide, I believe, the best method for distinguishing gifted knowledge more clearly from the framework of faith in which it lives and moves. One way of explicating this schematic claim is by filling in some apposite details from Aquinas's other remarks. In particular, an observation comparing faith and the gift of understanding in his commentary on Galatians is instructive:

> Thus, to know the invisible things of God darkly is in keeping with the human mode, and such knowledge pertains to the virtue of faith; but to know the

[16] III *Sent.*, d. 35, q. 2, a. 2, qcla. 2, arg. 1; 3.130 (pp. 1196-97): "Sed impossibile est quod in statu viae cognoscamus sine obumbratione phantasmatum, ut Philosophus ostendit." The reference is to Aristotle, *De anima*, 3.8 (432a7-8), which is discussed below.

[17] *STh* 11-11, q. 8, a. 6, ad 2: "Dicendum quod donum intellectus est circa prima principia cognitionis gratuitae, aliter tamen quam fides. Nam ad £idem pertinet eis assentire: ad donum vero intellectus pertinet penetrare mente ea quae dicuntur."

same things more penetratingly and above the human mode pertains to the gift of understanding. [18]

The gift is distinguished now from faith because its grasp is more penetrating, as was said above of the gift compared to natural *intellectus.* Moreover, the phrase "invisible things of God," like the "things heard" mentioned earlier, suggests the content attributable to the "first principles of graced cognition." But with what greater efficacy does the gift attain these principles?

At this point an application of gifted knowledge to the role of images may serve best to call attention to the cognitive features of the gift's activity. Perhaps the most characteristic terms in which Aquinas depicts the gift of understanding are its purgative effect on the mind and its contribution to the *via negativa* of Christian theology. Both purgation and negation point up the role of images in human knowledge of spiritual things, precisely by working to minimize the shadows cast by those images. As suggested above, however, Aquinas accepts as a psychological fact the judgment of Aristotle, that "no one can learn or understand anything in the absence of sense." And from this it follows as a corollary that "when the mind is actively aware of anything it is necessarily aware of it along with an image." [19]

Aquinas understands this dictum to mean that the soul "understands nothing without an image," or more precisely that the human intellect cannot understand in actuality *(actu intelligere)* except by turning to images. For only the images represent the individual thing the soul aims to understand. So great is Aquinas's insistence on turning to images that although the intellect is actualized upon reception of a universal likeness of a thing, not

[18] *In Gal.* c. 5, lect. 6, no. 329 (on Gal. 5:22-23): "Puta cognoscere invisibilia Dei sub aenigniate est per modum humanum: et haec cognitio pertinet ad virtutem fidei; sed cognoscere ea perspicue et supra humanum modum, pertinet ad donum intellectus" (in *Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura,* ed. R. Cai [Turin: Marietti, 1953), 2 vols., 1.636). The translation cited is from F. R. Larcher, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (Albany: Magi Books, 1966), 179.

[19] Aristotle, *De anima,* 3.8 (432a7-8). I have used the revised Oxford translation of *On the Soul* in *The Complete Works of Aristotle,* ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1:687. Cf. ibid.,3.7 (43la15-17): "To the tltinkingsoul images serve as if tltey were contents of perception … that is why the soul never thinks without an image" (1:685).

until the intellect converts to particularized images will he allow that it actually understands. [20] Nor is knowing through images an incidental result of the intellect's union with the body. As Aquinas's analysis of the separated soul serves to show, the intuitive mode of separated cognition, though nobler in itself, is so ill suited to the human soul that its knowledge in this state is "confused."[21] In short, the reliance on images in human cognition applies at every level, in every state, and to every object. Yet however indispensable they are in ordinary human cognition, images pose a stumbling block to any understanding of the spiritual as possessed of positive qualities not derived from creatures. As Aquinas says in the *Scriptum*, if the wayfarer is to have his cognition perfected, he must understand God to be "separate from all things [and] above all things."[22] But this understanding requires a practice of "removal" *(via remotionis)*, by which the traces of corporeality derived from mundane things may be gradually removed, or strained out, from one's conceptions of the spiritual. Yet no such method of negation of images will suffice for knowledge of spiritual things, if its operation remains (like faith) in the human mode. The mind must be purified, with respect to both its contents and its manner of conceiving those contents.

IV. UNDERSTANDING BEYOND IMAGES

Hence Aquinas is faced with a dilemma about the role of images in knowing supratemporal, spiritual objects. If he holds with Aristotle that there is no cognition apart from images, he must also accept that images overshadow the intellection of nonimaginable objects. Against this view, however, Aquinas must

[20] This point, already stated in *STh* I, q. 84, a. 7 (cited above in note 5), is applied to knowledge of singulars in *STh* I, q. 86, a. 1.

[21] *STh* I, q. 89, a. 1: "Si igitur animae humanae sic essent institutae a Deo ut intelligerent per modum qui competit substantiis separatis, non haberent cognitionem perfectam, sed confusam in communi."

[22] III *Sent.*, d. 35, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 2; 3.142-43 (p. 1199): "In statu viae intellectus ingreditur ad spiritualia primo modo [i.e. per viam remotionis], maxime ad divina; quia in hoc perficitur cognitio humana secundum statum viae, ut intelligamus Deum ab omnibus separatum, super **omnia** esse."

also take account of Augustine, who refers to corporeal images as a "human weakness which it is necessary for those aiming for God to remove through understanding," [23] that is, through the gift of understanding. This is not to deny the Dionysian principle already accepted, that divine things are proposed in signs and figures, which require images. Yet if images really do obscure the mind's grasp of spiritual realities, their "removal" may well be described as a purging of the mind. But how can the removal of images be affirmed together with the reliance on images as the most basic of conditions governing all human knowledge?

If a resolution of this tension is to be found, it must be sought in the activity of gifted knowledge itself. Three interpretations are at least possible. Gifted knowledge may be (1) superfluous, a mere verbal trick to make faith seem more scientific than it can ever be; (2) exceptional, that is, a contradiction of the conditions governing all other abstractive knowledge and inexplicable in natural terms; or (3) distinct from faith and natural cognition, yet subject to their conditions. Though this last is hardest to explain, it is also clearly the only sense worthy of serious consideration, since the first reading attributes dishonesty to Aquinas, while the second implies obscurantism at best, and at worst self-contradiction. Nothing said thus far entails either of these drastic conclusions, and I shall therefore explore below the positive alternative: that gifted knowledge, while living within faith, is nevertheless a possible mode of human cognition, distinct from that of natural understanding *qua* mode, and not merely as a result of having distinct objects.

Supposing there is such a distinct mode, the *aporia* it involves can be restated as the requirement of harmony between the grasping of *spiritualiain se* and the need for images to support thought. Certainly, there are limits on the first of these elements. After dividing the two means intellect has of approaching spiritual things into affirmative and negative ways, Aquinas flatly denies in the *Scriptum* that the gift can afford the wayfarer a direct gaze

[23] III *Sent.*, d. 35, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 2, ad 4; 3.148 (p. 1200): "Dicendum quod Augustinus nominat 'infirmitatem humanam' corporalia phantasmata, quae oportet removere per intellectum tendentes in Deum."

into the divine essence,[24] or even into spiritual things themselves,[25] mysteries of faith included. Seeing God and understanding propositions of faith are not nearly so carefully distinguished here as they are in the *Summa,* but the crucial reason for denying positive knowledge of *spiritualia* is ineluctable: there is darkness in the human intellect. Inherent in the state of being a human knower, this darkness undoubtedly includes the intellect's dependence on phantasms, already characterized as an obfuscation in Aristotelian terms and an infirmity by Augustine. The central contrast between these diagnoses of human cognition by phantasms appears in Augustine's exhortation to remove them, so that God might be seen by purified minds, as against Aristotle's dictum that there is no human cognition without relying on images. Aquinas's solution is to reconcile these opposed perspectives by insisting that while images cannot be deleted, their limitations can be transcended. The strengthened light that is brought to bear in gifted knowledge allows a piercing glance at spiritual reality, which is present though hidden in the doctrinal symbols that convey it. The images formed from these symbols are not then the objects, but rather the instruments, of cognition; like slides in a projector, they serve to focus light passed through them in a structured way. If illumined by a relatively weak light, only the slide itself will be seen. But if amplified by an incommensurably greater light, not only the slide but its image will become visible at a depth far beyond the slide's own surface. To complete the analogy, the form imprinted on the slide serves to focus the light, yet without overshadowing the resulting illumination of its image.

If the analogy of transparence of photographic images to images formed of *spiritualia* is useful, it provides a clue to what is meant by cognition that relies on images, yet escapes their obscuring influence. Another clue may be found in Aquinas's

[24] III *Sent.,* d. 35, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 2, ad 1; 3.145 (p. 1200).

[25] III *Sent.,* d. 35, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 2; 3.142 (p. 1199). This does not contradict the claim that gifted knowledge cognizes *spiritualia in se,* for a "direct gaze" into the essence would mean comprehending their essences. Since Aquinas allows no perfect knowledge of the essences even of natural things, the same presumably applies a fortiori to spiritual objects. This reasoning explains why he often prefers to speak of penetration to the "depths of things," as noted above, instead of attainment of their essences.

interpretation of the sixth beatitude, which he sees as promising the overcoming in purified minds of overshadowing by images. Those who will see God will do so only if they are "pure in heart," that is, only if their intellects are purified of all corporeal things.[26] Yet this mental purgation, while fully realizable only in direct vision beyond this life, will be at least partially accomplished in this life by way of removal *(per viam remotionis).* This removal must include distinguishing the symbolized from the symbols, while still relying on the symbols to focus the mind's illuminating power. If the way of removal were to become one's principal way of knowing *spiritualia,* and the light of the mind were to be strengthened, it is possible that a third dimension, comparable to depth perception, would become perceptible in the otherwise two-dimensional symbols of doctrine.

Finally, the distinction between negative and affirmative ways is paralleled in the *Summa* by a distinction between doctrines proper to faith *(sub fide),* such as the Trinity and the Incarnation, and propositions that are "ordered to faith" *(ordinataad {idem),* a class that can include any scriptural data that support doctrinal faith.[27] This distinction poses the problem of grasping *spiritualia* in yet another way. The first class of propositions cannot be positively understood, or comprehended, in this life; while those of the second type, though comprehensible by means of gifted knowledge, serve only to cast light on the central truths of doctrinal faith. In other words, those *spiritualia* susceptible to positive understanding presuppose the context of doctrines proper to faith. But the doctrines, far from being comprehensible in this life, can be approached only by way of negation or removal. The believer's relation to them is always more a matter of faith than understanding. And as we have seen, faith perfects the mind in a human mode of knowing. Yet if the gift of understanding is to be "otherwise than faith," Aquinas must allow for some

[26] III *Sent.,* d. 35, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 2; 3.143 (p. 1199): "quantum ad statum viae munditia ponitur in sexta beatitudine quae pertinet ad depurationem intellectus ab omnibus corporalibus." The scriptural locus for the sixth beatitude is Matthew 5:8: "Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt" ("Blessedare the pure in heart, for they shall see God"). Aquinas has thus interpreted purity of heart as referring to purification of the intellect.

[27] For this distinction, see *STh* 11-11, q. 8, a. 2.

cognition of the principles of faith, without of course compromising divine incomprehensibility. How is this dilemma to be resolved?

Aquinas's answer requires a further analysis of purification. He speaks variously of purification of the intellect's contents, especially of human conceptions of spiritual things, and of the intellect itself. In both processes he finds gifted knowledge at work: in the intellectual task of correcting distorted ideas about spiritual realities, and in the spiritual therapy of preparing the mind to be receptive to supernatural light. These two processes coincide when the gift has so purified the believer's intellect that he habitually and easily removes material images from his thoughts about the spiritual. Accordingly, the intellect is said to be purified when "those things which are proposed concerning God are not taken in the manner of corporeal images."[28] To the extent that the spiritual therapy presupposes the intellectual task, it must be that the purification of the intellect means especially the purification of its mode of knowing spiritual objects.

How implausible it is that such purification could be accomplished by any disinterested technique of "removal," divorced from the exigencies of faith, bears some reflection. Indeed, this view of intellectual purification strongly suggests that the purified mode is more passive than active, more the effect of having light passed through it than a result of its focusing and refocusing its own light on the images in which it conceives of spiritual objects. Images are undoubtedly still present in the purified intellect, yet it is precisely in looking *through,* rather than at, them that the mind becomes aware of the reality and integrity of the spiritual, now recognized against normal cognitive tendencies as much more than a thin abstraction from the obvious and solid world of material objects. To the extent that this apprehension of *spiritualia* as unbounded by images becomes more and more effortless, immediate, and guided from above, this gifted cognition might be

[28] *STh* II-II, q. 8, a. 7: "Alia vero munditia cordis est quae est quasi completiva respectu visionis divinae; et haec quidem est munditia mentis depuratae a phantasmatibus et erroribus, ut scilicet ea quae de Deo proponuntur non accipiantur per modum corporalium phantasmatum, nec secundum haereticas perversitates. Et hanc munditiam facit donum intellectus."

said to constitute, if not a distinctive mode of knowing, then certainly a new quality to the mode connatural to an embodied knower.

CONCLUSION

Because Aquinas regards purity of heart and vision of God as mutually inclusive, he concludes that seeing God begins in the present life, as a kind of inchoate vision.[29] To state this thesis negatively is not difficult: to know God as well as is possible in this life is to know that the divine nature exceeds whatever is comprehended by the intellect. The burden of this essay has been to find a Thomistic way of stating the point positively. Perhaps an example will clarify afresh the solution that I have pursued. On viewing a icon of Christ, one may abstract, as from any such image, the universal notion of human being, and connect this intelligible notion back to the image in which the form is exemplified. On an abstractive account this is one way that someone might judge that Christ is a man. But what is the analogical process for concluding that Christ is God? How is one supposed to abstract a proper notion of divinity from any possible assemblage of images, visual, auditory, or otherwise?

Considering the question again in these terms will permit, I think, the refutation of one tempting, but mistaken, dismissal of gifted knowledge in Aquinas. For it may still seem most reasonable to suppose that, apart from the distinction drawn between *spiritualia* and *temporalia*, gifted knowledge is nothing more than natural understanding working on the objects proper to faith, while deriving support from faith. If there are achievements of understanding what is believed, these are human attainments, explicable in the categories of abstraction, conversion to images, and reasoning that explain all our propositional knowledge. But because one cannot abstract a concept of divinity, even with the whole panoply of revealed symbols at one's disposal, one can know only what God is not. Even the provision of the supreme symbol of all, Christ as "express image" of God

[29] *STh* 11-11, q. 8, a. 7: "dona autem et hie nos perficiunt secundum quandam inchoationem, et in futuro implebuntur."

(Heb 1:3), can make no difference to one's conceptual knowledge of God.

No doubt faith would allow one to believe far more than one sees. And if gifted knowledge could be shown to be in no way discontinuous with faith, Aquinas's account of such knowledge would of course be superfluous, if not frivolous. On the other hand, by following the assumption that Aquinas does not allow human cognition at any time to be entirely free of reliance on images, I have aimed to suggest how a mode of cognition working with images of nonmaterial things might nevertheless see far enough through such images to grasp something of the character of those things themselves. As a corollary it seems plausible to suppose that this operation, if possible, is not in the mode of natural understanding. To know doctrinal images by way of abstraction is still to know them *qua* images, and not yet as symbols. For if they are images of transnatural and supratemporal realities, none of them (nor even all together) can adequately reflect the essence of the symbolized. Seeing an image as a symbol requires seeing both its likeness and its unlikeness to the symbolized. In Aquinas's terms, seeing the likeness requires a strengthening of our cognitive light, to see through the shadows cast by images. Seeing the unlikeness depends on removal of images, not as an occasional technique, but as the means of recognizing all such images as symbols, yet as only intimations of the symbolized.

One conclusion that may be drawn is that gifted knowledge merits serious study by those interested in the full range of cognition in Aquinas's thought. Of course, such study will have to delineate gifted knowledge much more broadly than has been attempted here, in terms that encompass the gifts of wisdom and knowledge, as well as their role within the economy of faith. Yet if the contribution of gifted knowledge to Aquinas's theory of knowledge is to be clarified, one must also pay attention to the range, modes, and objects of natural human cognition. Inasmuch as the topic thus described lies at the intersection of the topics usually delegated to theologians and those usually handled by philosophers, the task will require interdisciplinary attention. As noted at the outset, such an approach to gifted knowledge has

scarcely been attempted in modern scholarship on Aquinas. Apart from disciplinary segregation, however, there may be good reason for this lacuna. Much depends on establishing that gifted knowledge is properly a form of cognition, and that it is not reducible either to faith or to natural knowledge. Yet because gifted knowledge relies on faith for its cognitive efficacy, some may suspect that it resists meaningful analysis within a theory of knowledge, for the simple reason that *(ex hypothesi)* the disjunction between faith and knowledge is exclusive. Some theorists interested in the epistemological assessment of doctrinal faith may suppose that this distinction settles the matter. But Thomas Aquinas evidently disagrees.[30]

[30] I wish to express special thanks for the invaluable assistance of the late Monsignor Edward A. Synan in bringing this piece to fruition.

The Thomist 63 (1999): 191-216

TRANSCENDENTAL METHODS AND TRANSCENDENT AL ARGUMENTS: A CRITICISM OF RAHNER'S TRANSCENDENTAL THEOLOGY [1]

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INTRODUCTION

NUMEROUS RAHNER SCHOLARS have drawn attention to the importance of the "transcendental" turn for Rahner's theology. Karl-Heinz Weger has referred to the "transcendental-anthropological method" as the "instrument" of Rahner's thought. [2] J.B. Metz has described Rahner's "anthropologically oriented theology" as the "inner form" of his theological program. [3] Finally, Karl Lehmann has spoken of "transcendental questioning" as the philosophical and theological "starting point" for understanding Rahner's treatment of particular themes and issues.[4]

[1] This is a slightly revised version of my lecture entitled: "Transcendental Methods and Transcendental Arguments: A Criticism of Rahner's Transcendental Theology" delivered to the theology faculty of The Catholic University of America on 17 February 1998.

[2] Karl-Heinz Weger, *Karl Rahner: Eine Ein{Uhrung in sein theologisches Denken* (Freiburg: Herder, 1978), 20. The English translation speaks rather awkwardly of the transcendental method as the "apparatus" of Rahner's thought *(Karl Rahner: An Introduction to His Theology* [New York: Crossroad/Seabury, 1980], 11).

[3] J. B. Metz, "Karl Rahner," in *Tendenzen der Theologie im 20.]ahrhundert: Eine Geschichte in Portriits*, ed. Hans Jiirgen Schultz (Stuttgart: Kreuz-Verlag, 1966), 517. See also J. B. Metz, "Karl Rahner-Widmung und Wiirdigung," in *Gott in Welt: Festgabe{Ur Karl Rabner*, vol. 1, ed. J.B. Metz, W. Kern, A. Darlap, and H. Vorgrimler (Freiburg, Basel, Vienna: Herder, 1964), 8.

[4] K. Lehmann, "Karl Rahner," *Bilanz der Theologie im 20. Jahrhundert Bahnbrechende Theologen*, ed. H. Vorgrimler and R. Vander Gucht (Freiburg, Basel, Vienna: Herder), 158f.

But although critics agree about the importance of the "transcendental turn" in Rahner's theology, they rarely give more than a schematic account of it. For his part, Rabner has offered them little encouragement, either by playing down methodological considerations in his work or denying that he has a method that is uniquely his.[5] Nevertheless, the "transcendental anthropological method" is characteristic of Rahner's theology and any treatment of his thought must come to terms with it.

In this article, I shall examine and criticize Rahner's "transcendental method" insofar as it is understood as an application of transcendental philosophy to the subject matter of theology. My main criticism is that his "transcendental method" is flawed insofar as it appeals to deductive "transcendental arguments," since such arguments are unable to prove that the conditions they deduce as necessary are unique. My criticisms focus primarily on Rahner's fundamental theological arguments for infallibility since they furnish particularly dear and fruitful examples of the kinds of arguments I shall be criticizing, but they apply to all arguments of the same type. This paper is therefore an attempt to bring some general criticisms that have been advanced against transcendental arguments to bear on Rahner's transcendental method.

In general, Rahner's statements about the relation between transcendental theology and philosophy express two opposing views on the subject. One set of statements reflects the view that transcendental theology is an application of transcendental philosophy (or the "transcendental method") to the subject matter of theology. So, for instance, Rabner can say: "Transcendental theology is that theology which uses transcendental philosophy as its method." [6] By contrast, a second group of statements expresses the view that transcendental theology has its source within theology itself. As Rabner says, "The approach of transcendental

[5] Karl Rahner, "Anthropologie und Protologie," *Mysterium Salutis: Die Heilsgeschichte vor Christus*, vol. 2, ed. Johannes Feiner and Magnus Lohrer (Einsiedeln, Zurich, Cologne: Benzinger, 1967), 406.

[6] Karl Rahner, "Reflections on Methodology in Theology," *Theological Investigations*, vol. 11, trans. David Bourke (London: Darron, Longman & Todd, 1994), 85.

theology is genuinely theological."[7] He can even go so far as to assert the independence of transcendental theology from transcendental philosophy as when he says a transcendental form of questioning "must continually be posed from the essence of theology itself ... the express recourse to transcendental philosophy [is] not at all necessary."[8]

A complete account of Rahner's "transcendental method" would have to consider these conflicting claims. Here, however, we shall limit ourselves to the contention that transcendental theology is an application of transcendental philosophy or the "transcendental method" to the subject matter of theology. This decision is justified by the fact that the arguments we shall be considering are straightforwardly philosophical ones.

I. "TRANSCENDENTAL PHILOSOPHY"

In a shorthand definition of transcendental theology, Rahner writes that "One could call [transcendental theology] that systematic theology which .... uses transcendental philosophy as its instrument."[9] If "transcendental philosophy" is to serve theology as its "instrument" then it presupposes philosophy as an independent discipline. Rahner himself explicitly draws this conclusion when he says that "theology of its very nature presupposes philosophy as a condition of its own possibility."[10]

Assuming the importance of "transcendental philosophy" for theology, what does Rahner mean by the term? There are, in fact, several different meanings to be found in Rahner's writings.[11]

[7] Karl Rabner, "Transzendentaltheologie," *SacramentumMundi,* vol. 4 (Freiburg: Herder, 1969), 986 (my translation; cf. "Transcendental Theology," in *SacramentumMundi,* vol. 6 [New York: Herder and Herder, 1968], 287).

[8] Karl Rabner, "Uberlegungen zur Methode," *Schri#enzur Theologie*9 (Zurich: Benziger, 1970), 102 (my translation; cf. Rahner, "Reflections on Methodology in Theology," 90-91). Also see Friedmann Greiner, *Die Menschlichkeit der Offenbarung: Die transzendentale Grundlegung der Theologie bei Karl Rabner* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1978), 94.

[9] Rahner, "Tranzendentaltheologie," 987 (my translation; cf. "Transcendental Theology," 287).

[10] Karl Rahner, "Philosophy and Theology," *TheologicalInvestigations,* vol. 6, trans. Karl-H. Kruger and Boniface Kruger (London: Darton, Longmann & Todd, 1969), 71. Cf. Greiner, *Die Menschlichkeit der Offenbarung,* 10.

[11] Greiner, *Die Menschlichkeit der Offenbarung,* 94£.

Without attempting a complete classification, we can generalize and say that Rahner uses the term both in a loose, non-technical way and in a narrower, more technical manner.

Rahner employs the term "transcendental philosophy" in a loose sense to refer to the way any philosophy must proceed.[12] Every philosophy (and here "philosophy" is closely identified with metaphysics) makes apodictically certain judgments which imply, as a condition of their possibility, an a priori knowledge of the structures of the subject whose judgments they are.[13] By maintaining that there are "transcendental" elements in the writings of "pre-critical" philosophers such as Augustine, Origen, Aquinas, and others, Rahner seems to suggest that a "transcendental" hermeneutic is legitimate for interpreting their writings, as he himself interpreted the texts of Aquinas in *Geist in Welt.*[14] But Rahner also employs the term "transcendental philosophy" more narrowly to refer to "modern" philosophy since Descartes, especially the tradition from Kant to German Idealism.[15] He sometimes widens the concept further to include existentialism, phenomenology, fundamental ontology, and contemporary hermeneutics.[16]

If we limit ourselves to Rahner's more technical definition of the term, "transcendental philosophy" has two central features: it is characterized by a transcendental "turn" to the subject and it employs a "transcendental method" or "transcendental ques-

[12] Rabner, "Reflections on Methodology in Theology," 85.

[13] Karl Rabner, "Theology und Anthropology," *Theological Investigations,* vol. 9, trans. Graham Harrison (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1992), 29.

[14] Rabner, "Reflections on Methodology in Theology," 85-86.

[15] "What then is this note 'transcendental'? Basing ourselves on Kant's definition of [the] concept we can say: A question is posed on the transcendental plane when it asks for the *a priori* conditions that make knowledge of an object possible" (Rabner, "The Concept of Existential Philosophy in Heidegger," trans. Andrew Tallon, *Philosop by Today* 13 [1969]: 129). This article was originally published as "Introduction au concept de philosophie existentiale chez Heidegger" in *Recherches de sciences religieuses* 30 (1940): 152-71. It appeared mistakenly under the name of Rahner's brother Hugo.

[16] Rabner, "Reflections on Methodology in Theology," 86. Cf. "Theology and Anthropology," 38.

tioning."[17] Hence "transcendental philosophy" in the technical sense refers to philosophy of a broadly Kantian stripe.

Central to Rahner's notion of transcendental philosophy is the "transcendental method" or "transcendental questioning." He defines it as follows: "Transcendental questioning asks in such a manner, that the necessary conditions of the possibility of knowledge or action in the subject is questioned."[18]

For Rahner, a "transcendental philosophical theology" seeks "the theological subject's *a priori* 'structures' implicit in a particular theological statement."[19] Or, to put the matter in terms used by Rahner in *Hearer of the Word,* a transcendental theology seeks to "establish that it is a priori possible for us to hear an eventual revelation of God."[20] Friedmann Greiner, in his book on the transcendental groundwork of Rahner's theology, thus concludes: "Transcendental reflections involve *[beinhalten]* the question about the necessary conditions of the possibility of experience of God's revelatory act in the subject."[21]

One of the difficulties in characterizing Rahner's notion of "transcendental philosophy" or the "transcendental method" is that he uses the term "transcendental" in a number of ways. Hence, "transcendental" can refer to the act of human self-transcendence or to the concrete historical realization of this transcendence.[22] Both meanings have implications for Rahner's understanding of the formal question about the conditions of the possibility of experience. So, for instance, Rahner refers to human self-transcendence as "the *a priori* presupposition for the

[17] L. Bruno Puntel's characterization of the Transcendental Thomists' interpretation of Kant applies to Rabner as well. He writes, "Kant is interpreted and assimilated by these authors very superficially [iiugerJich] insofar as he is seen as the founder of a new *method,* namely the transcendental one." Puntel writes further, "Kant's transcendental move is interpreted entirely generally as the turn to subjectivity and the conditions of the possibility of knowledge contained therein, and insofar affirmed" (L. Bruno Puntel, *Analogie und Geschichtlichkeit* [Freiburg: Herder, 1969], 350).

[18] Rahner, "Theology and Anthropology," 29 (translation slightly modified).

[19] Ibid., 30.

[20] Rabner, *Hearer of the Word,* 1st ed., trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Continuum, 1994), 5. Cf. Greiner, *Die Menschlichkeit der Offenbarung,* 16.

[21] Greiner, *Die Menschliehkeit der Offenbarung,* 16.

[22] See Greiner for the distinction between Rahner's "formal" and "material" usages of "transcendental" (Greiner, *Die Menschlichkeit der Offenbarung,* 19-20).

possibility ... of hearing a Word of God."[23] Or he says that a transcendental inquiry is "a reflection of man upon himself ... in the realization of his existence" in which he is "always oriented toward a very concrete history." On the basis of the latter, Rabner sometimes characterizes his transcendental inquiry as the attempt to discover the "inner correspondence" between the content of revelation and the concrete, historical, self-understanding of man.[24] Rahner employs this usage in the following characterization of the transcendental method:

> The transcendental method attempts, stated very briefly, to reach conclusions of faith by asking about the conditions of the possibility of revelation in human self-understanding and history.[25]

A concise summary of the three central meanings of "transcendental" we have mentioned here is provided by Greiner in the following passage:

> First, if with regard to epistemological-theoretical considerations "transcendental" describes the formal question about the conditions of possibility of experience of revelation in the subject and second, in terms of its subject matter, the transcendence of human subjectivity beyond itself toward the divine being, so it describes, thirdly, also materially, the demonstration of the practical-existential relevance of divine revelatory action for the realization of human being's identity.[26]

II. TRANSCENDENTAL PHILOSOPHY AND TRANSCENDENTAL ARGUMENTS

We have said that Rabner sometimes describes his "transcendental theology" as a theology that uses transcendental philosophy as its "instrument," and a determining characteristic of transcendental philosophy is its employment of the "transcendental method" or a "transcendental form of inquiry." We have identified three meanings of the term "transcendental" which

[21] Rahner, *Rorer des Wortes,* 2d ed., 71.

[24] Rahner, "Anthropologie und Protologie," 406. Cf. Greiner, *Die Menschlicbkeit der Offenbarung,* 19.

[25] Rahner, "Anthropologie und Protologie," 406.

[26] Greiner, *Die Menschlicbkeit der Offenbarung,* 19-20.

determine Rahner's characterization of transcendental philosophy or the transcendental method. Now we are in a position to consider more carefully Rahner's characterization of his own transcendental procedure.

A) Two Types of Transcendental Arguments: Deductive and Reductive

In his extensive study of Rahner's thought, Peter Eicher distinguishes three stages in his transcendental method: (1) phenomenological description, (2) transcendental reduction, and (3) transcendental deduction. [27] The latter two stages correspond to the distinction in the philosophical literature between two types of transcendental arguments whose origins can be found in Kant: a "reductive" or regressive argument and a "deductive" progressive one.

Rahner sometimes refers to his transcendental arguments as "deductive" and at other times as "reductive." An example of the former can be found in *Hearer of the Word* where Rahner says that the essential connection he makes between "the transcendence of the human spirit and human historicity" was "transcendentally *deduced* from a peculiarity of the human spirit as such." [28] Similarly, in an encyclopedia article entitled "Transcendental theology" Rahner says that the essential unity and difference between human transcendentality and historicity is made clear in a "'transcendental' deduction." [29] Negatively, Rahner admits that the concrete historical content of God's self-communication cannot be "derived" through a transcendental procedure so that while, for example, a transcendental Christology can affirm that man searches in history for a "absolute savior," whether he actually encounters Jesus of Nazareth as this absolute savior cannot be "transcendentally 'deduced.'" [30]

[27] Peter Eicher, *Die anthropologischeWende: Karl Rahners philosophischerWeg vom Wesen des Menschenzur Persona/enExistenz* (Freiburg: Universitatsverlag, 1970), 55-64.

[28] Rahner, *Hearer of the Word,* 119. Cf. *Harer des Wortes,* 2d ed., 173, 175-76.

[29] Rahner, "Transzendentaltheologie," 990. Cf. "Transcendental Theology," 28.8.

[30] Rahner, "Theology and Anthropology," 30.

Rahner also refers to his transcendental procedure as "regressive" or "reductive." For instance, he says that a transcendental inquiry "means a clarifying reduction *[erhellende RUckfuhrung]* of everything meaningful for salvation ... to [a] transcendental essence."[31] And he further characterizes his transcendental reflection as a *Reduktion, RUckfuhrung,* or *Ritckgrandung.*[32]

Although Rahner does not discuss the differences between a "deductive" and "reductive" form of argument, the distinction is common enough in Transcendental Thomist discussions of the transcendental method. In general one can say that Transcendental Thomists understand a "reductive" transcendental argument as one that seeks the formal conditions of the possibility of a particular reality in the transcendental subject. Such an argument seeks to uncover the subjective a priori element in knowledge. By contrast, a "deductive" procedure seeks to derive the necessary structures of the object from the formal structures of subjectivity. This type of argument seeks the objective a priori element in knowing.[33]

We have established that Rahner distinguishes between "reductive" and "deductive" elements in this transcendental method and we have given a general characterization of how Transcendental Thomists understand the difference. But is this distinction useful for characterizing Rahner's actual procedure? We shall argue that it is and that, furthermore, this distinction helps to lay bear the logical force of a number of Rahner's fundamental theological arguments and provides grounds for criticizing them.

B) .Reductive" and .Deductive" Arguments in Rabner

In the following section I shall provide examples of both "reductive" and "deductive" transcendental arguments in Rah-

[31] Rabner, "Transzendentaltheologie," 51-52.

[32] Ibid.

[33] "linter 'Reduktion' verstehen wir den Riickgang auf die subjektiven, unter 'Deduktion' die Ableitung der objektiven apriorischen Elemente" (Eicher, *Die anthropologische Wende,* 59-64). Cf. Emerich Coreth, *Metaphysik,* 70-71; Otto Muck, *Die transcendentale Methode in der scholastischen Philosophie der Gegenwart* (Innsbruck: Felix Rauch, 1964), 75-76. For a general introduction to the use of "transcendental arguments" in theology, see: Kathryn Tanner, *God and Creation in Christian Theology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 20-27.

ner's writings. As examples of the reductive type, I shall take Rahner's arguments for a preapprehension *(Vorgriff)* of the universal form and for the identity of knower and known. As examples of deductive arguments, I shall consider Rahner's transcendental Christology and his "eschatological" argument for the infallibility of the Church in teaching.

Rahner's argument for a preapprehension of being or *Vorgriff auf esse* appears in his early philosophical work *Spirit in the World* in the context of his discussion of the Thomistic theory of abstraction. Following Aquinas, Rahner argues that the intellect knows material things by a process of abstraction which involves the liberation of the universal form from matter. Abstraction presupposes the knower's ability to recognize the universal form as limited in a particular material concretion. This is the work of the agent intellect.

> The agent intellect is ... the capacity to know the sensibly intuited as limited, as a realized concretion, and only to that extent does it "universalize" the form possessed sensibly ... [and] liberate the form from its material concretion. [34]

The ability to recognize the particular form as limited is, at the same time, a recognition of it as universal since it is potentially the form of many "this-es." Hence the capacity for abstraction is the ability to recognize the unlimitedness of the universal particularized in a concrete "this."

> The power of abstraction is the power of knowing that the quidditative determination presented by the senses in its singularity is, of itself, unlimited. The quidditative determination is first presented to us as restricted to a single sense object. If then we know at once that this determination as such is unlimited, we must somehow grasp that its limitation comes from the single sense object as such. If we are aware of this limitation as such, and as brought about by the "thisness" of the single object, we are also aware of the limitlessness of the quiddity as such. [35]

Rahner then asks how the recognition of the limitation of the form is possible. He argues that the anticipation of further

[34] Karl Rahner, *Spirit in the World,* trans. William Dych, S.J. (New York: Continuum, 1994), 141.

[35] Rahner, *Hearer of the Word,* 46-47.

possibilities through which the concrete sensible form is grasped as limited is possible by virtue of a preapprehension or *Vorgriff (excessus* in Aquinas's terminology).

> We are aware that the quiddity experienced in sensibility is limited in and through the single sense object. The fact that we are aware of this limitation reveals to us the limitlessness which belongs to the quiddity as such. This is possible only if the activity that grasps this individual sense object reaches out, prior to this grasping, beyond this individual object, for more than the latter is. New this "more" can only be the absolute range of all knowable objects as such. We shall call this reaching for more the "Vorgriff."[36]

Hence Rahner's argument for the *Vorgriff* is reductive because it asks about the formal conditions of the possibility of knowing within the subject.

Another example of Rahner's reductive procedure is his argument for the identity of knower and known, one of the central premises of his fundamental ontology.[37] On Rahner's account of knowing as self-presence it would seem that the proper object of knowledge is the knower's own subjectivity. But how then is receptive knowledge of the "other" of sense possible? Rabner concludes that it is possible only if the knower himself is the being of the other.

> How must a knower be understood ontologically, if, in spite of the metaphysical premise that knowledge is the presence-to-itself of an existent of a definite intensity of being, nevertheless there is to be an intuitive knowledge of another as the proper object? If according to the fundamental premise of the Thomistic metaphysics of knowledge only that which the knower itself is is known as proper object, and if, nevertheless, there is to be a knowledge in which this known as proper object is the other, then both of these can be understood as simultaneously possible only by the fact that *the knower itself is the being of the other.*[38]

Rahner's argument that "the knower itself is the being of the other" is reductive because it asks about the formal conditions of the possibility in the subject. But unlike his argument for the

[36] Ibid., 47.

[37] Rahner, *Harer des Wortes,* 2d ed., 44.

[38] Rabner, *Spirit in the World,* 79.

Vorgriff, the conditions are not merely epistemological but ontological. They do not concern the conditions of the possibility of knowledge but rather the nature or essence of the knower. This is consistent with Rahner's intention in *Hearer of the Word* to provide a "metaphysical analysis of human being"[39] rather than simply an account of the transcendental conditions of the possibility of human knowledge.

By contrast, an example of the "deductive" type of argument is provided by Rahner's "transcendental Christology" in which he seeks to give a "transcendental deduction" of faith in Christ.[40] Rabner argues that man is both a historical being and a being of absolute transcendence toward God. Consequently, he searches in his history for something like a "God-man" who would be the historical fulfillment of man's search for the absolute.[41] He also provides certain "existential" features such an ideal figure would possess including "absolute love of neighbor," "readiness for death," "hope in the future."[42] This transcendental deduction of the "idea" of a God-man attempts to show how the factual, historically conditioned faith in Jesus is necessary. "The transcendental deduction of an 'idea' is ... a reflection, which notes explicitly the 'necessary' in the factual ... and thereby justifies it."[43]

This deductive procedure is also characteristic of the "eschatological" argument Rabner provides for the infallibility of the Church in teaching. His starting point for that argument is the claim that by virtue of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, history has entered its "eschatological," "irreversible," and "definitive" *(endgultige)* stage. The Church is thus the continuing presence of God's final self-communication in Christ.[44] The deduction of the Church's infallibility follows from an analysis of

[39] Rahner, *Hearer of the Word,* 24.

[40] Karl Rahner, "Current Problems in Christology," *Theological Investigations,* vol. 1, trans. Cornelius Ernst, O.P. (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), 185ff.

[41] Ibid., 192; "Reflections on Methodology," 97; "Transecndental Theology," 288-89.

[42] Rahner, *Grundkurs des Glaubens,* 289-90; cf. *Foundations of Christian Faith,* trans. William V. Dych (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 208-10.

[43] Rahner, "Transcendental Theology," 288 (translation slightly modified; cf. "Transzendentaltheologie," 990).

[44] Karl Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments,* trans. W. J. O'Hara (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), 18.

consciousness. For Rahner, the Church becomes conscious of its own identity in acts in which it realizes itself. He speaks of these as acts of "absolute engagement." They seem to include all "official" acts of the Church in which it realizes its identity as the historical community of God's final self-communication in Jesus Christ. In addition to the sacraments, Rahner includes infallibility among such acts. Hence infallibility is seen to be necessary if the Church is able to realize its essence. If the Church were not infallible, it would lose its function as the sacrament of the "irreversible and victorious" salvation offered in Christ and would become a mere religious institution like the Jewish synagogue.[45]

Rahner's eschatological argument for the infallibility of the Church is deductive insofar as infallibility is seen to be necessary as a result of the self-realization *(Selbstvollzug)* of the Church. In this case we have a deduction not from the subjectivity of the individual but rather from the self-consciousness of the Church as a community. This self-consciousness comes to expression in the "official" acts of the Church and its representatives.

III. RAHNER'S FUNDAMENTAL THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS FOR INFALLIBILITY

In this section we shall examine Rahner's fundamental theological arguments for the infallibility of the Church as examples of transcendental arguments that combine both reductive and deductive elements.

Rahner provides three different versions of his fundamental-theological or apologetic argument for the infallibility of the Church in teaching. The basic point of each of them is that "being in the truth" necessarily requires expression in language and hence the preservation of the Church in the truth of the gospel necessarily requires propositions. I shall consider three versions of this argument: (1) the argument from the truth of propositions, (2) the argument from moral truth, and (3) the argument from

[45] Rahner, *Handbuch der Pastoraltheologie*, vol. 1 (Freiburg, Basel, Vienna: Herder, 1964), 133ff.

basic trust. Each of these arguments, I shall argue, has both reductive and deductive elements.

A) The Truth of Propositions

In his debate with Hans Kiing about infallibility, Rabner maintains that "being-in-the-truth" is possible only by means of true assertions. "Man lives in the truth only through true propositions, although 'being-in-the-truth' ... and having true propositions are not identical."[46] Rabner goes on to argue that the validity of every true judgment is grounded in a non-propositional knowledge of being and the first principles as the condition of its possibility.

> The evidence of every judgment is ultimately grounded in the evidence of first principles. These are essentially metaphysical, i.e., they purport to apply to being as such.... The evidence of the first principles ... is an objective insight, that affirms the metaphysical validity of these principles in every judgment which man makes and this affirmation implicitly posits the a priori conditions of the possibility of knowledge within the material world. With the necessity with which man judges he also co-posits and affirms the transcendental a priori structures of being as such.[47]

The first step in Rahner's argument is reductive. The condition of the possibility of any existential judgment is a non propositional knowledge of being and the first principles. This argument has a reductive form because it presupposes the fact that people make true judgments and asks about the conditions of this possibility. Then, having established these conditions, Rabner moves deductively to conclude that true propositions are necessarily an expression or objectification of nonpropositional knowledge of the truth. This argument itself depends upon the view that human being realizes itself by "thematizing" its prelinguistic knowledge of being in objective judgments. This epistemological insight into

[46] Karl Rahner, "Kritik an Hans Kiing," in *Zum Problem Unfelhbarkeit Antworten auf die Anfrage von Hans Kung* (Freiburg: Herder, 1971) 39.

[47] Karl Rahner, "Die Wahrheit bei Thomas v. Aquin," *Schriften zur Theologie* 10 (Zurich: Benziger, 1972), 34-35 (my translation; cf. "Thomas Aquinas on Truth," *Theological Investigations*, vol. 8, trans. David Bourke [London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975], 26).

the structure of knowing is interpreted ontologically in Rahner's "ontology of symbol" where he argues that human being is necessarily "expressive" or "symbolic": "every being is of itself necessarily symbolic, because it necessarily 'expresses' itself in order to find its essence."[48]

B) Moral Truth

Rahner argues, in effect, that the Golden Rule is a categorical imperative which demands one's absolute assent. When it is realized with an "absolute engagement" it is "infallibly true" in virtue of the structure of practical reason.

> [That] Every single person is to be respected as being of intrinsic worth and [that one is required] to love his neighbor as himself, is a proposition; ... [and I] recognize ... the duty and justification of an absolute assent to this proposition, and posit it before the absoluteness of practical reason as infallibly true.[49]

Rahner later gives up the view that this argument establishes the infallibility of propositionally true judgments. This admission alone would seem to condemn the argument to failure since it cannot show what it sets out to prove. Nevertheless, it is unclear why Rahner believes that he must show anything more than the possibility that such claims express true moral values. If the values expressed by the imperatives are permanently or "irreversibly" true then they are "infallible," since this is what the term implies with respect to doctrines.

There are, of course, problems with maintaining that truth can be predicated of moral imperatives. Generally speaking, truth or falsity is considered a predicate of propositions. By contrast, Rahner's appeal to moral imperatives is a defense of the possibility and necessity of ethically true propositions. According to

[48] Karl Rahner, "Zur Theologie des Symbols," *Schriften zur Theologie*, 4 (Zurich: Benziger, 1961) 283-84 (my translation; cf. "The Theology of Symbol," *Theological Investigations*, vol. 4 [Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966], 225-26).

[49] Rahner, "Kritik an Hans Kiing," 41.

Rahner's view, our interest in being moral stems from an interest in believing the truth. [50]

But Rahner's moral argument is not convincing. He defends the certainty of the judgments of conscience and our obligation to obey its dictates but once he gives up the claim that his argument can prove the infallibility of individual moral judgments he seems to retreat to the position of defending the absolute binding character of decisions of moral conscience. The following passage from Rahner's article entitled "Conscience" sounds remarkably like his "moral" argument for infallibility.

> where people must make decisions and act within the framework of their possibilities, after having given the alternatives sufficient thought, if they reach the conclusion that one of the alternatives is the right one, then their decision is absolutely binding on them. [51]

The most this argument could hope to establish is the duty of the individual to obey his conscience. It does not establish that decisions of conscience are true.

A better argument is already available to Rahner and follows the pattern of his argument for the truth of propositions generally. The fact that people make ethically true judgments is presupposed. Then one asks about the conditions of the possibility of such judgments and finds that they are possible by virtue of a nonobjective knowledge of "the Good" and moral first principles. Then one asks why one's factually moral judgments are necessary and deduces that it is so because human beings must necessarily express their moral judgments in symbolic or linguistic form in order to become conscious of the fact that what they take for "good" is truly good. Hence the necessity of expressing our nonobjective relation to goodness is deduced from the essential structures of the human consciousness.

Like his argument for the truth of propositions generally, this argument from moral truth would have both reductive and deductive elements.

[50] Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1985), 29.

[51] Rahner, "Conscience," *Theological Investigations*, vol. 22, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 6.

C) Basic Trust

Finally, we turn to Rahner's argument from basic trust. This argument has the same structure as the one from the truth of propositions. The condition of the possibility of affirming the truths of faith is a "basic trust" *(Grundvertrauen)* in the meaningfulness of existence. This argument is reductive and generally presupposed. Rahner then argues deductively from this fundamental or basic trust to its necessary expression in propositions. The Church's propositions of faith *(Glaubenssiitze)* are examples of propositions that express such a basic trust.

Rahner's most extensive presentation of his argument from basic trust is his article "Does the Church Offer Any Ultimate Certainties?" There he argues as follows:

> There is a certain basic state or basic attitude ... an ultimate trust in the meaningfulness of human existence, in the possibility of a full, all-embracing, and definitive salvation .... There are individual propositions, consisting of human concepts and words, which are put forward with the claim of being real and true-true and assured beyond any shadow of doubt, and so offering ultimate certainties. [52]

For Rahner, "basic trust" is a description of the phenomenon of religious faith. This "basic trust" is always mediated through "an objectified knowledge expressed in propositional form. "[53] Rahner also speaks of the attitude of "basic trust" as a decision *(Grundentscheidung)* in which one is faced with the question whether existence is fundamentally meaningful or trustworthy. Propositions that express or objectify this basic trust both originate from it and participate in the certainty it provides:

> There is ... a kind of consciously objectifying human knowledge which is expressed in terms which present the reality signified as object, and which shares in the special quality of the basic decision of man. In other words it participates in his ultimate sureness and certainty and in the temptations by

[52] Karl Rahner, "Does the Church Offer Any Ultimate Certainties?" *Theological Investigations*,vol. 14, trans. David Bourke (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976), 48-49.

[53] Ibid., 51.

which these are assailed in virtue of his human freedom.... There are many such statements which share in the nature of this ultimate sureness.[54]

Rahner's argument from basic trust presupposes the grace of faith, but it can be read as a straightforward .apologetic argument. As such it presupposes his account of freedom. On Rahner's view, the "original freedom" of the subject is conceived as a "basic decision" in which he decides for or against God as the transcendental ground and goal of freedom. Rahner's argument from basic trust is that the objectifications of such free decisions must necessarily express themselves in propositions. When such propositions are expressions of a "basic decision" they are necessarily true although whether particular propositions participate in this "basic trust" always remains partly hidden from the subject. This argument has a deductive structure because it moves from the experience of basic trust to its necessary expression in language.

As we have seen, the three fundamental-theological arguments for infallibility that we have discussed all have reductive and deductive elements. Now that the form of these arguments has been established, we shall turn to some of the criticisms that have been made of transcendental arguments in the philosophical literature.

IV. TRANSCENDENTAL METHODS AND TRANSCENDENTAL ARGUMENTS

Rahner's understanding of the "transcendental method" can be traced to the influence of the Belgian Jesuit Joseph Marechal who used this term to characterize Kant's transcendental procedure. By focusing upon methodological considerations, Marechal was able to appropriate Kant's procedure without accepting his idealism. In a similar way, analytic philosophers have attempted to revive Kantian-style "transcendental arguments" as a way of following Kant's method without necessarily having to accept his conclusions. Since both Transcendental Thomists and analytical philosophers focus on the formal features of Kant's thought, it should be possible to give an account of the transcendental method by

[54] Ibid., 52.

appealing to the structure of transcendental arguments. That is what I shall attempt to do here.

Following Kant, Reinhold Aschenberg has distinguished between a "regressive-analytical" and "progressive-synthetic" method or argumentative structure.[55] The "regressive" or "reductive" method presupposes the reality of certain synthetic a priori judgments as a "fact" and attempts an "analysis" of the elementary conditions of the possibility of such judgments. This corresponds roughly to the notion of a "transcendental reduction" as described by Rahner. The "progressive" method, by contrast, attempts to "deduce" the reality and existence of synthetic a priori judgments entirely from the principles that make experience possible. This approximates Rahner's description of the "transcendental deduction."

Aschenberg points out that the "regressive" and "progressive" methods differ in logical force. The "reductive" method is concerned with the possibility of something that is taken for granted or presupposed. It seeks sufficient conditions for the affirmation of that reality. By contrast, the "progressive" method is concerned with the necessity of the preconditions of something that cannot be taken for granted. It seeks to convince the skeptic by providing necessary conditions for the affirmation of the reality in question.[56]

Aschenberg has argued that the "progressive-synthetic" method, if it is possible at all, represents the only type of argument that can convince the skeptic and is thus is a cardinal condition for any sort of transcendental philosophy of the

[55] Reinhold Aschenberg, *Sprachanalyse und Transzendentalphilosophie* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982), 257ff.; "Transzendentale Argumentation, progressiv und analytisch: Zu Ross Harrisons analytischer Transzendentalphilosophie," *Bedingungen der Moglichkeit: "Transcendental Arguments" und transzendentales Denken*, ed. Eva Schaper and William Vossenkuhl (Stuggart: Kletta-Cotta. 1984), 57-79; "Uber transzendentale Argumente: Orientierung in einer Diskussion zu Kant und Strawson," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 85 (1978): 331-58; "Einiges iiber Selbstbewu Btseinals Prinzip der Transzendentalphilosophie," *Kants transzendentale Deduktion und die Moglichkeit van Transzendentalphilosophie*, Forum fiir Philosophie, Bad Homburg (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988), 53-55.

[56] Aschenberg, *Sprachanalyse und Transzendentalphilosophie*, 260-61.

Kantian type.[57] For Aschenberg, a "regressive" argument has a "meta-theoretical" rather than a strictly transcendental structure.

Although the distinction between "regressive" and "progressive" arguments is generally accepted, some defenders of the transcendental method have tried to unite them as two "moments" of one single process of transcendental reflection. Klaus Hartmann, Otto Muck, and Peter Eicher can all be read as trying to unite the "progressive" and "regressive" types of transcendental arguments under a single "regressive" rubric.[58] The paradigm for such an attempt would be Hegel's philosophy which, when read from the perspective of the history of self-consciousness, proceeds "genealogisch aus einem Anfang" while, read in terms of his logic, can be understood as a "Riickgang in den Grund."[59] But unless one begins from an intuitive grasp of self-consciousness or proceeds on the basis of some special logic, it is unclear how the demands for a "structural progressivity" and a "reductive" logic can be united.

Assuming the distinction between two types of transcendental arguments, the philosophically more interesting claim is represented by the "progressive" type. The "regressive" argument is less interesting by virtue of its being circular. It presupposes the sort of knowledge for which it then seeks grounds. By contrast, the "progressive" type seeks to ground knowledge of a certain type without presupposing such knowledge from the outset.[60]

There are, however, problems with transcendental arguments of this "progressive" type. The prime example of a "progressive" argument is a "transcendental deduction" of which Kant's deduction of the categories is the most notable example. But Kant

[57] Aschenberg, "Transzendentale Argumentation," 54.

[58] Klaus Hartmann, "Transzendentale Argumentation," 38-41; Muck, *Die transzendentale Methode,* esp. 61-71; Eicher, *Die anthropologische Wende,* 55-64.

[59] Hartman, "Transzendentale Argumentation," 40.

[60] Aschenberg, *Sprachanalyse und Transzendentalphilosophie,* 260-61. Kathryn Tanner writes, "Transcendental arguments on the whole provide conditions of possibility for something; but the rhetorical force of their employment varies depending upon whether that something is problematic or taken for granted prior to the argument. If that for which conditions are supplied is problematic, the point of the argument is to support it by providing those conditions. If conditions are supplied for something unproblematic, the purpose is to argue in support of those very conditions themselves" (Tanner, *God and Creation in Christian Theology,* 20).

assumes, in the words of Hilary Putnam, "that our conceptual choices are fixed once and for all by some thick transcendental structure of reason."[61] More precisely, Kant believes that the conceptual scheme discovered by a transcendental deduction is the only possible one. But Stephan Korner has argued persuasively that transcendental deductions fail precisely because of the impossibility of demonstrating the uniqueness of any particular conceptual scheme.[62]

Korner defines a transcendental deduction as "a logically sound demonstration of the reasons why a particular categorical schema is not only in fact, but also necessarily employed, in differentiating a region of experience."[63] The possibility of a transcendental deduction rests on two conditions: (1) that a categorical schema can be established and (2) that its uniqueness can be proven.[64] Although Korner accepts the possibility of establishing a particular categorical schema, he denies that one can demonstrate its uniqueness. In order to demonstrate the uniqueness of a particular conceptual schema, one would have to show that every way of differentiating experience belongs to it and is made in accord with it-and this, according to Korner, is impossible.

Korner considers three prima facie possibilities for demonstrating the uniqueness of a conceptual scheme.[65] First, one can compare it with experience undifferentiated by any prior scheme. But this is impossible since the statements by which one makes the

[61] Hilary Putnam, *Pragmatism: An Open Question* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1995), 30. Kathryn Tanner notes, "Kant ... assumes (1) that the preconditions of experience he adumbrates are necessary preconditions, the only preconditions of our experience of objects, and (2) that there are no alternative modes of meaningful human experience that cannot be accounted for with reference to the conditions of possibility he specifies" (Tanner, *God and Creation in Christian Theology,* 21-22).

[62] Stephan Korner, "The Impossibility of Transcendental Deductions," *The Monist* 51 (1967): 317-31. Kathyrn Tanner applies Korner's criticisms to transcendental arguments in theology and Karen Kilby has done so to criticize Rahner's transcendental theology; see: "The *Vorgriff auf Esse:* A Study in the Relation of Philosophy to Theology in the Thought of Karl Rahner" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1994). My argument follows the general line of thought developed by Kilby.

[63] Korner, "The Impossibility of Transcendental Deductions," 318-19.

[64] Ibid., 320.

[65] Ibid., 320-21.

comparison "cannot be formulated without employing some prior differentiation of experience." Second, one could compare the scheme with rival conceptual schemes, but the very notion of competing conceptual schemes concedes that one's scheme is not unique. Third, one could "examine the schema and its application entirely from within the schema itself, i.e., by means of statements belonging to it." But this could only show how the scheme functions with regard to the concepts we actually employ and "not that it is the only possible schema" by which we can order expenence.

In her article "Arguing Transcendentally," Eva Schaper criticizes Korner's arguments because "they are conducted in terms of whether there could be, or could be proved not to be, a choice between [sic] categorical schemes without inquiring whether there might not be a restriction upon us in the way of what can be envisaged as alternatives. "[66] Her criticism focuses primarily on the third of Korner's objections. She argues that if alternatives to the scheme that we are employing are not stateable except in terms of that scheme, then they are either variants of the scheme or unintelligible as alternatives. [67] The "necessity" of a scheme consists in the inability to conceive alternatives to it.[68]

This line of argument is developed by Rudiger Bubner in relation to the self-referentiality of transcendental arguments. Bubner believes that the central structure of any transcendental argument is its self-referential character. [69] That is, "the possibility of a transcendental reflection is connected with the possibility of the knowledge toward which the reflection is directed. Tran-

[66] Eva Schaper, "Arguing Transcendentally," *Kant-Studien* 63 (1972): 111-12.

[67] lbid., 108-9.

[68] "In the case of some transcendental arguments, it may be that things at least analogous to meaning relations or conceptual connections help underwrite the relevant necessary connection. Other transcendental arguments seem to turn at least in part on considerations of conceivability. Though we can in some weak sense conceive the impossible, it is traditional to maintain that there is a connection between conceivability of some suitably regimented sort and possibility, and the necessary seems to be that whose falsehood is not possible" Ooseph Mendola, "Transcendental Arguments," *A Companion to Metaphysics* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1995], 498-99).

[69] Riidiger Bubner, *Modern German Philosophy*, trans. Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 86-87; Bubner, "Kant, Transcendental Arguments and the Problem of Deduction," *Review of Metaphysics* 28 (1975): 463-64.

scendental reflection itself, therefore, demonstrates ... that in the conditions of our knowledge, once given, alternatives are inconceivable."[70] The process of showing that alternative conceptual schemes to the one in use are inconceivable consists in "ruling out alternative forms of knowledge."[71] If this can be done, then it shows that "transcendental argumentation recognizes something about understanding in general."[72]

Richard Rorty has criticized that notion that there might be "restrictions upon us in the way of what can be envisaged as alternatives"[73] to our present conceptual scheme. Rorty says that transcendental argumentation "merely recognizes that one suggested alternative description to our present understanding won't work."[74] It does not "show that every alternative proposed would have the same defect" since this would require us "to know in advance the range of the skeptic's imagination."[75] This would require us to be able to imagine every possible future alternative and rule it out as an alternative. As Rorty says:

> To know in advance that every alternative description of the content to which we hope our scheme corresponds (or, which comes to the same thing, every alternative conceptual scheme) would have the same defect would be able to do in philosophy what nobody dreams we can do in science-predict that any new theory to come along will merely be a disguised version of our present theory.[76]

Thus Rorty rejects the notion that transcendental arguments place restrictions upon what we can in principle conceive as alternatives to our present conceptual scheme. As he writes, "Pace Bubner, nothing in heaven or earth could set limits to what we can in principle conceive; the best we might do is show nobody has in

[70] Bohner, *Modem German Philosophy,* 86-87. See Bohner, "Kant, Transcendental Arguments and the Problem of Deduction," 464-65, for a more detailed analysis.

[71] Bohner, "Kant, Transcendental Arguments and the Problem of Deduction," 463.

[72] Ibid., 465.

[73] Eva Schaper, "Arguing Transcendentally," 111-12.

[74] Richard Rorty, "Transcendental Arguments, Self-Reference, and Pragmatism," in *Transcendental Arguments and Science: Essays in Epistemology,* ed. Peter Bieri et al. (Dordrecht and Boston: D. Reidel), 82.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

fact conceived of an exception. So there can be no advance on a 'merely factual demonstration' by introducing self-referentiality. "[77]

We have argued that the "transcendental method" can be understood in terms of a distinction between two types of transcendental arguments: a "progressive" and a "regressive" type. In addition, we have maintained that these two types of arguments vary in logical force. Finally, we have indicated problems with the "progressive" type of transcendental argument based upon interpreting the notion of "necessity" in terms of "conceivability." Now we are in a position to consider how these criticisms might apply to Rahner's transcendental arguments.

V. APPLICATION OF CRITICISMS TO RAHNER'S ARGUMENTS

In our examination of some of the criticisms that have been directed against transcendental arguments, we focused on criticisms of the "progressive" or "deductive" type of argument rather than the "regressive" or "reductive" type. We did this for a number of reasons. First, as Aschenberg has argued, a "progressive" or "deductive" argumentative structure is central to any transcendental philosophy. If this so, then an approach to theology that purports to apply transcendental philosophy in its service must employ such arguments. Second, it is the philosophically more interesting argument. A "deductive" or "progressive" argument, if successful, would show the necessary and not merely the sufficient conditions under which a particular state of affairs must obtain. It therefore constitutes a stronger claim than the regressive argument. This has implications for Rahner's arguments as well. If one can show that the objections to the deductive type of argument can be overcome, then they succeed as arguments. This would mean, for instance, that the infallibility of the Church could be deduced transcendentally from the structure of human knowing and willing. Such an argument would in principle constitute a successful apologetic argument for infallibility because it would be universal and necessary; it would

[77] Ibid., 83.

be unreasonable to deny such an argument, whether one were a Catholic Christian or not.

We have shown that Rahner's arguments for infallibility have both reductive and deductive elements. To characterize the arguments schematically: Rahner argues from a particular phenomenon (true propositions, moral truths, faith or dogmatic propositions) to the conditions of its possibility (nonpropositional knowledge of being and the first principles, moral first principles, basic trust in the meaningfulness of existence) and then to the necessity of the phenomena. The final stage in each of these arguments is deductive and this is decisive because it establishes the necessity of true propositions and this is the heart of Rahner's argument for infallibility in each case.

As we have seen, however, transcendental arguments of the deductive type have been subject to criticism because they cannot establish that the conditions argued for are necessary or unique. It has been argued that to justify the claim that A is a necessary condition of the possibility of B one would have to enumerate all the possible cases of B and show that in all cases but A, B would be impossible.[78] This would imply the ability to survey all conceivable possibilities of B in order to rule out possible counter-examples; such a possibility appears doubtful.

It is important to remember that the conditions about which we are talking are always conditions that obtain in virtue of a conceptual scheme. The question is not only whether A is a necessary condition of the possibility of B, but whether there are alternative schemes to our current one in which this is not the case. Hence, we do not have to consider the question whether there are counter-examples within a particular scheme, but whether there are alternative schemes that present counter-examples which we cannot currently conceive or imagine.

The difficulty with Rahner's transcendental arguments for infallibility is the presupposition that a Transcendental Thomist philosophical scheme is unique or necessary. We have seen that there are reasons to deny this is the case on general philosophical grounds but, in addition, there are also reasons internal to

[78] Kilby, "The *Vorgriff auf Esse*," 51.

Rahner's theology for doubting that this is the case. First, Rahner sometimes argues that transcendental theology is not simply an application of transcendental philosophy to the problems of theology but involves arguing reductively from within faith itself. Second, he sometimes contrasts his "transcendental method" with more "indirect" modes of argument which involve inductive and informal modes of argument that are cumulative in character. [79] Such arguments do not require one to assume that the conceptual scheme one employs is unique since such arguments yield results that are probable rather than necessary. Third, Rahner's claim that a genuine pluralism in theology and philosophy means that the attempt to establish a perennial philosophy is obsolete applies equally to the system of Transcendental Thomism. [80] If there is no longer any one philosophy that can integrate and mediate the insights of the various human and natural sciences, then there is no single conceptual scheme that is necessary or unique for understanding reality. Hence Rahner's recognition of the fact of pluralism undermines his own defense of transcendental theology when this is understood as an application of transcendental philosophy to the subject matter of theology (where the employment of transcendental arguments of the deductive type is seen as a cardinal feature of such a transcendental philosophy).

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have criticized Rahner's "transcendental method" to the extent that it is understood as the application of "transcendental philosophy" to the subject matter of theology. I have done so mainly by applying some general philosophical criticisms of transcendental arguments to Rahner's apologetic arguments for the infallibility of the Church in teaching. If the argument of this paper is correct, Rahner's "transcendental method" is much more problematic than many of its proponents have assumed.

[79] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith,* 346£.; "Reflections on Methodology in Theology," 75f.; cf. N. H. Healy, "Indirect Methods in Theology: Karl Rahner as an ad hoc Apologist," *The Thomist* 54 (1992): 613-33.

[80] Rahner, "Reflections on Methodology in Theology," 74-75.

Nevertheless, one ought to be careful in drawing general conclusions about Rahner's theology from this limited examination of his method. There are several reasons for this. First, as we have seen, Rahner at times denies that his "transcendental method" is a systematic application of transcendental philosophy to the subject matter of theology. A complete evaluation of his method would have to attempt to reconcile his conflicting statements on the issue. Second, for theological reasons having to do with the relation between nature and grace, Rahner believes his transcendental method enables him to conceive revelation so as to steer between the Scylla of neo-Scholastic extrinsicism and the Charybdis of Roman Catholic modernism.[81] A complete evaluation of his method would therefore have to consider and evaluate its possible theological advantages. Third, Rahner sometimes says that this method is "transcendental" only in a very loose or "prephilosophical" sense. He speaks of the "prescientific" character of his theology and the need for an indirect appeal to evidence similar to Newman's appeal to the illative sense. The conclusions of these broadly inductive arguments would yield results that were probable rather than necessary and hence would not be subject to the criticisms advanced here. Moreover, the critique of transcendental arguments we have presented does not rule out a priori arguments or appeals to logical necessity in general but only the type of transcendental necessity we have been criticizing. Fourth, as we have seen, Rahner sometimes employs broadly reductive "transcendental arguments" that presuppose faith and merely seek conditions of possibility that will render a particular belief coherent. There is nothing in the criticisms I have presented that would rule out such arguments. But given these qualifications, I believe that these criticisms represent a strong challenge to Rahner's transcendental method and its proponents.

[81] Karl Rahner, "Observations on the Concept of Revelation," in Joseph Ratzinger and Karl Rahner, *Revelation and Tradition*, trans. W. J. O'Hara (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 9-25.

The Thomist 63 (1999): 217-40

DEPOSITUM GI.ADIUS NON *DEBET RESTITUI FURIOSO:* PRECEPTS, *SYNDERESIS,* AND VIRTUES IN SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

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CAREFUL READERS of Thomas Aquinas's work soon become aware of his liking for using the same or similar examples to illustrate all kinds of argument. This method actually makes the researcher's task easier, as he can set out from the assumption that the subjects explained using the same examples are in some way connected. Moreover, if we look further into the history of these correlations, we often find that they provide an important key for problems that may arise from the text.

This is the case when we seek out all the occasions on which Aquinas uses a particular example to shed light on the controversial subject of the immutability of natural law. The example in question has a long history, going back to the first book of Plato's *Republic;* Aquinas usually transcribes it as "depositum gladius non debet restitui furioso," although some variations also occur. We shall first look at the context in which Plato situates this idea, then go on to examine the occasions on which Aquinas draws on it: in the *Summa,* when discussing the question as to whether the natural law is the same for everyone; in his *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics,* when he explains in what sense natural law may change, and in what sense it remains the same; and finally, where he examines the virtues of *gnome* and *epieikeia,* also in the *Summa.*

I. PLATO'STEXT: *REPUBLIC* 331C-332A

The first book of the *Republic,* the *Thrasymachus,* deals in a general way with justice. After Cephalus speaks, Socrates responds by asking for an explanation of his definition of justice:

> An admirable sentiment, Cephalus, said I. But speaking of this very thing, justice, are we to affirm thus without qualification that it is truthtelling and paying back what one has received from anyone, or may these very actions sometimes be just and sometimes unjust? I mean, for example, as everyone I presume would admit, if one took over weapons from a friend who was in his right mind and then the lender should go mad and demand them back, that we ought not to return them in that case and that he who did so return them would not be acting justly-nor yet would he who chose to speak nothing but the truth to one who was in that state. [1]

This is the example that Aquinas was to appropriate and apply to the issues mentioned above concerning the immutability of natural law and the nature of justice: "depositum gladius non debet restitui furioso." It is therefore interesting to analyze this with care, especially Socrates' query, "Are we to affirm thus without qualification that it is truth-telling and paying back what one has received from anyone, or may these very actions sometimes be just and sometimes unjust?" In this context, it is useful to bear in mind a nuance in the Greek text which the English translation does not always make clear. What Socrates says is not that the actions of returning what is owed and telling the truth may sometimes be just or unjust. What he says is that these actions are sometimes done justly, sometimes unjustly. [2]

As we can infer from the text, the counterpoint is set up between an excessively "casuistical" view of justice, as shown by the condition "in all cases," and a view of justice as a "way of acting," which is reflected in the use of adverbs: things that are done *justly*

[1] Plato, *Republic* l.33 lcl-12.

[2] TOUTO o' mh6, Tliv OlKQIOOUVflV,rr6n:pa aMj0nav aUTO ELVOI arr7u7ic; ouTWc; Kai TO arro0106vat aV Ttc; TI rrapa TOU Aclj3i:J, aUTcl mum fonv EVlOTE µEV OtKa(wc;,EVloTE of. aOIKwc; 1TOtETv;olov TOlOVOE AEyw· aV 1TOU ElrrOI, d nc; Aclj301 napa <j>(AOU avopOc; aw<j>pOVoUVTCJ<; OlTAa, El µavcic; CtnatTOI, OTI oUTE Tel TOtaUTa anoo106vat, oUTE O(Katoc; aV Elfl 6 CtlTOOlOOIX;,000' au npOc; TOV OUTWc; £xovrn navrn *tett.wv* TaAf18ij Atyn v (ibid.).

and *unjustly*. This view, as far as everything else goes, is valid not just for justice but in general for every other virtue. For the possession of a virtue means acting *in a certain way,* rather than materially carrying out certain actions. Plato himself insisted on this on other occasions, as in the *l.Aches,* when he speaks of valor.[3] He uses this to draw attention to the shortcomings of a casuistic definition of the virtues: there are actions that generally show certain virtues, but that might in some cases not do so. Plato thereby diverts attention from the matter to the *form* of the act. Aristotle was to emphasize this point more clearly by associating the form of acts with the moral disposition of the agent: "actions are called just and temperate when not only are they such that the just or temperate man may do them, but also the man who does them does them as just and temperate men do them."[4]

In the *Republic,* however, Socrates perseveres with the suggestion that the definition of justice should be modified, because he understands that the idea of justice must include *all the acts* of this virtue. Thus, according to Socrates, "this is not the definition of justice-to tell the truth and return what one has received,"[5] as on occasions acting justly means that one should not give back what one has received. But Polemarchus, his conversation partner at this point, opposes this. Calling on Simonides' authority, Polemarchus insists that the just action is to return to everyone what one owes. Without passing judgement on Simonides' words, Socrates can do no more than repeat his difficulty concerning the way of interpreting these words:

> I must admit, said I, that it is not easy to disbelieve Simonides. For he is a wise and inspired man. But just what he may mean by this you, Polemarchus, doubtless know, but I do not. Obviously he does not mean what we were just speaking of, this return of a deposit to anyone whomsoever even if he asks it back when not in his right mind. And yet what the man deposited is due to him in a sense, is it not?[6]

[3] Plato, *Laches* 190e2ff.

[4] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.4.l 105b6-9.

[5] Plato, *Republic* l.331dl-2.

[6] Ibid. 33 le8-16.

The difficulty outlined by Socrates finds no satisfactory solution in the dialogue. In other places, Plato sets out the problem in a slightly different way: conflating the virtues and the arts almost entirely,[7] he understands that both have a single proper end,[8] which requires in practice the intervention of a "royal art" that can direct the use of both in concrete cases.[9] This "royal art" consists of "knowing how to use," which partly recalls Aristotle's concept of prudence. It seems clear that this "knowing how to use" is what Socrates felt the lack of in Simonides' definition of justice, if it was supposed to apply to all possible cases. Aristotle resolved this problem in his own way: when he introduces the distinction between natural or imperfect virtue (which can be defined as the simple tendency to good works) and moral or perfect virtue, he points out that the latter cannot exist without prudence.[10]

To return to the main point, in the light of the above, what interests us here is to examine Aquinas's use of the example quoted by Socrates to see how far the philosophical issues latent in this example afford us a deeper understanding of the frequently contested Thomist doctrine of natural law.[11]

II. PRECEPTS AND PRACTICAL WISDOM

One of the places in which this example appears is in *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 4, illustrating the sense in which natural law can be said to vary. What this article asks is "whether the natural law is the same for all." To answer this question, Aquinas begins by establishing one basic thesis as his starting point: "to the natural law belong all those things to which man has a natural inclination,

[7] Ibid. 332dl-2.

[8] Plato, *Cratylus* 386e8-387b9.

[9] Plato, *Euthydemus* 278e4-282a9; 288e-292e. See Volker Hildebrandt, *Virtutis non est virtus: ein scholastischer Lehrsatz zur naturgemiissen Bestimmung vernunftigen Handelns in seiner Vorgeschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1989).

[10] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.13.1144b31.

[11] See Robert A. Gahl, "From the Virtue of a Fragile Good to a Narrative Account of Natural Law," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 37 (1997): 457-72.

among which there figures as proper to man the fact that he inclines towards acting according to reason." [12]

As Aquinas himself states, reason proceeds by setting out from common principles and reaching proper, more specific conclusions, though this takes place in one way for speculative reason, and in another for practical reason. After comparing the way these two types of reason proceed, he concludes that, in contrast to what happens on the speculative level, where the conclusions enjoy the same universality as the premises, on the practical level the conclusions (secondary precepts) [13] do not always have the same validity in all circumstances. In fact, Aquinas says, if we are talking about "the particular conclusions of practical reason, truth or rectitude is not the same in all, nor is it equally known in those in which it is the same." [14] To illustrate this point, he brings in the example of the "depositum":

> Thus it is right and true for all to act according to reason. And from this principle it follows as a proper conclusion that goods entrusted to another should be restored to their owner. Now this is true for the majority of cases, but it may happen in a particular case that it would be injurious, and therefore unreasonable, to restore goods held in trust; for instance if they are claimed for the purpose of fighting against one's country. [15]

According to Aquinas, then, the secondary precepts of natural law may fail or miscarry *ut in paucioribus* not only as far as knowledge of them is concerned (as in the case of people whose inadequate disposition means that they never manage to understand that some precept is good) [16] but also as far as their reliability is concerned, "in the same way that generable and corruptible

[12] *STh* 1-11, q. 94, a. 4.

[13] See R. A. Armstrong, *Primary and Secondary Precepts in Thomistic Natural Law Teaching* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966).

[14] *STh* 1-11, q. 94, a. 4.

[15] Ibid.

[16] "Et hoc propter hoc quod aliqui habent depravatam rationem ex pasione, seu ex mala consuetudine, seu ex mala habitudine naturae; sicut apud Germanos olim latrocinium non reputabatur iniquum, cum tamen si expresse contra legem naturae, ut refert Iulius Caesar, in libro de hello Gallico" *(STh* 1-11, q. 94, a. 4).

natures are sometimes defective because of some impediment." [17] (The reference to the mutability of generable and corruptible natures therefore constitutes a key for interpreting correctly the variable character of natural law. We shall return to this subject below.) Nonetheless, this lack of reliability should not be attributed so much to the precept considered in itself as to the precept seen through its application to action. This variation has taken place in its turn only because, in the action which that precept was designed to regulate, a "circumstance" has been introduced that notably modifies the object of the action itself, to the extent that this action can no longer be regarded *in the first instance* or exclusively as yet another case of the same precept, at least as long as the "perturbing" circumstances are present. While circumstances of this kind remain, the action has to be governed by a different precept which practical reason must determine. [18]

The fact that the secondary precepts of natural law are open to erroneous application demonstrates that this law cannot be reduced to a code of regulations, as this would be of less practical use. If natural law is to govern action effectively, it must provide us with certain knowledge as to what precept should be used in any particular case. If not, then how can we determine which precept to use? We must return here to the classic answer that prudence, seen as a very special way of "knowing how to use" that does not exist without moral virtue, was for Aristotle the practical criterion governing action: only prudence equips us to discern in each case which precept (or habit) it is appropriate to use. [19]

For Aquinas too, prudence is at once an intellectual and a moral virtue: an intellectual one because it is a way of knowing, and a moral one because it does not exist without the correctness

[17] "sicut etiam naturae generabiles et corruptibiles deficiunt ut in paucioribus, propter impedimenta" (ibid.).

[18] These are not circumstances that belong to the sources of the morality of a given action, aside from its object and its end, but rather circumstances that, by modifying the object of the act, place it under a different moral species.

[19] Although I do not share all his criticisms and analyses, see D. M. Nelson, *The Priority of Prudence: Virtue and Natural Law in Thomas Aquinas and the Implications for modern Ethics* (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1992).

of appetite that is the product of moral virtue.[20] Like Aristotle, Aquinas maintains that prudence is an acquired virtue,[21] and he frames Aristotle's problem concerning moral learning in a similar way: if moral virtue cannot exist without prudence, and prudence cannot exist without moral virtue, and if all these virtues are acquired, then how can someone act righteously? In this context, it seems timely to underscore the fact that when we call prudence an acquired virtue, this does not rule out the previous existence of an imperfect form of prudence, that is, a more or less steady natural inclination to direct one's own conduct in accordance with reason. According to Aristotle, this inclination exists. It is an inclination that does not consist simply of acting in accordance with a morally neutral reason,[22] as, for him, acting according to reason is the same as acting according to the virtues, to which we have a natural aptitude. However, speaking of an inclination within the reason (the reason being for Aristotle a potency for opposites)[23] presupposes the existence of something that robs reason of its original indeterminateness. Aristotle himself did not discuss this, but Aquinas alludes to the problem when he mentions the existence of a natural habit of the reason known as synderesis,[24] which he refers to elsewhere, significantly, as "the nursery of virtues."

Of course, the idea of a natural habit implies more when it comes to finding a basis for ethics. What interests us here, however, is that in the operational order Aquinas attributes to synderesis the function of prescribing *intellectually* the ends of the virtues of practical reason, thus clarifying a point that Aristotle left implicit.[25] Thanks to synderesis, then, practical reason knows

[20] This was to be modified in Duns Scotus's writing, as Professor Fernando Inciarte (Munster) has shown me.

[21] See P. Hall, *Narrative and the Natural Law: An Interpretation of Thomistic Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 94.

[22] *As* could be understood from the explanation by A. Gomez Lobo in "The *ergon* Inference," *Phronesis* 34 (1989): 170-84.

[23] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 9.2.5.

[24] See *STh* 1-11, q. 49, a. 4, ad 3; *De Verit.*, q. 16, a. 2, ad 4.

[25] The idea that Aquinas's moral thinking attempts in part to address the problems Aristotle had left open, making explicit matters that in Aristotle were only implicit, is the main thesis of the book by M. Rhonheimer, *Praktische Vernunft und die Vernilnftigkeit der*

two important things when the time comes to act: that it must act in accord with the ends of the virtues, and that it must avoid acts that are contrary to such ends. This knowledge of the principles is what makes practical learning possible later, in that it enables people to acquire moral virtues and prudence.[26] Moreover, this knowledge of the principles is what the prudent man has managed to incorporate naturally into his actions.

In Aquinas's thinking, it is synderesis that makes it possible to refer to natural law as something greater than a collection of codifiable precepts. Of course, every law, especially the natural law, is "something that belongs to reason"[27] and not just a habit. For this reason, it consists properly speaking of a series of precepts ordered towards the human good.[28] However, these precepts are "promulgated" by practical reason to regulate our concrete action in accordance with certain principles that we know through a natural habit. It is this natural habit which so to speak "feeds" the practical reason, guiding it in all cases. The fact that synderesis is a habit means, among other things, that the judicial formulation of its contents, in the form of a code of precepts, will never be exhaustive. At most, it will be able to indicate the normal route by which the virtues are acquired, and the actions that never accompany virtue. All this means that the precepts alone, without synderesis, do not constitute a definitive criterion. There are times when a general precept must not be applied, as in the case of the borrowed sword. To recognize such cases, it is not enough to have a selection of precepts: what is needed is the practical wisdom proper to the prudent man, who can judge concrete actions in the light of the principles. The *formulation* of the precepts is always a later task, which, as has occasionally been noted, Aquinas does not credit with particular importance. That is why he does not seem concerned to enumerate them. All this shows us that if we want to understand

Praxis: Handlungstheorie bei Thomas von Aquin in ihrer Entstehung aus dem Problemkontext der aristotelischen Ethik (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994).

[26] See D. Westberg, *Right Practical Reason: Aristotle, Action and Prudence in Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

[27] See *ITh* I-II, q. 90, a. 1; q. 91, a. 1; q. 94, a. 1.

[28] See *ITh* I-II, q. 94, a. 1. M. Rhonheimer emphasizes this: see *Naturals Grund/age der Moral,* 67-76.

the way that Aquinas sees the natural law, we must emphasize the connection of precepts through a form of wisdom responsible for directing action.

III. MUTABILITY AND IMMUTABILITY OF NATURAL LAW

To shed further light on the connection of the precepts through wisdom, we can look at another passage referring to Plato's example, this time from the *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics.* This is the commentary on the text by Aristotle in which the latter asserts that "with us there is something that is just even by nature, yet all of it is changeable."[29] Aquinas, like Aristotle before him, understands that it is important to dispute this point, as the thinkers who reject the existence of something that is by nature just use this as support for their arguments, maintaining that everything that is whatever it is by nature is immutable, whereas what is just varies on occasions, as in the case of the borrowed sword. In fact, "nothing would seem to be more just than returning what has been borrowed to its owner, and yet you do not have to return a borrowed sword to a madman, or money for arms to your country's enemy."[30]

To answer this objection, Aquinas begins by distinguishing two types of nature: the divine nature, which is immutable throughout, and human nature, which dwells among corruptible things and which thus lies halfway between the two spheres:

> For us men who live among corruptible things, there is certainly something natural, yet everything in us is mutable, either *per se,* like having feet, or *per accidens,* like having a tunic, and similarly, even though everything that is just

[29] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.7.1134b30. According to Jaffa this is one of the most mysterious passages in the *Nicomachean Ethics.* See H. V. Jaffa, *Thomism and Aristotelianism: A Study of the Commentary by Thomas Aquinas on the Nicomachean Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 179.

[30] "Nihil enim videtur esse magis iustum quam quod deponenti depositum reddatur et tamen non est reddendum depositum furioso reposcenti gladium vel proditori patriae reposcenti pecunias ad arma" (V *Ethic.,* lect. 12 [1134b24], 147-53).

for us is in some sense mutable, it is also true that some of these things are just by nature.[31]

It is important to distinguish between what is mutable *per se* and what is mutable *per accidens,* because Aquinas's answer goes along the lines of asserting the mutability *per accidens* of what is just by nature. In fact, one of the features of what is natural or *secundum naturam* proper to corruptible natures is that it occurs *ut in pluribus* but may not be borne out *ut in paucioribus.* According to Aquinas, the secondary precepts of natural law are *secundum naturam* in this sense, like generable, corruptible natures, in such a way that they are mutable *per accidens:*

It is manifest that also in other things that are natural for us the same determination is true as in the case of naturally just things; since those things that are natural for us are certainly the same most of the time, but occasionally fail. For example, it is natural for the right side to be stronger than the left, even though there are some people whose left hand is as strong as the right and who become ambidextrous. Similarly, even those things which are naturally just, like returning a deposit, should be observed most of the time, but on occasions change.[32]

The above text hints at the possibility of a change in human nature, something that Aquinas states more clearly elsewhere. What I would like to do here is consider a text from the *Secunda Secundae* referring to the mutability of human nature, which then goes on to use the example of the borrowed sword:

[31] "Apud nos homines, qui inter res corruptibiles sumus, est aliquid quidem secundum naturam, et tamen quicquid est in nobis est mutabile vel per se vel per accidens; nihilominus tamen est in nobis aliquid naturale, sicut habere pedes, et aliquid non naturale, sicut habere tunicam, et sic etiam, licet omnia quae sunt apud nos iusta aliqualiter moveantur, nihilominus tamen quaedam eorum sunt naturaliter iusta" (V *Ethic.,* lect. 12 [1134b27], 160-68).

[32] "Manifestum esse quod etiam in aliis naturalibus quae sunt apud nos eadem determinatio congruit sicut et in naturaliter iustis; ea enim quae sunt naturalia apud nos, sunt quidem eodem modo ut in pluribus, sed ut in paucioribus deficiunt, sicut naturale est quod pars dextera sit vigorosior quam sinistra et hoc in pluribus habet veritatem, et tamen contingit ut in paucioribus aliquos fieri ambidextros qui sinistram manum habent ita valentem ut dexteram; ita etiam et ea quae sunt naturaliter iusta, utputa depositum esse reddendum, ut in pluribus est observandum, sed ut in paucioribus mutatur" (V *Ethic.,* lect. 12 [1134b33], 185-96).

That which is natural to one whose nature is unchangeable must needs be such always and everywhere. But man's nature is changeable, wherefore that which is natural to man may sometimes fail. Thus the restitution of a deposit to the depositor is in accordance with natural equality, and if human nature were always right, this would always to be observed; but since it happens that man's will is unrighteous, there are cases in which a deposit should not be restored, lest a man of unrighteous will make evil use of the thing deposited: as when a madman or an enemy of the common weal demands the return of his weapons.[33]

What is natural for man is modified as his nature undergoes modification. What is permanent is the relationship between nature, which is the origin, and what is natural, which is what is originated. It is interesting to note that in the above text the reference to a possible perversion of the human will appears as a cause of human nature's lack of rectitude and, in the last instance, of the fact that a precept which is naturally right ceases to be so when it is put into practice. On such an occasion, Aquinas maintains that the perversion of the human will is not only responsible for the defective knowledge of a precept of natural law, as is the case in the text of the *Prima Secundae* referred to above, but even for the fact that this precept is not always correct (a shortcoming that is always relative to the application of this precept in a given situation).

The term "perversion of the will" is a way of referring to sin, as when someone sins the will becomes sick, not so much because it wants something that is positively bad as because it wants something good, but the manner of its wanting is bad. This is why Aquinas says that sin occurs *praeterintentionem*:[34] what the agent wants when he sins is not something bad, but a given good, though in such a way that *per accidens* the will is perverted and is diverted away from the good apportioned to it. In any case, by stating that sin has a cause *per accidens*, and that the variable correctness of the precepts of natural law ultimately depends on this cause *per accidens*, Aquinas excludes an essential mutation of natural law, for the same reason as he rules out an essential mutation of nature.

[33] *STh* II-II, q. 57, a. 2, ad 1.

[34] See J.M. Boyle, "*Praeter Intentionem* in Aquinas," *The Thomist* 42 (1978): 649-65.

In fact, in Aquinas's view nature is always a teleological principle which, of itself *(per se)* always strives for a good, although it sometimes, *per accidens,* gives rise to a defect.[35] The same goes for the movements and properties we call natural, as we can see from his commentary on the text in the *Ethics* in which Aristotle speaks of the right hand and the left hand. According to Aristotle, the right hand is stronger *by nature,* and this, which is *secundum naturam,* is true for the majority *(ut in pluribus).* If in other cases this is not true, then the reasons are accidental *(per accidens),* be it for natural reasons or through habit (i.e., because someone exercises the other hand).

It is clear that in this last sense (by habit) we could also talk of a change in the natural law (as long as this is a secondary precept): exercising the other hand gives rise to a contrary disposition which seems to be natural. However, this type of change does not so much affect the correctness of the precepts as the knowledge and practical application of them. What we are interested in here is the other kind of variation: variation in the correctness of a precept or, rather, variation relative to the correctness of its application in a given case. In this sense, there is evidence that Aquinas admits a certain variation analogous to that which is registered in the natural/physical order-a variation through accidental causes which, as we have read in the text from the *Secunda Secundae,* Aquinas also attributes to the perversion of the human will.

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the ailing will in this case is not that of the agent (e.g., the person who ought to act in accord with the precept of giving back borrowed items), but rather that of the sword's owner (who was to be given it back), in view of which the agent decides not to apply a precept which is correct in principle. Presuming that the sword's owner will use it badly, the agent decides not to return it. To the extent that the bad use of something is the product of an ailing will, and an ailing will is nothing other than a will that has become used to sin, we must assert that sin has introduced an accidental factor to the world which the prudent man must not ignore when

[35] See A. Quevedo, *Ens per accidens: contingencia y determinaci6n en Arist6teles* (Parnplona: EUNSA, 1989).

exerc1smg his power of judgment. This is a factor which, for example, makes it inappropriate in some cases to apply the positive precept recommending the return of property. Thus,

> When the thing to be restored appears to be grievously injurious to the person to whom it is to be restored, or to some other, it should not be restored to him there and then, because restitution is directed to the good of the person to whom is made, since all possessions come under the head of the useful.[36]

By saying this, Aquinas is not inviting us to reason exclusively with regard to whatever consequences might follow: he adds an essential reason. For him, external goods are ordered by their very nature to the good of the body; at the same time, external goods are ordered by their very principle to humanity in general (if private property belongs to natural law, this is only because, in principle, private property is a better way of safeguarding the common good). This means that external goods are also ordered by their very nature to usefulness or the common good.

It is vitally important to have this ordering of goods in mind if we are to understand why in some cases it is justifiable not to return a borrowed item. A careful reading of the versions Aquinas offers of a possible variation in the rightness of the precept of restitution will show us that all cases are justified with reference to a definite practical damage to the common good (almost always illustrated by the idea of an "attack against the *patria").* Plato before him had considered the possibility that the man who is given the sword back might use it against himself.[37] These are not contradictory motives, as both the man who uses an external good to attack his own physical integrity and the man who uses it against the common good are contradicting the natural use of goods which is presupposed in the exercise of justice.[38] According

[36] *STh* I-II, q. 62, a.5, ad 1.

[37] "He who has to return gold to a lender does not give back what he owes if there is some disadvantage incurred by retutning or receiving" (Plato, *Republic* 1.332al 1-b2).

[38] The idea of the "natural use" of goods does not entail any kind of fixity. It is not an attempt to limit the ends of human action a priori, but of expressing a condition for their moral consistency. Using is always a voluntary act (the active use of the will), and as such, it can be morally good or bad, which is different from a good or bad technical use. Unlike the technical use, a good moral use makes it necessary to preserve the integrity of the human good, and this only happens if the agent, while it pursues its particular objectives, preserves

to this, returning the borrowed sword in certain cases would mean betraying the very essence of justice. In effect, this virtue cooperates with the human good, by guaranteeing that in human relationships each person will want everyone to have his own property, in the conviction that having one's own things is good for everyone. In our example, keeping the precept of restitution would mean attacking the very essence of justice, because giving the madman his sword back would mean giving him the opportunity to misuse it by doing harm to himself and to others. Naturally, if we are to make this decision, and deprive someone of something that in principle belongs to him, then we must have well-grounded reasons. Where such reasons are not present, the just action is always to return the sword.

In principle, all this is in keeping with Aquinas's thesis that the lack of rightness of a precept goes back to the perversion of the human will. We have seen repeatedly that, considered in themselves, all the precepts that derive from the first principles are correct. Any possible lack of rectitude would depend on their application to certain actions that appear to come under the heading of that precept, but that really do not, because the course of the action has been crossed by some circumstance that actually turns round the meaning of the precept if it is applied. If the precept is of itself ordered to justice, the presence of this circumstance will rightly make us fear that justice itself would not be a good, should that precept be applied. The only thing capable of inverting the sense of a precept which is good *per se* is a bad use of the precept on the part of a will. For this reason, Aquinas states that these "perturbing" circumstances depend on the perversion of the human will. In this sense, if there were no sin, all precepts would be universally applicable, as such circumstances would not arise.[39]

Thus the variation in the rightness of a precept depends on accidental causes. This would seem also to be confirmed in Aquinas's commentary on Aristotle's text, as there Aquinas echoes word for word the comparison Aristotle draws between the

in its action the prescribed order: external goods for the well-being of the body, and the body for the well-being of the soul.

[39] See Aristotle, *Politics* 7.13.1332all-25.

mutability of physical nature (illustrated by the example of the hand) and the mutability of what is just by nature. Just as the right hand is stronger by nature, but this may not be the case *per accidens,* so the secondary precepts of natural law are right by nature (in themselves and in their application) but can vary *per accidens,* for accidental reasons.

However, according to Aquinas this mutability has a limit, as does the mutability of human nature. Continuing the analogy with the natural-physical order, Aquinas expresses this limit as follows:

> And given that the essences of mutable things are themselves immutable, if there is something natural in us which belongs to the very essence of man, this cannot vary in any way: for example, that man is an animal; however, what follows nature, for example, the dispositions, actions, and movements, changes from time to time. Similarly, those things that belong to the very essence of justice cannot change in any way, for example, that one must not steal, as this is to commit an injustice; however, what follows from this may change from time to time.[40]

In both the natural-physical and the natural-moral order, it is necessary not to lose sight of a fundamental metaphysical distinction that is the very reason why Aquinas was able to maintain the essential immutability of the natural law, at the same time as he accounts for the variable reliability of the secondary precepts.[41] This distinction is between what, in the order of essence, belongs to human nature, and what is the consequence of essence in the order of performance. What belongs to human nature is *per se* absolutely immutable. What is the consequence of essence in the order of performance is mutable: some things are mutable *per se,* others *per accidens.* Among the first, to borrow an example from

[40] "Quia rationes etiam mutabilium sunt immutabiles, si quid est nobis naturale quasi pertinens ad ipsam hominis rationem nullo modo mutatur, puta hominem esse animal, quae autem consequuntur naturam, puta dispositiones, actiones et motus, mutantur ut in paucioribus; et similiter etiam ilia quae pertinent ad ipsam iustitiae rationem nullo modo possunt mutari, puta non esse furandum, quod est iniustum facere, ilia vero quae consequuntur mutantur ut in minori parte" *01 Ethic.,* lect. 12, 1134b33 [184-207]).

[41] In reality, it is this very immutability that offers us a criterion for discernment and thus enables us to judge on the variable nature of the secondary precepts. See P. Lee, "The Permanence of the Ten Commandments: St. Thomas and his Modern Commentators," *Theological Studies* 42 (1981): 422-43, esp. 442.

Aquinas, there is the fact of possessing a tunic. Among the second, there is the fact of having feet. Analogously, what belongs *per se* to the reason of justice is immutable, whereas what is a consequence of the reason of justice is mutable-some things *per se* (e.g., what is legally just) and others *per accidens* (e.g., what is naturally just).

Among "what is a consequence of the reason of justice" there figures the precept of returning borrowed items,[42] a precept of natural law that does not have universal validity, only general validity, *ut in pluribus.* We have already seen why this is: on some occasions this precept may not be just, not so much because of the precept itself as because circumstances may be present at the time of action that are not normally taken into account when ing things only from the point of view of what is generally just. So to be able to judge whether or not it is rational to apply the precept in given circumstances, it is necessary to understand the good towards which this precept is ordered, and the way in which this good plays a part in the integrity of the human good. This is what the prudent man does.

What the prudent man assumes in his judgment is that, on the one hand, the precepts are not irrational, but obey principles, and on the other, that these principles are accessible to us. This last condition is always fulfilled because, as we have seen before, such principles are contained in natural reason or synderesis. And it is to this very synderesis, through which we learn the ends of all the virtues and therefore also of the "reason of justice," that Aquinas attaches the essential immutability of the natural law. In fact, according to Aquinas, synderesis is never extinguished,[43] which is compatible with two of his other statements: on the one hand, that the light of synderesis is the light of the agent intellect itself, which is numbered among the incorruptible natures, and on the other, that synderesis is the basis for the reason of justice, which, as we have seen, is also immutable.

[42] "Per restitutionem fit reductio ad aequalitatem commutativae iustitiae, quae consistit in rerum adaequatione, sicut dictum est. Huiusmodi autem rerum adaequatio fieri non posset nisi ei qui minus habet quam quod suum est, suppleretur quod deest. Et ad hanc suppletionem faciendam necesse est ut ei fiat restitutio a quo acceptum est" (*Sl'h* 11-11, q. 62, a. 5).

[43] See *De Verit.,* q. 16, a. 3.

IV. TYPES OF ACTION

Synderesis is the habit of the practical first principles. These principles are immutable. To the extent that the agent keeps the principles, the "seed-bed of the virtues," when he acts, his action will be good/virtuous. If the opposite is the case, his action will be bad, and it will constitute vice. Good acts can be divided into types, as different specific virtues exist, and can become the object of positive precepts which are valid *semper sed non ad semper: semper* because one must always act *secundum virtutem; sed non ad semper* for the simple reason that we cannot fulfill all the precepts under all circumstances. Nor is it necessary to do this. What we must do is act virtuously, and to do this it is necessary to discern when one precept should be applied, and when another. And this is the task that falls to prudence.

Nonetheless, as Finnis has emphasized, [44] the nature of negative precepts is quite different, as they are valid *semper et ad semper.* There are acts that must never be performed, because they themselves entail a contradiction of the principles. To continue using our own example about justice, it is one thing to prescribe an action like returning borrowed items because it is an act of justice (leaving open the possibility that in some concrete case, in Aquinas's view because of sin, it is not), and quite another thing to prohibit theft absolutely, because stealing is always and in all circumstances an act which runs counter to justice (and this can also be said of keeping other people's property). [45]

[44] See J. Finnis, *Moral Absolutes: Tradition, Revision and Truth* (Washington D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 91.

[45] Taking or keeping someone else's property is intrinsically bad. The problem that can be raised here does not lie in questioning the suitability of the precept, but in determining what *someone else's property* is. As is well known, in Aquinas external goods are naturally ordered for the human race to use them. Private property is only justified in the name of this common use. It is part of natural law, but only a secondary part, deriving from common use (see *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 5, ad 3). Therefore, in the case of extreme need property becomes common, and so someone who takes or keeps what in normal circumstances would be someone else's cannot be accused of theft. Something analogous happens in the case of keeping things back: "Quando aliquis non potest statum restituere, ipsa impotentia absolvit eum ab instanti restitutione facienda: sicut etiam totaliter a restitutione absolvitur si omnino sit impotens. Debet tamen remissionem vel dilationem petere ab eo cui debet, aut per se aut per alium" *(STh* II-II, q. 62, a. 8, ad 2).

What is permanent in both cases is the principle of the "essence of justice," which is nothing other than the very essence of the virtue of justice, that is, *the habitual disposition of the will by which we wish to give each person what is his.* For this very reason, even when in a particular case the appropriate action is not to return the borrowed item, the will to do justice must remain intact, which means that there must be a desire to give it back when circumstances return to normal. So after pointing out the possible "exception" to the precept of restitution, Aquinas concludes:

> Yet he who retains another's property must not appropriate it, but must either reserve it, that he may restore it at a fitting time, or hand it over to another to keep it more securely.[46]

This serves to bring out an aspect of Aquinas's moral doctrine that has occasionally been obscured, but which is of prime importance: rather than being a morality of precepts, Thomist morality is a morality of virtues, for the basic reason that it is the function of virtue (not only human virtue but all supernatural virtue) to rectify the human will. As Aristotle writes, "all virtue perfects the condition of the person whose virtue it is, and makes him perform his operation well."[47] According to this, human virtue is what makes man act according to his specific nature: it is what makes a man into a good man. If we lose sight of this, it is easy to end up with a rationalist vision of Aquinas's morality, which has often been the case in modern treatises on morality, and even in the manuals of this century.[48]

At the heart of a rationalist view of ethics there are often "conflicts" between precepts which do not appear in an ethics based on virtues. Thus using one good habit instead of another, for example liberality instead of justice, does not contradict the essence of the moral virtue when this use is governed by prudence. The only thing that contradicts the essence of moral virtue

[46] *STh* II-II, q. 62, a. 5, ad 1.

[47] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.6.1106al4-15. See *STh* I-II, q. 55, a. 2, sc.

[48] See M. Rhonheimer, *Natur als Grund/age der Moral. Die personale Struktur des Naturgesetzes bei Thomas van Aquin: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit autonomer und teleologischerEthik* (Innsbruck-Wien: Tyrolia Verlag, 1987), 141-42.

is any act which, in its very structure, includes a contradiction to *any* virtue, because this kind of contradiction perverts good will, which is central to moral action.[49]

Understanding the nature of moral virtue and its central role in ethics is in itself a hermeneutic key that can be used to interpret properly those cases that seem at first sight to be "exceptions to the law," like the case of the borrowed sword. If we bear in mind the unity of the virtues, it is clear that *acting counter to justice is different from acting according to criteria that are higher than justice.* Not everyone who does not practice the habit of justice (by which we wish to give everyone his own property) acts against this habit: there are times when it is appropriate to apply another habit, and by doing so one is not failing in justice. It would not occur to anyone to say that, for example, being generous or showing solidarity constitutes a lack of justice. Yet it is obvious that in this case we are not giving "each man his own," at least not in the literal sense of the expression. In other cases, it is perfectly possible for the practical reason to prescribe such an action to someone with particular urgency, simply because what is at stake is, according to moral wisdom, not some precept or other, but the good of man.

V. *GNOME* AND *EPIEIKEIA*

Prudence and moral virtue are what the agent needs in order to act well in practice: moral virtue which rectifies his ends (so that he can deliberate correctly), and prudence by which he considers the circumstances and prescribes the most appropriate act in each case. With this very aim in mind, Aquinas mentions three potential virtues in prudence: *eubulia,* by which the deliberation preceding the precept of prudence is perfected,[50] and *synesis* and *gnome,* by which the judgement of prudence is perfected.[51] The difference between the latter two *(synesis* and

[49] See D. M. Gallagher, "Aquinas on Goodness and Moral Goodness," in *Thomas Aquinas and His Legacy,* ed. D. M. Gallagher (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 37-60.

[50] See *STh* II-II, q. 51, a. 1 and 2.

[51] See *STh* II-II, q. 51, a. 3 and 4.

gnome) lies in the fact that the first judges those cases that fit easily under the general headings, and the second is used in cases that do not obey the general rules:

> It happens sometimes that something has to be done which is not covered by the common rules of actions, for instance in the case of the enemy of one's country, when it would be wrong to give him back his deposit, or in other similar cases. Hence it is necessary to judge of such matters according to higher principles than the common rules, according to which *synesis* judges: and corresponding to such higher principles it is necessary to have a higher virtue of judgment, which is called *gnome,* and which denotes a certain discrimination of judgment.[52]

Gnome, which is the virtue that perfects the judgment prior to the precept of prudence in those matters that are not covered by the general rule, is also a virtue necessary to exercise *epieikeia.* In recent years, *epieikeia* has been the object of increasing attention,[53] because it has often been interpreted as being in conflict with the idea of a natural law of universal validity. In this respect, it is useful to remember that in Aquinar's thought *epieikeia* is above all a virtue that, like any other, presupposes respect for the ends generally known through synderesis and that can therefore never be counter to the reason of justice.

The object of this virtue is the equitable which, as Aristotle explains, is "just, but not the legally just, but a correction of legal justice."[54] What is presumed is that the literal application of the law might turn out to be unjust. Thus *epieikeia* is the virtue that makes it possible to rectify possible injustices resulting from applying the law literally in all cases.[55] This description of *epieikeia* concurs with what Aristotle says in his *Rhetoric,* where

[52] *SI'h* 11-11, q. 51, a. 4.

[53] See A. Rodriguez Lufio, "La virru dell'epicheia: Teoria, storia e applicazione (I)," *Acta Philosophica, Rivista Internazionale di Filosofia* 6 (1997/2): 197-236.

[54] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.10.1137bll-13.

[55] Thus Aristotle defines the equitable man: "the man who chooses and does such acts, and is no stickler for justice in a bad sense but tends to take less than his share though he has the law on his side, is equitable, and this state of character is equity, which is a sort of justice and not a different state" *(Nicomachean Ethics* 5.10.1137b35-1138a3).

he contrasts *epieikeia* with legal justice, because he is taking the latter in its literal sense.[56]

Aquinas distinguishes two ways of referring to *epieikeia* according to whether legal justice is regarded as the law in its purely literal sense, or as including the intention of the legislator.[57] In the former case, *epieikeia* is distinguished from legal justice, which it governs. In the latter case, it is not: *epieikeia* itself is part of legal justice. The following text from the *Commentary on the Ethics* seems to reflect the first sense best:

> That which is equitable is certainly something just, but not like what is legally just, but like a certain direction of what is legally just. In fact, it has been said to be contained within what is naturally just, from which what is legally just takes its origin; and each thing is born to be directed according to its principle.[58]

However, whether we say that *epieikeia* can be distinguished from legal justice or not, what is certain is that it is responsible for rectifying the injustices occasioned by literal applications of the law, and this by virtue of its referring back to the principle of law itself. At this point, to avoid unnecessary arguments about the scope of *epieikeia*, it is necessary to look back at how Aquinas envisaged the relationship between natural law and positive law. In concrete, we have to remember that, first and foremost for Aquinas, both originate in the same source-the nature of justice-even though they emanate in different ways.[59] We should also

[56] See Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.13.

[57] "Epieikeia correspondet proprie iustitiae legali: et quodammodo continetur sub ea, et quoadammodo excedit earn. Si enim iustitia legalis dicatur quae obtemperat legi sive quantum ad verba legis sive quantum ad intentionem legislatoris, quae potior est, sic epiekeia est pars potior legalis iustitiae. Si vero iustitia legalis dicatur solum quae obtemperat legi secundum verba legis, sic epieikeia non est pars iustitiae communiter dictae, contra iustitiam legalem divisa sicut excedens ipsam" (*STh* 11-11, q. 120, a. 2, ad 1).

[58] "Id quod est epiikes est quidem aliquod iustum, sed non est iustum legale, sed est quaedam directio iusti legalis. Dictum est enim quod continetur sub iusto naturali, a quo oritur iustum legale; unumquodque enim natura est dirigi secundum principium a quo oritur" (*V Ethic.*, lect. 16 [1137bll], 76-82).

[59] Both the secondary precepts of natural law and the precepts of positive law have one and the same principle, the essence of justice. However, natural law and positive law have diverse origins, as the force of the former follows directly from the principles of law as a kind of conclusion, and the latter as a kind of determination or concrete expression.

note that in the Thomist view, what is just by nature-and therefore, natural law-includes obedience to positive law; and that positive law is only just if it adheres to the principles of natural law. This apparently circular argument becomes clear if we distinguish between principles of law on the one hand, and the conclusions and resolutions of law on the other. For Aquinas, natural law includes the principles, on the one hand, and on the other, all the precepts that derive directly from the principles.: these precepts are conclusions of the principles, and as such are known as secondary precepts. Positive law also originates in these principles, but it decides or specifies the way in which they are to be put into practice in a particular society and particular circumstances.

Since this is the case, it would appear to be obvious that it is impossible to draw a clear dividing line between natural law and positive law: natural law is embodied in positive law. Living positive law is usually the same as living natural law. This is the reason why we are bound by conscience to obey the law. The problem raised here-that of the unjust law-falls outside the scope of *epieikeia*.Aquinas offers a series of criteria for discerning unjust laws.[60] Nonetheless, when he writes of *epieikeia* he does so on the basis that the laws are just. In this context he asserts repeatedly that the purpose of *epieikeia* is not to call into question the rightness of the law, which he does not doubt, but only t_0 judge whether, in some particular case, it is just to apply it literally. To do this, it has to judge this case in the light of the principles of law, that is, in the light of the essence of justice.

For this very reason, it is immaterial whether the case in question is supposed to be governed by a secondary principle of natural law or a principle of positive law. After all, these are not distinguished from the point of view of the use made of them by the agent, but only in the means of proceeding from this principle. It would be quite another thing to apply *epieikeia* to the principles of law themselves: this goes against the very concept of *epieikeia,* as, if it is a virtue, it cannot exist apart from those

[60] See *STh* I-II, q. 96, a. 4.

principles.[61] But when it is a conclusion of natural law, Aquinas has no objection to applying *epieikeia.*This is what he does when he applies it to the precept of restitution, which is a (secondary) precept of natural law, independently of the fact that its formulation as a law has to be attributed to a human legislator:

> Since human actions, with which laws are concerned, are composed of contingent singulars and are innumerable in their diversity, it was not possible to lay down rules of law that would apply to every single case. Legislators in framing laws attend to what commonly happens: although if the law be applied to certain cases it will frustrate the equality of justice and be injurious to the common good, which the law has in view. Thus the law requires deposits to be restored, because in the majority of cases this is just. Yet it happens sometimes to be injurious-for instance, if a madman were to put his sword in deposit, and demand its delivery while in a state of madness, or if a man were to seek the return of his deposit in order to fight against his country. In these and like cases it is bad to follow the law, and it is good to set aside the letter of the law and to follow the dictates of justice and the common good *[sequi id quod poscit iustitia eratio et communis utilitas].*This is the object of *epieikeia*which we call equity. Therefore it is evident that *epieikeia*is a virtue.[62]

Like Aristotle, Aquinas insists that *epieikeia* does not conspire against the law, which is good in itself, as long as it is directed towards the common good,[63] nor does it speak of a defect in the legislator, who introduced the law because of what happens *ut in pluribus* regarding a specific matter. Indubitably, the need for *epieikeia*implies some kind of deficiency, but this is an intrinsic shortcoming of the very nature of human acts,[64] which are not always of the same kind: "just as returning a borrowed item is just in itself, and good most of the time, it may also be bad in some cases, for example, if a sword is returned to a madman. "[65]

[61] Aquinas sometimes places the treatment of *epieikeia*on the same level as that of the dispenser of the law; see *STh* I-II. q. 97, a. 4, ad 3.

[62] *SI'h* Il-Il, q. 120, a. 1.

[63] See *STh* 1-11, q. 96, a. 6.

[64] See *SI'h* 11-11, q. 120, a. 1.

[65] The complete text reads as follows: "Praedictus defectus non tollit rectitudinem legis vel iusti legalis, dicens quod, licet peccatum accidat in aliquibus ex observantia legis, nihilominus lex recta est, quia peccatum illud non est ex parte legis, quae rationabiliter posita est, neque ex parte legislatoris, qui locutus est secundum condicionem materiae. sed est peccatum in natura rei. Talis enim est materia operabilium humanorum quod non sunt universaliter secundum se iustum est et ut in pluribus bonum, in aliquo tamen casu potest esse

According to the text quoted, the possibility of disagreement between the letter of the law and the intention of the legislator lies in the contingency of human actions itself. Earlier, we saw that Aquinas attributes this disagreement to the disorder introduced to the world by a bad will, as the negative use which is practically sure to result from returning the sword in such cases is something that depends on the will. In any case, it is patent that the defect in question is not in the law itself, about whose goodness *epieikeia* does not judge. *Epieikeia* confines itself to evaluating the advisability of applying the law literally in certain problematic cases,[66] which it does by reference to the essence of justice,[67] a principle generally known through synderesis. This reference to synderesis is what, in the last instance, justifies the application or nonapplication of a positive secondary precept, and which in all cases justifies the universal validity of the prohibitions against intrinsically evil acts.

malum, puta si reddatur gladius furioso" (V *Ethic.*, lect. 16 [1137b17], 116-30).

[66] "Ille de lege iudicat qui dicit earn non esse bene positam. Qui vero dicit verba legis non esse in hoc casu servanda, non iudicat de lege, sed de aliquo particulare negotio quod occurrit" (*STh* 1-11, q. 120, a. 1, ad 2).

[67] "Epieikeia *est* pars subiectiva iustitiae. Et de ea iustitia per prius dicitur quam de legali: nam legalis iustitia dirigitur secundum epieikeiam. Unde epieikeia est quasi superior regula humanorum actuum" (*STh* 11-11, q. 120, a. 2).

The Thomist 63 (1999): 241-67

LOVING THE LORD YOUR GOD: THE *IMAGO DEI* IN SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS[1]

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THEN GOD SAID, 'Let us make human beings according to our image and likeness'" (Gen 1:26).[2] From this verse and St. Paul's references to the image of God developed a stream of theological reflection on what we now term the doctrine of the *imago Dei,* or image of God. Patristic theologians often employed this doctrine either to present the orthodox teaching on the redemption worked by Christ or to investigate our knowledge of God.[3] The teaching of the image of God in humans was placed within the overall drama of salvation, which included both creation and redemption, thus forging a unity within the narrative that has too often been forgotten.[4]

[1] A version of this paper was presented at the Midwest Regional AAR, DePaul University, Chicago, 20-22 March 1998.

[2] Following the quotation as used by Aquinas, "Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram" *(STh* I, q. 93 a. 1, sc). All translations of the *Summa Theologiae* are my own. I have relied on the Latin of the 1953 Ottawa edition and have occasionally consulted the English translation by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province.

[3] For an example of the former see St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word;* for the latter see St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Sermons on the Beatitudes;* and St. Augustine, *De Trinitate.*

[4] On the need for theology to include both creation and redemption see David Burrell, C.S.C., "Incarnation and Creation: The Hidden Dimension," *Modern Theology* 12 (1996): 211-20. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* grounds human dignity both in creation in the image of God and in redemption by Christ: *"Created* in the image of the one God and equally endowed with rational souls, all men have the same nature and the same origin. *Redeemed* by the sacrifice of Christ, all are called to participate in the same divine beatitude: all therefore enjoy an equal dignity" (CCC 1934; emphasis added).

St. Thomas Aquinas shared these assumptions, as is seen in the overall structure of his *Summa Theologiae,* which brings a certain order *(ordo disciplinae)* to the history of salvation. He begins with God and his creation of the universe and then treats the return of the human creature back to God through Christ. Situated within the *Summa,* Aquinas's teaching on the image of God in humans must not be viewed as a static or abstract anthropological datum; rather, it manifests the dynamic character of the relation of the human creature to God, for the image is moving through various levels of potency and act, on the one hand, and obscurity and beauty, on the other.

In contemporary discussion one often hears the affirmation that the image of God is in all human beings as a way to underscore our duty to respect the dignity of all people. Such a characterization may be true, but it has the tendency to reduce the Christian teaching of the image of God to the Kantian categorical imperative: "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end."[5] Kant's abstract notion of humanity provides such a thin account of human agency that the particular traditions in which one stands become an impediment, rather than the path, to the realization of full humanity. [6] In what I am calling the Kantian approach, the image of God is removed from the Christian narrative. Aquinas's questions, however, are not those of Kant. To understand the full theological significance of Aquinas's teaching on the image of God we must explicitly situate the doctrine within its narrative context: humans have been created to know and love God, with

[5] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals,* trans. H.J. Paton (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1964), 96.

[6] As an alternative to this interpretation of Kantian ethics see Barbara Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgment* {Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), in which she argues that Kant's focus on the maxims of the subject's willings provides a way of including the particularity of the subject. For the argument that practical rationality is constituted by traditions of inquiry rather than by a momentary divorce from the empirical, see Alasdair Macintyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notte Dame Press, 1988); and idem, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notte Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990).

this created capacity culminating in the friendship with God made possible in Christ.[7]

Aquinas's discussion of the image of God in humans both presupposes and displays his teaching about God and humans. He brings the Scholastic *quaestio* to bear on the wealth of patristic reflection. Some scholars have suggested that in the *Summa Theologiae* Aquinas moves beyond the Augustinian view of the image of God because he relies increasingly on an Aristotelian psychology.[8] This view, however, can be challenged in two respects. First, as his own view develops, Aquinas does not leave Augustine aside, but rather treats him more subtly, with more nuance.[9] In the *Summa,* written toward the end of his earthly life,[10] Aquinas presents the image of the Triune God in humans. chiefly as the procession of the word from its principle and the procession of love from both, the same image with which Augustine concludes his *De Trinitate.*[11]

Second, when Aquinas includes Aristotelian notions such as potency, habit, and virtue, he often mediates between Augustine

[7] On the relation between the image of God and Christ see David Schindler's discussion of the tension (not contradiction) between the theistic account of the image of God in *Gaudium et spes* 12 and the Christocentric emphasis of *GS* 22, in "Christology and the *Imago Dei:* Interpreting *Gaudium et Spes," Communio* 23 (1996): 156-84. On a related issue see Thomas Hughson, "John Courtney Murray and Postconciliar Faith," *Theological Studies* 58 (1997): 480-505.

[8] For example, Marie-Joseph Serge de Laugier de Beaurecueil, "L'homme image de Dieu selon saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Etudes et Recherches* 8 (1952): 45-82 and 9 (1955): 37-97, cited in D. Juvenal Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity: A Study in the Development of Aquinas' Teaching* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1990), 5-6. For a more pronounced objection to Aquinas see David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), who concludes, "In spite of all that is noble in the teaching of Aquinas on the divine image in man, it is clear that here we are moving far more in the world of Aristotle than in the world of Christ, with His Gospel of the Kingdom and the Fatherhood of God" (119).

[9] In this way, Aquinas becomes a better reader of Augustine's *De Trinitate* by the time he writes the *Summa Theologiae.* Merriell presents this thesis through an examination of the development of Aquinas's discussions of the image of God in humans as found in the *Scriptum, De Veritate,* and *Summa Theologiae* (see *To the Image of the Trinity).* I will focus on Aquinas's mature teaching, as presented in the *Summa.*

[10] J.-P. Torrell, O.P., dates the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* between 1266 and 1268 *(Saint Thomas Aquinas:* vol. 1, *The Person and His Work,* trans. Robert Royal [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995], 142-46).

[11] Cf. *STh* I, q. 93, aa. 6-7.

and Aristotle by means of a Christian authority. [12] The (often-heard) criticism of the triumph of Aristotelianism over Augustinianism in Aquinas collapses in his teaching on the image of God in humans. We should view this teaching of Aquinas as a meeting of East and West, appreciating the skillful way in which he places Latin and Greek *theological* traditions of reflection on the image of God so that they can mutually illumine one another. From the Latin tradition of Augustine, Aquinas takes the theme that the image of God is in humans insofar as we turn, or are capable of turning, toward God in knowledge and love. From the Eastern tradition of John Damascene, Aquinas takes the theme that the image of God is in humans insofar as we have understanding, free-will, and creative power *(per se potestativus).* [13] The combination of these two traditions allows Aquinas to develop the moral significance of the teaching of the image of God in humans. He thus argues that humans are fundamentally ordered toward God in a way that elevates our freedom instead of thwarting it. The teaching of the image of God exemplifies the way in which Aquinas remains indebted to his sources and yet goes beyond them.

In this paper I will argue that by including John Damascene's authority alongside that of Augustine, Aquinas transforms the teaching of the image of God so that it serves both as an entrance into the mystery of the Triune God and as a figure forthe human progression in the moral life toward friendship with God. I will begin with an analysis of Augustine's teaching on the image of the God in humans in his *De Trinitate.* Then I will explicate Aquinas's presentation of the image of God by offering a reading of question 93 of the *Prima Pars,* where Aquinas, while remaining indebted to Augustine, nevertheless employs the authority of John Damascene to widen the scope of the doctrine of the image of God to include a greater explication of the moral life of the

[12] I am thankful to Thomas Hibbs for showing this pattern to me.

[13] I render *per se potestativus* as "creative power" as an alternative to "self-movement" (in the English Dominicans' translation) and "man's mastery over himself" (in the translation by Edmund Hill, O.P., in the Blackfriars edition).

human creature.[14] The shift between Augustine and Aquinas can also be seen through a comparison of the structures of the principal works. Although Augustine treats the image of God in humans as part of an investigation into the divine Trinity, Aquinas includes the image of God as part of his discussion of the human creature.[15] Moreover, the succinct style of the *Summa Theologiae* is quite different from Augustine's rhetorical invitation in the *De Trinitate.* Aquinas's teaching is only obscured if read through the textbook caricature that sees him as orchestrating a synthesis between Aristotelianism and Christian faith. The actual contours of the *Summa Theologiae* reflect other complex interactions between many strands of the Christian tradition: the Eastern Fathers, the conciliar documents, the Latin West, and so on. The recognition of the Western and Eastern traditions within Aquinas's teaching on the image of God enables us to approach it as the theological gem that it is. The image of God, if properly understood, defies categorization into either what is now classified as moral theology or systematic theology. Aquinas, instead, presents us with a thoroughly theological view of the human person made to the image and likeness of God, whereby the moral life presupposes, as well as perfects, the knowing and loving of God.

I. THE IMAGE OF GOD IN ST. AUGUSTINE'S *DE TRINITATE:* FAITH LEADING TO CONTEMPLATION

Augustine's *De Trinitate* is divided into fifteen books. In the first four books, Augustine puts forth the doctrine of the Trinity

[14] Although it is easier to see the moral implications of the image of God in Aquinas, Augustine also presumes that intellectual inquiry into the faith has a moral dimension. "If this [the Word made flesh] is difficult to understand, then you must purify your mind with faith, by abstaining more and more from sin, and by doing good, and by praying with the sighs of holy desire that God will help you to make progress in understanding and loving" *(De Trinitate* 4.31).

[15] Within the *PrimaPars,* q. 93, on the image of God, falls within the larger section of qq. 75-102, on the human creature as processing forth from God. Aquinas's placement of the discussion of the image of God is closer to that employed by John Damascene in *De fide orthodoxa,* in which the treatment of the human creature follows that of God Three and One.

as found in Scripture. In the next three books, he challenges the Arian heresy of subordinating the Son to the Father. Then in book 8, he changes course and proceeds in a more interior manner *(modo interiore)* to attempt to understand the mystery of the Trinity in light of the human creature which is called the image of God. After suggesting an understanding of the Trinity as lover, what is loved, and the love shared, Augustine draws back from the dazzling brilliance of this Trinity of love to "the more familiar consideration of our own mind insofar as man has been made to the image of God."[16] In the ninth book Augustine presents the triad of the mind, its love of itself, and its knowledge of itself.[17] He investigates the mind's knowledge and introduces the concept of the mental word *(verbummentis)*, which he defines as knowledge loved *(amata notitia)*. Augustine concludes book 9, "And so you have a certain image of the trinity, the mind itself and its knowledge, which is its offspring and its word about itself, and love as the third element, *and these three are one* (1John5 :8) and are one substance *(una substantia)*."[18] We will see this mental triad employed by Aquinas in his discussion of the image of God in humans as a representation of the uncreated Trinity. Augustine, however, leaves behind this triad for the next few books and considers the better-known triad of memory *(memoria)*, understanding *(intelligentia)*, and will *(voluntas)*.[19]

Augustine distinguishes between knowledge *(scientia)* and wisdom *(sapientia)* and examines them in books 13 and 14 respectively. Knowledge is of temporal things and so fails to meet the requirement that the image of God be found in what is eternal in the human mind.[20] Nevertheless, Augustine shows that it is the Word incarnate who reveals to us the wisdom of the eternal Word through our knowledge of the Word made flesh.[21] Since it is one and the same Word whom we encounter, knowledge in this

[16] Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 15.10. Unless otherwise noted, all citations are from *The Trinity*, translated by Edmund Hill, O.P. (Brooklyn: New City Press, 1991). References to the book and chapter follow the standard division of the *De Trinitate.*

[17] Ibid., 9.8.

[18] Ibid., 9.18.

[19] Ibid., 10.17-18.

[20] Ibid., 14.4.

[21] Ibid., 13.24.

life leads to wisdom in the next, just as faith leads to contemplation. The proper image of God in humans can only be found, therefore, in wisdom, which Augustine defines as the true worship of God.[22] Humans are said to be made to the image of God insofar as their soul has the capacity "to use reason and understanding in order to understand and gaze upon God."[23] Augustine does not depict the image of God in humans primarily in terms of humanity's dominion over creation, but in terms of the capacity to worship God.[24] Although humans have lost participation in God, with the consequence that the image of God becomes worn out and distorted, this image nevertheless remains in all humans insofar as they have a mind, which itself has the capacity for knowing and loving God.[25]

We have noted that Augustine examines the image of God in humans in an attempt to gain a greater understanding of the divine Trinity. He summarizes his consideration of the image of God in humans by noting that "we lingered over the creature which we ourselves are from the ninth to the fourteenth book in order to descry ... the invisible things of God by understanding them through those that have been made."[26] How does Augustine evaluate his achievement of this self-described project? He clearly states what he has not accomplished. In book 15, he shows the various ways in which the trinity in humans fails to mirror adequately the divine Trinity. Concerning the mental triad of the memory, understanding, and will it must be said that humans remember nothing without the memory, understand nothing apart from the understanding, and love nothing apart from the

[22] Ibid., 14.1.

[23] Ibid., 14.6.

[24] Joseph Ratzinger argues along these lines in his commentary on *Gaudium et spes,* in *Commentary on the DocumentsofVaticanll,* ed. H. Vorgrimler, vol. 5 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 115-63. David Schindler writes, "For Ratzinger, it is crucial to see that this dominion as understood in the document is the consequence *(Folge)* and not the content *(lnhalt)* of God (121-22). The content, (Ratzinger] says, as indicated by St. Augustine, is the capacity for God" ("Reorienting the Church on the Eve of the Millennium: John Paul H's 'New Evangelization,'" *Communio* 24 [1997]: 728-73).

[25] Augustine, *De Trinitate,* 14.11.

[26] Ibid., 15.10; cf. Rom 1:20.

will.[27] This mental triad is therefore inadequate according to Augustine because each of the Persons of the Trinity must have his own understanding, memory, and will. Who could rightly say that the Father has no wisdom except through the Son?[28] This triad fails as an image of the Trinitarian relations in God because it refers to essential attributes of God, that is, attributes possessed in virtue of his substance, rather than by any of the Persons uniquely. So Augustine concludes that any direct understanding of the Trinity from the human creature is impossible.[29]

Despite the optimistic attempt to understand the Trinity in light of the image of God in humans, there is a strong negative element in the *De Trinitate,* indicating the inadequacy of human characterizations of the Triune God. Augustine states that "only when [the image of God in humans] comes to the perfect vision of God will this image bear God's perfect likeness."[30] Theological inquiry into the image of God in humans cannot be viewed as a "saving" natural theology, but presupposes for Augustine that the image is only an aid for understanding insofar as the human creature knows and loves God more and more through faith in this life and contemplation in the next. Thus Augustine still attempts to bring forward those aspects of the image of God in humans that represent the personal relations within God.

Augustine, seeking God's face always, turns to 1 Corinthians 13:12, which says, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face."[31] He then returns to the earlier triad of the mind, its knowledge, and understanding, but specifies this knowledge in terms of the inner word that makes understanding possible: "this is the word that belongs to no language."[32] He seeks a relation between this word and the Word of God insofar as this inner word completely manifests the knowledge that begets it, just as the Word of God is the true image of the Father. Augustine describes this inner word as follows: "For when we utter some-

[27] Augustine, *De Trinitate,* 15.12.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 14.23.

[31] RSV; cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate,* 15.14.

[32] Augustine, *De Trinitate,* 15.19.

thing true, that is when we utter what we know, a word is necessarily born from the knowledge which we hold in the memory, a word which is absolutely the same kind of thing as the knowledge it is born from."[33] The movement progresses beyond all sensible words "to come to that word of man through whose likeness of a sort the Word of God may somehow or other be seen as an enigma."[34] Augustine is caught, however, moving back and forth between affirming the vast dissimilarity between our inner word and the Word of God and also affirming at least some likeness.[35] Those who grasp the significance of the mental triad have no greater understanding of the divine Trinity, unless they see the mind precisely as an image of something greater, and so "in some fashion refer what they see to that of which it is an image."[36] Faith is therefore necessary to see the human mind as a mirror of God, a faith that now sees through a mirror in an enigma but will one day be brought to a contemplation in which the Trinity will be perceived directly.[37]

As has been noted, Augustine distinguishes between two primary ways in which the image of God can be considered in humans. First, there is the triad of memory, understanding, and will; it is to this triad that Augustine devotes the most space. Second, there is the triad of the mind, the procession of the word in knowledge, and the procession of love from both. Although Augustine sets aside this latter triad in book 9, he returns to it in book 15 because the former triad refers to what are essential attributes in God and so does not fully represent the Trinitarian relations.[38] The inner word, begotten of our knowledge, is the most proper image of the Word begotten of the Father, but this inner word requires actual thought. These two triads, nevertheless, can be said to overlap one another insofar as thoughts can be

[33] Ibid., 15.19.

[34] lbid., 15.20.

[35] Ibid., 15.22-24, 39.

[36] Ibid., 15.44.

[37] Ibid., 15.44-45.

[38] My interpretation differs here from that of John Edward Sullivan, O.P., who argues that Augustine permanently sets aside the triad of the mind and the processions of knowledge and love; see *The Image of God: The Doctrine of St. Augustine and Its Influence* (Dubuque, Iowa: The Priory Press, 1963), 115-48.

brought forth from memory just as they can be formed in the mind.[39]

Augustine concludes his work with reference to the mental trinity of the procession of word and love, which among the mental trinities is the best image of the divine Trinity.[40] Despite his many affirmations of the vast dissimilarity between the image and God, Augustine says that divine illumination does allow us to see ourselves as the image of the supreme Trinity which we cannot yet contemplate.[41] Having come to know of the Trinity in the revelation of Scripture, we can see the trinities in our knowing and loving, and these can aid our understanding of the Trinity, which always remains beyond our grasp. Augustine leads the reader on a rhetorical path of give-and-take between our complete inability to comprehend God in this life and the understanding we can have of him from created reality, above all from the Word made flesh-a path that would be impossible to traverse without the incarnation, death, and resurrection.

As I will show, Aquinas inherits this Augustinian vision of the image of God in the human creature. Nevertheless, Aquinas subtly transforms this vision as well-sometimes shifting the use of terminology within the Augustinian framework, and at other times adding themes from the Eastern theological tradition, such as the likeness of God as the love of virtue.

II. A READING OF THE IMAGE OF GOD IN ST. THOMAS AQUINAS'S *SUMMA THEOLOGIAE:* THE PERFECTION OF CONTEMPLATION AND ACTION

In *STh* I, q. 93, Aquinas first asks whether the image of God is in humans. He replies in the affirmative, citing the authority of Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man to our image and likeness," and

[39] Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate,* 14.10.

[40] Ibid., 15.50: "ffhe divine light] has shown you that there is a true word in you when it is begotten of your knowledge, that is when we utter what we know, even if we do not think or speak a meaningful sound in the language of any people; provided our thought is formed from what we know, and the image in thinking attention is completely like the awareness which was already contained in memory, with will or love as the third element joining these two together as parent and offspring."

[41] Ibid.

then explains what the image of God does *not* mean. It does not mean that humans share a likeness of *equality* with God, because the exemplar (God) infinitely exceeds the image (the human creature). Properly speaking the image of God is in humans not perfectly, but imperfectly. Aquinas thus reminds the reader of the uniqueness of Christ the Son of God as the only perfect image of God, as in Colossians 1:15.

After explaining that the image of God in humans is imperfect and does not place humans on a par with the Son of God, Aquinas then considers the other extreme to show that humans are made to the image of God in a way that distinguishes them from irrational creatures.[42] Since humans as creatures cannot have an equality with the uncreated God, in what sense do they resemble God any more than the rest of his creation does? Aquinas here clarifies that image requires likeness of species. This likeness of species presupposes an ultimate difference, otherwise it would be likeness of equality. Aquinas introduces three ways in which creatures share in a likeness to God: first, because they exist; second, because they live; and third, inasmuch as they know or understand.[43] Rational creatures possess all three ways of likeness to God and so they alone can be said properly to be made to the image of God. Since Aquinas has described the image of God as likeness of the species of the intellectual nature, he is ready to interpret the *theologoumenon* inherited from Gregory the Great that the image of God is also in angels. Here he claims that the image of God is greater in the angels than in humans because the angels' intellectual nature is more perfect or higher *(perfectior).*[44]

Aquinas then asks whether the image of God is found in every human being. This question arises on two fronts: Romans 8:29, which says that those God predestined he conformed to the image of His Son; and an apparently deliberate misquotation of 1 Corinthians 11:7, reading, "man is the image of God, and woman

[42] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 2.

[43] Mark Jordan argues that these three pure perfections *(existere, vivere, intelligere)* correspond to the three transcendentals *(unum, bonum, verum);* see "The Grammar of *Esse:* Re-Reading Thomas on the Transcendentals," *Thomist* 44 (1980): 18.

[44] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 3.

is the image of man."[45] To respond to these objections, Aquinas must clarify in what manner the image of God is in the human creature as regards its intellectual nature. As Aquinas moves along in his teaching on the image of God, he continually adds levels of specification, in this case specifying that the intellectual nature chiefly imitates God insofar as God knows and loves himself. Hence, the image of God in humans can be viewed in three ways: first, as each human has the capacity for knowing and loving God, a capacity that is in the nature of the mind itself and so is common to all humans; second, when the human creature actually or habitually knows and loves God imperfectly, as in the conformity of grace; and third, when the human creature knows and loves God perfectly in act, as in the likeness of glory. Aquinas cites the *Gloss* saying that there is a triple image, of creation, of re-creation, and of likeness.[46] All humans, men and women alike, share this capacity for knowing and loving God, which means that the image of God is in each human being. Aquinas thus presents the image of God as existing in various modes of potentiality and actuality, so that the image of God only reaches perfection in the beatific vision in which the human creature knows and loves God.[47]

Aquinas here narrows the scope of image to knowing and loving God, but he has not yet discussed whether this refers to essential attributes or personal relations. He raises this question

[45] Jaroslav Pelikan notes the misquotation in the objection, in "*Imago Dei:* An Explication of *Summa Theologiae,* Part I, Question 93," in *Calgary Aquinas Studies,* ed. Anthony Pare] (foronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1978), 27-48. In the reply to the objection, Aquinas correctly quotes St. Paul, "man is the image and glory of God, and woman is the glory of man" *(STh* I, q. 93, a. 4, ad 1). Aquinas argues that in that which principally constitutes the image of God, that is, the intellectual nature, the image is equally in men and women. St. Paul's statement, for Aquinas, refers to some secondary sense of the image of God found in men alone, namely that "man is the principle *(principium)* and end of woman, as God is the principle and end of all of creation."

"" *STh* I, q. 93, a. 4.

[47] In an otherwise insightful article, Jaroslav Pelikan anachronistically divides the structure of Aquinas's discussion of the image into that belonging to natural theology and that belonging to revelation. Pelikan's division leads him to the odd suggestion that the image of God is split between reason, which belongs to natural theology, and love, which belongs to revelation *("Imago Dei,"* 38-39). Aquinas, in contrast, states that in the natural state the image exists as the capacity for both knowing and loving God; so also in the graced state the image consists in both knowing and loving God (see *STh* I, q. 93, a. 4).

in article 5 and answers with a brief summary of Trinitarian theology. The distinction of Persons in the Trinity is only according to their relations of origin. Since modes of origin are appropriate to their corresponding natures, it must be said that the distinction of the divine Persons is suited to the divine nature. Aquinas summarily disposes of any strong division between the Persons and the nature of God: "Hence to be to the image of God by imitation of the divine nature does not exclude being to the image of God by representation of the divine Persons; but rather one follows from the other." [48] There can be no conflict between understanding the image of God in the human creature with respect to the divine essence and with respect to the Trinity of Persons, just as there is no conflict in God himself who is one nature in three Persons. There is in Aquinas's Trinitarian theology no divine essence that stands behind the three Persons.[49] Aquinas finds it necessary to affirm statements that attribute to humans the image of the divine essence and thus interprets John Damascene's teaching on the image in this light. He accepts Damascene's statement that the human creature is said to be the image of God as "an intellectual being, having free will and creative power *(potestativus per se).*"[50] Because Aquinas affirms the identity of the Trinity of Persons and the divine nature, he can present simultaneously Augustine's understanding of the image of the Trinity in humans as well as Damascene's notion of the image of

[48] *SI'h* I, q. 93, a. 5. Jurgen Moltmann makes the following erroneous claim concerning Augustine's and Aquinas's account of the image of God: "The soul does not correspond to a single Person of the Trinity, or to the fellowship of Persons in the Trinity. It corresponds to the One divine Being and the One divine sovereignty" *(God in Creation* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 238). Moltmann thus assumes a division between the divine essence (the One divine Being) and the divine Persons (the fellowship of Persons in the Trinity) that Aquinas has clearly denied. Aquinas states that the human creature can be said to be the image of God both with respect to the one divine essence and with respect to the Trinity of Persons. If we recall Ratzinger's statement that the image of God is not in humans primarily with regard to dominion, but with regard to the capacity to worship God, we can offer a better Augustinian and Thomistic way to avoid justification for the environmental exploitation that rightly concerns Moltmann.

[49] For example, Aquinas says "in God, Person and nature are really the same" *(SI'h* ill, q. 16, a. 5, ad 1). Aquinas explicitly states elsewhere that "divine simplicity requires that in God essence is the same as *suppositum,* which in intellectual substances is nothing other than person" *(SI'h* I, q. 39, a. 1).

[50] *SI'h* I, q. 93, a. 5, obj. 2; cf. Damascene, De *fide orthodoxa* 2.12.

God as a representation of God's power. As we will note later, Aquinas cites this same passage in the prologue to the *Prima Secundae,* thus introducing his section on morals with Damascene's description of the image of God.

Aquinas then asks in article 6 whether the image of God is in humans according to the mind only. This appears redundant since he has already shown that the image of God is in the intellectual nature. To unravel this apparent redundancy we may compare Aquinas's use of the mind and the intellect in the *Summa Theologiae* to his earlier discussion in the *De Veritate.*[51] In this article of the *Summa Theologiae* Aquinas identifies the mind with the intellect when he writes, "it is the intellect or the mind *(intellectus sive mens)* whereby rational creatures exceed other creatures." In *De Veritate,* q. 10, a. 1, ad 5, however, he indicates a division between the mind and the intellect:

> since in applying the image [of God] mind takes the place of the divine essence, and memory, intellect, and will take the place of the three Persons, Augustine attributes to mind those things which are needed for the image in creatures when he says: "Memory, understanding, and will are one life, one mind, and one essence" *(De Trinitate* 9.12)**....** These three are called one essence since they flow from the one essence of the mind, one life because they belong to one kind of life, and one mind because they are included in one mind as parts in the whole, just as sight and hearing are included in the sensitive part of the soul.[52]

Whereas in this earlier treatment Aquinas accepts the Augustinian psychology of the mind as something from which flow memory, intellect, and will, in the later treatment the mind becomes a synonym for the intellect. Here we see another reason why Aquinas moves toward the dual procession of word and love as the preferred model of the Trinity in comparison to the other Augustinian triad of memory, intellect, and will: the former model avoids establishing the mind as an essence distinct from its powers. Aquinas may have come to this conclusion through his

[51] John P. O'Callaghan, Creighton University, brought to my attention this change in Aquinas's use of 'mind'.

[52] Thomas Aquinas, *Truth,* vol. 2, trans. James V. McGlynn, S.J. (Chicago: Hugh Regnery Company, 1953), 8.

employment of a more Aristotelian psychology, which posits no such mind, but he maintains the philosophical conclusion in the theological discussion of the image of God. He thus uses the Augustinian language of the mind as the image of God in both the *De Veritate* and the *Summa Theologiae*, but in the later work the dominant usage of the term "mind" is synonymous with "intellect."[53]

Aquinas thus argues that the image of God is in rational creatures only with respect to their intellect or mind. This does not deny the bodily character of human existence, but indicates that the human body only bears a likeness to God in its relation to the intellect and will.[54] The argument in article 6 that the image of God is in the intellectual nature is not repetitive, since Aquinas there qualifies how humans are like God. From this starting point, Aquinas introduces a way of understanding the image of God in humans to account for God as One and Three. The human creature bears a likeness (according to species) to the divine nature insofar as it understands. (Other creatures bear a trace of the Trinity insofar as they are and as they live.) The will only bears the image of God insofar as it is directed by the intellect; Aquinas calls the will the rational appetite, as opposed to the sensitive appetite which humans share with nonrational creatures. Thus in the discussion of the image of God the will's loving is more akin to a husband's decision to love his wife than to a person's craving for chocolate. Humans are drawn to God by knowing and loving, where loving is a free response to the divine call.

[53] Whether this synonymous usage of *mens* and *intellectus* holds in the rest of the *Summa Theologiae* is an interesting question, but one that will not be addressed here.

[54] If the human body were in itself an image of God, then other animal bodies would also share this image. Aquinas argues that human corporeality manifests the image of God in a secondary sense-this likeness depends on the primary likeness of the intellect (*STh* I, q. 93, a. 3). From a different perspective, Jacques Derrida approaches this question in a reflection on the role of the face in the encounter with the other: "the expression of infinity is the face. • . . Thought is speech, and is therefore immediately face. In this, the thematic of the face belongs to the most modern philosophy of language and of the body itself" ("Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," in Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978): 98, 100). The face both presumes, and points beyond, our bodily existence.

Aquinas then specifically addresses the Trinitarian character of the image of God. The likeness of species in rational creatures extends to a representation of the uncreated Trinity:

> as the uncreated Trinity is distinguished according to the procession of the Word from the One speaking, and of Love from both ... so we may say that in rational creatures, in which is found the procession of the word in the intellect, and the procession of love from the will, there is an image of the uncreated Trinity by a certain representation of species.[55]

The image of God as a representation of species is found only in the mind or intellect of the human creature. The image of God in humans consists both in the intellectual nature and in the dual procession of word and love. That the image of the divine nature is in the intellectual nature of humans leads to the conclusion that humans also represent the image of the Trinity in the activities of knowing and loving. Although Aquinas gives no direct authority for the image of the dual procession of word and love, it is clearly taken from Augustine's *De Trinitate,* a work cited more than any other throughout this question.

In light of the earlier consideration of Augustine's *De Trinitate,* it is obvious that Aquinas is very Augustinian in his discussion of the image of God in humans, and yet, as I have also shown, he quietly transforms the notion of mind to be interchangeable with intellect. His argument that the rational creature is an image of the Trinity by the procession of the word in the intellect and of love in the will echoes Augustine's final conclusion that the word begotten in understanding is the least inadequate image for the eternal procession of the Word of God from the Father. Continuing to draw heavily upon Augustine, Aquinas argues that the image of God is in the human soul principally when the soul is engaged in knowing and loving. He describes the mind's engagement as follows: "from the knowledge which we have in thinking we form an inner word, and from this we burst forth in love."[56] This dual procession of word and love, described here in such dynamic terms, requires the engagement of the human intellect

[55] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 6; cf. *STh* I, q. 28, a. 3.
[56] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 7.

and will. Aquinas claims that the image of the Trinity may be said secondarily to exist in the human soul in the mere capacity for understanding and willing, but the image of the Trinity is principally in the soul when the person is actively knowing and loving someone or something.

Aquinas then offers the possibly surprising claim that the image of God is in the human creature only with respect to God as the object of human knowing and loving.[57] Not only must the soul be engaged in activity, but it must be engaged in at least the beginning of contemplation of God for it to be the image of the divine Trinity. Aquinas cites Augustine's statement that "the image of God exists in the mind, not because it has a remembrance of itself, loves itself, and understands itself; but because it can also remember, understand, and love God by whom it was made."[58] This does not contradict the earlier affirmation that the image of God is in every human being, for the necessity of God as the object of our knowledge and love includes the capacity for knowing and loving God. Aquinas describes this in terms of turning to God: "the image is in the soul inasmuch as it turns to God, or by nature can turn to God."[59] Self-reflection, for Aquinas, finds an image of the Trinity in the mind not when the mind is considered by itself, but only when it possesses the ability to turn to God.[60] It is not merely the procession of the word in understanding and the procession of love in willing that constitutes the image of the Trinity in the human creature; rather the image is in humans "according to the word born of the knowledge of God, and to the love derived from there."[61] Aquinas has already argued that the image of God is in the human creature according to representation of species. So if the Word of God is begotten by and the Love proceeds from God's knowledge and love of himself, then the word and love proceeding from human understanding only represent the same species as the divine Trinity when the human creature turns to God.

[57] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 8.
[58] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 8, sc.
[59] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 8.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.

In Augustine and Aquinas, the identification of the image of God with the activities of the will and intellect presupposes a conception of these activities that diverges from many contemporary caricatures of the will and intellect as static faculties.[62] For Augustine, memory, understanding, and will are action words that do not refer chiefly to functions of the human mind. The will is understood in terms of the act of willing, memory in terms of the act of remembering, and understanding in terms of the act of understanding. Aquinas accepts this basic context for the intellect and will; he adds that they can also be viewed through the aspects of potency and habit, but the paradigmatic form of the will and intellect lies in the engagement of desiring the good and understanding the true. Aquinas distinguishes between the soul's essence, faculties, and acts. Because the essence of the soul is not its faculties, Aquinas can identify the image of God with the essence of the soul insofar as the soul by nature can turn to God through the activities of knowing and willing.[63] Therefore the soul imitates God who is pure act chiefly in activity ordered toward God.[64] This is even clearer in the Latin, in which "faculty" or "power" is *"potentia."* Aquinas makes the obvious point that a faculty as such is ordered to an act, because *potentia* qua *potentia* is ordered to *actus.*[65] Faculties, as potencies, are incomplete without their activities. "Static faculties" are unintelligible in Aquinas's usage. When the intellect and will are (mis)understood as primarily static faculties, then the Augustinian and Thomistic teaching of the image of God likewise becomes static and loses its sense of the human creature's dynamic relationship toward God.

[62] James Halstead, O.S.A., directed me to clarify this ambiguity in the language of intellect, memory, and will. Ghislain Lafont also argues for the primacy of active knowing and loving in his discussion of Aquinas's Trinitarian theology: "in mental activity, the Word and Love are effectively the two distinct terms of knowing and willing considered as *operations,* and they thus can characterize the intra-divine processions" *(Peut-on connaitre Dieu en Jesus-Christ?* [Paris: Les Editions de Cerf, 1969], 116; emphasis and translation mine). Also see Aquinas, "the word is understood as proceeding by the action of understanding *(per actionem intelligibilern),* and not as the thing understood *(res intellectus).* For when we understand a stone, what the intellect conceives comes from the thing understood, and this is called the word" *(STh* I, q. 28, a. 4, ad 1).

[63] Cf. *STh* I, q. 77, a. 1; *STh* I, q. 93, a. 4.

[64] Cf. *STh* I, q. 79, a. 10.

[65] *STh* I, q. 77, a. 3.

Turning to Aquinas's earlier discussion of the Triune God, it is noncontroversial to say that he employs throughout Augustine's psychological image of the Trinity.[66] Aquinas argues that we only know and name God through creatures, which are expressions of his perfections and subsistence.[67] He thus speaks of the intellect and will of God, and of the processions of the Word and the Holy Spirit, in language that was originally at home in discussions of rational creatures. Following Augustine, who is following St. Paul, Aquinas believes that we learn about the invisible things of God from the visible things of his creation. The image of God in the human mind was, for Augustine, primarily a tool for the inquiry into God. Augustine, however, concludes his *De Trinitate* by recognizing the great difference between the image of the Trinity within us and the divine Trinity itself. He also explicitly argues that our knowledge of God from creation can only concern the substance of God and thus cannot attain to God as Trinity. Faith is therefore necessary for the proper recognition of the image of the Trinity in humans. Although Aquinas does not present the image of God in humans in the context of his elucidation of the mystery of the Trinity, he nevertheless relies on Augustine's analysis in his description of the procession of the Son from the Father, and the procession of the Spirit from both. Aquinas writes,

> As God is above all things, we should understand what is said of God, not according to the mode of the lowest creatures, namely bodies, but from the similitude of the highest creatures, the intellectual substances; while even the similitudes derived from these fall short in representation of the divine objects.[68]

Although creatures, as Aquinas insists, cannot adequately represent the uncreated divinity, our understanding of God must be mediated through our knowledge of creatures. Aquinas employs in this manner the procession of the intelligible word, which remains in the speaker, and the procession of love whereby

[66] *STh* I, qq. 27-43.
[67] *STh* I, q. 13.
[68] *STh* I, q. 27, a. 1.

the object loved is in the lover.[69] In this instance we can observe that Aquinas, following Augustine, affirms that the image of God in the human soul is a necessary, but insufficient, mode of understanding God.

The reader might object that Aquinas has not yet spoken of the image of God in humans in his discussion of the Trinity. One needs, however, only to read closely the way in which he says that the image of the Trinity is in human beings in order to recognize that his discussion of the Triune God in the earlier part of the *Summa Theologiae* depends on the notion of the image of God. He discloses the significance of the image of God in humans for his discussion of the Trinity some fifty questions later in the question on the image of God.[70] In the latter question, Aquinas makes explicit what was implicit in the earlier account:

> Likewise, as the uncreated Trinity is distinguished by the procession of the Word from the Speaker, and of Love from both of these as we have seen (I, q. 28, a. 3); so we may say that in rational creatures wherein we find a procession of the word in the intellect, and a procession of the love in the will, there exists an image of the uncreated Trinity, by a kind of representation of the species *(per quandam repraesentationem speciei)*.[71]

Aquinas uses the psychological image for his discussion of the Triune God, but he also explicitly emphasizes that the image of the Trinity in us is not sufficient for us to come to knowledge of the divine Trinity. Our soul has a kind of representation of the species of the Trinity, but any such representation remains necessarily incomplete.

To see Aquinas's explicit interpretation of Augustine's use of the image of God, we can examine two specific instances where Aquinas claims that Augustine did not attempt to prove the

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

[76] Here is an example of why the *Summa Theologiae* should not be read in a strictly linear fashion, as though the earlier parts stand independently of the later parts (i.e., as a series of semi-autonomous "treatises"). The *Summa* presupposes in addition a certain background in the reader. See John Jenkins, C.S.C., who argues that the *Summa Theologiae* is a kind of second-order pedagogy that presumes the reader's acquaintance with the details of theology and training in Aristotelian philosophy, in *Faith and Knowledge in Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997).

[71] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 6.

Trinity through natural reason alone. The first instance occurs in *STh* I, q. 32, on our knowledge of the three Persons. In article 1, "Whether the Trinity of divine Persons can be known by natural reason?", Aquinas answers negatively, but views Augustine's *De Trinitate* as a possible source for those who want to claim that such knowledge is available by natural reason. Accordingly, objection 2 proposes that "Augustine (De *Trinitate* 9.4; 10.11-12) proceeds to show *(procedit ad manifestandum)* the Trinity of Persons by the procession of the word and of love in our own mind; and we have followed him in this (I, q. 27, aa. 1, 3)."[72] Aquinas concludes his reply to this objection by claiming that Augustine began with faith in revelation: "Nor is the image in our mind an adequate proof in the case of God, since the intellect is not in God and ourselves univocally. Hence, Augustine says that by faith we arrive at knowledge, and not conversely."[73] Before we evaluate the status of Aquinas's interpretation of Augustine, let us observe one other objection and reply concerning Augustine's *De Trinitate.*

In question 93, on the image of God, Aquinas raises the question whether the image of God is in humans according to the Trinity of Persons (we have already noted how he combines Augustine and John Damascene in answering this question).[74] He poses the objection that if the image of God were in humans according to the Trinity, then humans would be able to possess knowledge of the Trinity through natural reason, which is contrary to his previous argument.[75] He replies:

> This argument would avail if the image of God in man represented God in a perfect manner. But, as Augustine says, there is a great difference between the trinity within ourselves and the Divine Trinity. Therefore, as he there says: "We see rather than believe the trinity which is in ourselves; whereas we believe rather than see that God is Trinity" *(De Trinitate* 15.6).[76]

n *STh* I, q. 32, a. 1, obj. 2. In this objection, Aquinas distinguishes *fJrobare* from *manifestare.*

[73] *STh* I, q. 32, a. 1, ad 2.

[74] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 5.

[75] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 5, obj. 3; cf. *STh* I, q. 32, a. 1.

[76] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 5, ad 3.

Although Aquinas does not quote Augustine out of context here, he presents what was originally a rhetorical question as an indicative statement and thus adds a measure of clarity and specificity not originally present. Compare the quotation in its original setting:

> Or is it that we see rather than believe these trinities which belong to our senses or our consciousness, while we believe rather than see that God is a trinity? If this is so, it either means that we observe none of his invisible things by understanding them through those that were made, or that if we observe some of them we do not observe trinity among them, and so there is something there which we can observe, and something also which being unobserved we must just believe. But the eighth book showed that we do observe the unchanging good which we are not, and so did the fourteenth persuade us of this when we were talking about the wisdom which man has from God. Why then should we not recognize a trinity there? [77]

Augustine moves with a sense of urgency in his endeavor to find an image of the Trinity. Just after he admits that we do not see the Trinity in created things, but must believe the Trinity, he exhorts us to recognize the Trinity in the wisdom given humans by God. Augustine identifies the image here with the wisdom given by God and thus suggests that natural reason cannot suffice to discern the image. Augustine earlier attacks Cicero's commendation of contemplative reason because the return to God cannot be made without the faith of the Mediator. [78] Nevertheless, in the *De Trinitate* Augustine is not as concerned as is Aquinas to demarcate clearly the line between that which is attainable by natural reason and that which is directly revealed. The rhetorical character of the *De Trinitate* could include more easily the orthodox Christian, heretical, and pagan audiences. Aquinas reads back into Augustine a systematic demarcation between

[77] Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 15.10. I have substituted the verb "observe" for Hill's usage of "descry." The Latin edition of the *Corpus Christianorum* similarly presents the first sentence as a rhetorical question.

[78] Ibid., 14.26.

natural reason and revelation that was probably more of an inchoate division within Augustine's works. [79]

Aquinas also clarifies Augustine's thought concerning the inability of natural reason to come to knowledge of the Trinity. Aquinas says that understanding is not used of God and humans univocally. Although Augustine lacks the description "not used univocally," he affirms that God's knowledge is "vastly dissimilar" to our knowledge. [80] So too our inner word, born from our knowledge, is unlike the Word of God, born from the essence of the Father. [81] Always the preacher, Augustine employs the explicitly rhetorical movements of the *De Trinitate* to emphasize a similarity and then to point out a dissimilarity. Aquinas and Augustine share the sense that God is both knowable and unknowable. But given Aquinas's attempt to treat theology as *scientia,* he shows a greater concern to isolate among the principles of the *scientia* of sacred doctrine those principles that are available to philosophy, or the human intellect unaided by light of grace. In this manner, the Triune God and the image of the Trinity in us become for Aquinas occasions to address the relation between natural reason and revelation.

Ill. JOHN DAMASCENE AND THE LOVE OF VIRTUE

In the last article of question 93, Aquinas inherits the traditional practice of distinguishing between the meaning of "image" and "likeness" in Genesis 1:26. [82] He cites in the *sed contra* Augustine's statement that if likeness and image referred to the same thing then one word would have sufficed. It must be noted, however, that in this article Aquinas introduces elements that are foreign to the Augustinian inheritance. Aquinas says that image *(imago)* and likeness *(similitudo)* can be related to one another in two ways. First, likeness can be a preamble to image so that

[79] Consider the *Confessions,* specifically Augustine's discussion of the elements of Christian truth that he learned from the Platonists and those elements concerning the incarnation of the Word (7.9).

[80] Augustine, *De Trinitate,* 15.22.

[81] Ibid.

[82] The Septuagint reads *"eikon"* and *"homoiosis."* The Latin Vulgate reads *"imago"* and *"similitudo."*

likeness is the more general category of which image is a further specification as a likeness of species. Aquinas uses this notion of image throughout his discussion of the likeness of species in terms of Augustine's trinity of the mind with the dual procession of word and love. Likeness as a preamble to image is employed as well by Augustine.

Second, likeness may be understood as the "expression and perfection of the image."[83] Aquinas cites the same passage from John Damascene that we have already seen, but this time he cites the second half as well: "that which is an image, signifies an intellectual being, with free will and creative power *(potestativus per se);* and what is a likeness, implies likeness of virtue *(virtus),* inasmuch as this is possible for a human being."[84] The image of God indicates that the human creature can think, act, and has creative power. That humans are also made to the likeness of God indicates that this capacity can reach a perfection of power and virtue *(virtus* means both). In other passages, John Damascene describes this perfection of *virtus* in the more familiar language of deification or divinization.[85] Aquinas likewise speaks in the second part of the *Summa Theologiae* of the theological virtues that make possible a certain participation in divinity-according to 2 Peter 1:4, that by Christ we are "participants in the divine nature."[86] Although Aquinas does not explicitly state the connection between the "likeness of virtue *(virtus)"* and the theological virtues, he already indicates in the teaching on the image of God the human trajectory toward participation in God.

[83] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 9.

[84] Ibid.

[85] James J. Meany, S.J., distinguishes three levels in John Damascene's doctrine of the image of God in humans. There is an image of God in all humans because of their free, rational nature. Some have an additional moral likeness built up from virtuous acts. Some have an ontological likeness received in baptism and intensified in the Eucharist. "This [ontological] 'likeness' •• is a prerequisite in order that man might be able to obtain the 'likeness' which is through virtue" *(The Image of God in Man according to the Doctrine of Saint John Damascene* [Manila, P.I.: San Jose Seminary, 1954), 68, d. 67-74).

[86] *STh* I-II, q. 62, a. 1. See A. N. Williams, "Deification in the *Summa Theologiae:* A Structural Interpretation of the *Prima Pars," Thomist* 61 (1997): 219-55. Although Williams addresses the image of God in humans by focusing on the capacity for humans to turn to God and to grow in virtue, she does not indicate what authorities or sources Aquinas employs to develop these motifs.

The inclusion of Greek notions of the image of God becomes even more apparent when Aquinas raises an objection to Peter Lombard's statement from the *Sentences,* "the image is in the understanding of truth, and likeness in love of virtue *(virtus)."* This cannot stand because Aquinas has already shown that understanding and willing are the two parts of the *image* of God. To distinguish image from likeness on the basis of the understanding of truth and the love of virtue could separate the intellect from the will and thus render void Aquinas's discussion of the image. Aquinas responds to the objector by quietly changing the language of the objection, replacing the phrase "understanding of truth" with "love of the word." Image and likeness cannot be distinguished by the difference between love and understanding, but rather both image and likeness must be primarily understood in terms of love. Aquinas says, "It must be said that love of the word, which is knowledge loved, pertains to the idea of image; but love of virtue pertains to likeness; as does virtue." In this one line, Aquinas conjoins the Augustinian notion of the image as the processions of word and love and the Eastern notion of likeness in terms of the perfection of virtue.

A reader of Aquinas might object that the inclusion of the likeness to God as love of virtue does not play a significant role in his treatment of the moral life. Aquinas, however, begins the moral section *(pars moralis)* of the *Summa Theologiae* by saying that after treating the exemplar, God, we now turn to the image of God, human beings. There he cites again John Damascene's identification of the image of God with the free will, but he does not include the full citation that identifies the likeness with the love of virtue.[87] I have suggested that Aquinas uses the doctrine of the image of God toward a more explicit moral end than did Augustine. I have also indicated that this more explicit moral end is conceived in terms of participation in God. The objector, nevertheless, might respond that in the prologue to the *Secunda Pars* Aquinas is limiting his application of the image of God to the similarity of power and free will and not employing the more theological notions of participation in God or love of virtue.

[87] *STh* 1-11, pro!.

Should we then conclude that the inclusion of John Damascene does indeed enable Aquinas to apply the doctrine of the image of God to the moral life, but at the expense of Augustine's theological commitment that the image of God exists in the human capacity for worshiping God? To show that this is not the case, we must examine another place in the *Summa* where Aquinas identifies the love of virtue with the perfection of the human being.

Aquinas discusses the love of virtue *(amor virtutis)* in the questions on the New Law or the Evangelical Law. The questions on the New Law and grace are the culmination of Aquinas's treatment of morals in general in the *Prima Secundae.* According to Aquinas, the New Law is a written law, but it is first and foremost "the grace itself of the Holy Spirit, which is given to the faithful of Christ."[88] The New Law is called the law of love *(lex amoris)* because those who truly have virtue do not act from the fear of punishment nor from the desire for external rewards, but from the love of virtue.[89] The New Law has "spiritual and eternal promises, which are the object of the virtues, above all of charity."[90] Acting from love of virtue, for Aquinas, is synonymous with acting as led by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In the discussion of the New Law, Aquinas completes his statement that the perfection of the image of God in humans is a kind of likeness to God by the love of virtue. In the overall structure of the *Prima Secundae,* from the prologue to the treatise on the New Law, Aquinas felicitously employs these elements of John Damascene concerning the image and likeness of God in humans.

IV. CONCLUSION

Aquinas's reading of Augustine helps him to see that the image of God in humans expresses their dynamic orientation toward knowing and loving God, an orientation only perfected in the vision of God in the next life. Aquinas's reading of John Damascene enables him to exploit the moral significance of the

[88] *STh* I-II, q. 106, a. 1.

[89] *STh* I-II, q. 107, a. 1, ad 2.

[90] Ibid.

image of God in humans by showing that we are prepared for participation in God by the perfection of virtue. Augustine brings out how our being orients us to God; Damascene highlights our action. Anthropology spills over into morality. The teaching on the image of God encapsulates the history of salvation moving through creation, sin, redemption, and glory. Aquinas thus presents the heart of his anthropology within the context of God's action in creation and salvation. The comparison of the processions of intellect and will in the human creature to the eternal processions within the Godhead does not relegate Trinitarian theology to abstraction. Instead, Aquinas elaborates the human relation to God in terms of the characteristically human activity of knowing and loving. It is in the graced activity of the New Law through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that the human orientation to God is fully awakened, opening the human creature to the mystery of divine friendship. [91]

[91]The connection of the image of God and the New Law suggests a complementary way of viewing the image of the Trinity in terms of adoptive sonship. Christians are taken as sons and daughters of the Father, through Christ our Lord and brother, in the Holy Spirit by whom we call on God as Father. As St. Paul teaches, "And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father'" (Gal 4:6, RSV).

The Thomist 63 (1999): 269-81

PROPORTIONALISM AND THE PILL: HOW DEVELOPMENTS IN THEORY LEAD TO CONTRADICTIONS TO PRACTICE

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ONE MAY BE TEMPTED to think that thirty years after the publication of *Humanae vitae* scholars have heard almost every argument for and against contraception and almost every argument for and against the moral theory most commonly invoked to justify contraception, namely, proportionalism. Authors on both sides of the matter have pointed out the connections between the theory of proportionalism and the practice of contraception. All proponents of proportionalism argue that this theory justifies the use of contraception at least under some circumstances, and most, but not all, critics of proportionalism hold that contraception is an intrinsically evil act that cannot be justified. As Edward Vacek notes:

> An argument could be made that *Humanae vitae* has fueled the development of P[roportionalism] in Catholic thought, and that the birth control debate has been so drawn-out and intense precisely because it is really a debate over a style of moral reasoning and a vision of what it means to be human, not to mention over what God is doing in the world-therefore over much larger matters than the use of a pill.[1]

Vacek is absolutely correct in saying that *Humanae vitae* led to a greater and greater questioning of traditional formulations of

[1] Edward Vacek, "Proportionalism: One View of the Debate," *Theological Studies* 46 (1985): 293.

moral theory.[2] If one surveys the literature that began what was later called proportionalism,[3] one will find a recurring pattern; first basic principles are laid down and defended, and then, invariably, it is shown that these principles justify the use of contraception. John Finnis puts the point as follows:

> The formal attack on the moral absolutes emerges, among Catholics, in response to the problem of contraception. Not in response to the desire to maintain a counter population deterrent strategy of annihilating retaliation; or to tell lies in military, police, or political operations; or to carry out therapeutic abortions; or to arrange homosexual unions; or to relieve inner tensions and disequalibria by masturbation; or to keep slaves; or to produce babies by impersonal artifice. Those desires were and are all urgent enough, but none of them precipitated the formal rejection of moral absolutes. The desire to practice and approve of contraception did.[4]

Indeed, early formulations of proportionalism, formulations that understood proportionate reason simply as the injunction to choose the lesser of two evils and lacked a developed application of the goodness/rightness distinction, seemed to justify the use of contraception in most cases. What has been overlooked, however, is how the development of proportionalism itself leads to the conclusion that the use of contraception, for the most part if not entirely, is illicit. In other words, proportionalism itself, given a proper understanding of proportionate reason and the goodness/rightness distinction, leads one to a rejection of the use of contraception.

Unlike consequentialism or act-utilitarianism, proportionalism is not mere maximization of premoral goods or minimization of premoral evils. Though maximization of premoral goods and minimization of premoral evils *primarily* define proportionate reason, there are other, secondary conditions that establish it as

[2] In his book *Proportionalism: The American Debate and Its European Roots* (Washington: Georgetown University, 1987), Bernard Hoose makes similar remarks (p. 37).

[3] See, for instance, *Readings in Moral Theology vol. 1: Moral Norms and Catholic Tradition*, ed. Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick, S.J. (New York: Paulist Press, 1979); Christopher Kaczor, ed., *Proportionalism: For and Against* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, forthcoming).

[4] John Finnis, *Moral Absolutes* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 85.

well.[5] These conditions were worked out through the responses to critics who suggested that proportionalism justifies any sort of behavior whatever, even for example allowing a sheriff to frame and execute an innocent man to prevent a riot. Proportionalists responded by clarifying that proportionalism does not advocate the maximization of nonmoral goods irrespective of all other considerations. Certain secondary conditions must be met for there to be a truly proportionate reason.

First, proportionate reason includes a *condition of necessity of cause*.[6] The premorally evil means used by the agent must stand in a necessary causal relationship to the premoral good sought. Hence, in the often-cited case of abortion to save the life of the mother, one may legitimately effect the death of the child in order to save the life of the mother because the killing and the saving stand in a necessary relationship to one another. On the other hand, a sheriff may not frame an innocent person for a murder he did not commit even in order to prevent a riot that will kill many others. There is no necessary relation between framing an innocent person and preventing a riot, hence the act contemplated by the sheriff lacks a proportionate reason.

Second, proportionate reason has a condition of *chronological simultaneity*. Proportionate reason is present only in the preservation of a good here and now, not some future good. One cannot have an abortion because one wants to avoid paying the unborn child's tuition; one cannot sleep with the prison guard to be reunited with one's family. On the other hand, one can kill in self-defense, since this killing preserves the good of life here and now.

Finally, proportionate reason excludes causing *more evil than necessary*. If one can defend oneself by injuring, rather than killing, then one should only injure. If one can defend oneself without even injuring, then one is obliged to take this course of

[5] I am indebted here to the summary of James Walter, "Proportionate Reason and Its Three Levels of Inquiry: Structuring the Ongoing Debate," *Louvain Studies* 10 (1984): 30-40, esp. 33-36, though I have changed his order of presentation and slightly altered the list itself.

[6] Richard A. McCormick and Paul Ramsey, eds., *Doing Evil to Achieve Good: Moral Choice in Conflict Situations* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1978), 238; Richard A. McCormick, *Notes on Moral Theology, 1965 through 1980* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981), 718-719, hereafter, *Notes 1*.

action. This final secondary condition excludes the causing of *superfluous evil.*

According to revisionists, these three secondary conditions of proportionate reason (namely, the causal necessity of the evil to achieve the good, chronological simultaneity, and the curtailing of superfluous evil) sharply delineate proportionalism from straightforward consequentialism, especially if each is construed as a necessary rather than as a sufficient condition. Finally, of course, proportionalism demands that one must choose the lesser of two evils and in this it does not differ from consequentialism. How do these conditions relate to the use of contraception?

The condition of necessity, that there must be a causal necessity between the evil used and the good achieved, excludes, for example, the possibility of terror bombing, bombing innocent civilians to terrorize the enemy into submission. There is no necessary connection between these deaths and the capitulation of military leaders. Richard McCormick explains as follows:

> extortion by definition accepts the necessity of doing nonmoral evil to get others to cease their wrongdoing. The acceptance of such a necessity is an implied denial of human freedom. But since human freedom is a basic value associated with other basic values (in this case, life) undermining it *also thereby undermines life.*[7]

In this context, "necessity" means that there is no other way imaginable to prevent greater loss of life, save the taking of life. If there is another way available, for example, the cessation of wrongdoing by others or heroic efforts on one's own part, then there is no necessary connection.

However, this causal necessity excludes many common grounds for the use of contraception, including financial well-being, stable family life, and desire to pursue a career. There is no necessary connection between these goods and the use of contraception. Some who use contraception never achieve the goods of stable family life, financial well-being, and career fulfillment. Some who do not use contraception do achieve the goods of stable family life, financial well-being, and career

[7] McCormick, *Doing Evil to Achieve Good,* 260.

fulfillment. There are undoubtedly other ways to secure these goods aside from contraception. The spouses themselves, family members, and the community can make or break efforts to achieve the goods in question. The only case in which there is the requisite necessary connection would be use of contraception in cases in which a pregnancy would endanger a woman's life or health. Here, it is the *pregnancyitself* that is the problem and not negative effects accidentally related to pregnancy that could be lessened or even alleviated with the help of others. Hence, either proportionalism is inconsistent in its invoking of the necessity condition in some cases (terror bombing) but not in other cases (contraception) or if the necessity condition is consistently applied then one is forced to reject many common justifications for the use of contraception, leaving only contraception to preserve the health of the mother.

Another secondary condition of proportionate reason is chronological simultaneity of the good and evil effects. McCormick puts the point in the following way:

> Here [in the work of a critic of proportionalism] we have evil *now-good to come.* Thus it is sometimes said that adultery now justifies a future good. This misrepresents what Fuchs-Schiiller-Bockle-Janssens-Scholz-Weber-Curran and many others are saying. What they are saying is that the good achieved *here and now* (though it may perdure into the future) is sometimes inseparable from premoral evil. Thus, an act of self-defense achieves *here and now* the good of preservation of life. A falsehood achieves *here and now* the protection of a professional secret. Taking property (food) of another saves the life of the taker *here and now.* [8]

When the condition of chronological simultaneity of good and evil effects is applied to the case of contraception, the result is that most uses of contraception become unjustified. For example, contraception used to avoid the costs that will be incurred at the birth and upbringing of a child is a case doing evil here and now for the sake of preventing an evil feared in the future. Contraception for the sake of family stability or career advancement likewise is doing evil now so that one may have some good or

[8] Richard A. McCormick, *Notes on Moral Theology, 1981-1984* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1984), 3 n. 10; hereafter, *Notes* 2.

avoid some evil in the future. Once again, the only cases of contraception that would be justified would be cases in which the life or the health of the woman would be threatened by the pregnancy itself.

Third, proportionate reason demands that one cause as little premoral evil as possible to secure the end in question. One should use deception in self-defense rather than injuring another if both means will secure safety. One should not kill if self-defense that merely injures the adversary will achieve the same goal. This aspect of proportion corresponds precisely to Thomas's use of the word in his famous treatment of self-defense in *STh* 11-11, q. 64, a. 7.[9] The act of self-defense must be proportioned to the end of defense. Hence, one who uses more force than necessary in defending himself acts wrongly.

If one may not bring about superfluous evil in achieving the end, certain methods of contraception would seem to be excluded. For instance, the pill, Norplant, and IUD can act as abortifacients.[10] Particularly in association with smoking, women using oral contraceptives run a higher risk of cancer, blood clotting, strokes, and heart attacks.[11] Although these dire side effects are not usual, women taking oral contraceptives commonly report weight gain, mood swings, and increased irritability. The IUD is also not without its disadvantages. In the words of Hanna Klaus, M.D.:

[9] On this famous article, see Thomas Cavanaugh," Aquinas's Account of Double Effect," *TheThomist61(1997):107-21;* Christopher Kaczor, "DoubleEffectfromGurytoKnauer," *Theological Studies* Qune 1998): 297-316.

[10] In the words of Dr. Hanna Klaus: "[Although oral contraceptives are not ipso facto abortifacient, it] is important to understand that there are four mechanisms of action of oral contraceptives: when the dose of estrogen and progesterone is high, the drugs suppress the LH (lutenizing hormone) surge, and ovulation does not occur. At all effective levels the cervical mucus is rendered hostile to sperm entry (becomes G mucus only), tubal motility is interfered with making conception less likely (or ectopic pregnancy more likely if conception occurs), and the endometrium is changed so that it is much thinner than normal and contains much fibrous tissue while the glands are suppressed to a large extent. Such an endometrium could not support the imbedding of the blastocyst, and would therefore cause it to abort" (Sr. Hanna Klaus, M.D., "The Reality of Contraception," *Catholic Dossier* 3, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1997): 42.

[11] Ibid.

The IUD at the very least introduces a foreign object into the uterus. Plastic IUDs were primarily abortifacient. Later copper devices would prove to have a mixed action. Initially the copper produces a toxic fluid in the uterus which destroys spermatozoa in transit to the tube, and washes into the tube to destroy any ova. If the gametes succeeded in uniting, the embryo was usually destroyed before embedding. The IUD also interferes with normal tubal motility .... If the device is not inserted skillfully, the woman's uterus can be perforated. Even when properly placed, it can be the channel for bacteria or viruses to enter the uterus and cause pelvic infection. [12]

Although sterilization avoids the side effects associated with the IUD, it too is not without its drawbacks. In addition to being expensive and difficult to reverse, sterilization for women by means of tubal ligation brings with it an increased chance of ectopic pregnancy.[13] Other forms of contraception such as a diaphragm and the condom do not have these disadvantages. They are not abortifacients, nor do they have harmful side effects. They are both relatively inexpensive and easily reversible. If one is obliged to avoid causing superfluous evils, then one is obliged not to use many of the most common forms of contraception, the anovalent pill, the IUD, Norplant, and sterilization in favor of other means available, such as condoms and diaphragms, which bring about less superfluous evil in achieving the desired end.

Thus far, if consistently applied, no case of contraception would be licit on grounds given by proportionalists save for contraception used in cases in which a woman's health is endangered and the only forms of contraception that could be licitly used in such cases would be condoms or diaphragms. However, one must not forget that the primary condition of proportionate reason demands the maximization of premoral goods and minimization of premoral evils. The requirement is sometimes formulated as follows: given the choice between two evils, one must choose the lesser of two evils. As McCormick suggests, the only alternative would seem to be that in such conflict situations one must choose the greater of two evils, which seems clearly absurd.

[12] Ibid., 43. See also F. Alvarez, et al., "New Insights on the Mode of Action of Intrauterine Contraceptive Devices in Women," *Fertility and Sterility* 49 (May 1988): 768-73.

[13] Klaus, "The Reality of Contraception," 43. See also H.B. Peterson, M.D., et al., "The Risk of Ectopic Pregnancy after Tubal Ligation," *New England Journal of Medicine* 336 (1997): 762-67.

Given that proportionalism holds that one must choose the lesser of two evils, it would seem commonsensical that, given the choice, one must choose something indifferent or good over something that is evil, even if only a premoral evil. Condoms and diaphragms are not entirely free from premoral evil. In the words of Richard McCormick:

> Contraception represents a type of intrusion, a nuisance, an interference. That is clear from the description of the "perfect contraceptive": it must be inexpensive, effective, without side effects, aesthetically acceptable, and easy to use. Lack of these qualities would spell evils of some kind.[14]

Unlike condoms and diaphragms, Natural Family Planning (NFP) would seem to fulfill all the criteria laid down by McCormick for the "perfect contraceptive." Its only necessary expense is perhaps the time taken out from work or play to learn the method. Well aware of the difference between the "rhythm method" and NFP, McCormick echos the findings of numerous scientific studies: "Natural family planning is a highly effective method."[15] When both are used properly, NFP's failure rate is roughly the same as the pill's. NFP has no side effects on male or female health. It is aesthetically acceptable insofar as it does not disturb the natural structure of the sexual act. Finally, NFP is easy to use, requiring no specialized technique or knowledge. James P. Hanigan acknowledges additional advantages of NFP over contraception:

> Ironically, if one considers the virtues and relational dynamics needed to practice NFP effectively, one discovers many of the values and virtues advocated for marital relationships by revisionist and feminist theologians who emphasize "quality of relationship" norms to evaluate the morality of sexual behaviors. NFP, more than any other means of birth control, calls for honest communication, for mutual equality, for shared responsibility and joint decision-making between the sexual partners. The burden of responsible parenthood through the techniques of NFP, while still heavier on the woman than on the man, is not placed exclusively on the woman.[16]

[14] Richard McCormick, *Health Care and Medicine in the Catholic Tradition* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1987), 98 and 99.

[15] Ibid., 98.

[16] James Hanigan, "Veritatis Splendor and Sexual Ethics," in *Veritatis Splendor: American Responses* (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1995), 212.

Given the advantages of NFP over all forms of contraception, considered purely within the framework of premoral goods and evils, the greater good is not difficult to discern. If one is required to choose the greater good or the lesser evil in avoiding pregnancy, NFP is obligatory and contraception impermissible.

Usually, revisionists acknowledge that NFP is an obligatory ideal but that this ideal, like many other ideals, must be tempered by realistic considerations. These considerations are of two kinds. First, NFP requires knowledge of the female reproductive system as well technical devices that may be too expensive or unavailable to some, such as thermometers for measuring body temperature in determining time of ovulation.[17] Second, and much more important, NFP "requires a high degree of motivation and mutuality on the part of the couple which cannot be readily presumed, training in the practice of the method and a good deal of self-knowledge and self-discipline on the part of the couple."[18] Not all couples can meet these demands; hence, given the practical alternatives, contraception may be justified.

The first objection has the theoretical drawback that it applies much better to forms of contraception than it does to NFP. Like NFP, the proper use of contraceptives requires knowledge, at least minimal, of the reproductive system. If sex-education experts are to be believed, one must learn how properly to use a condom or diaphragm. Presumably, before a doctor prescribes the pill or Norplant, he teaches the patient something about the drug so as to allow the patient an opportunity to give informed consent. In terms of technical devices, the requirements of NFP are much more modest than the requirements of artificial contraception. Strictly speaking no technical devices are needed for NFP, though a thermometer and chart may be useful. If buying a thermometer or a chart for NFP taxes the family budget, certainly a visit to the doctor, pill prescriptions, condoms, or diaphragms would be too expensive.

The second argument is more substantive. NFP is simply too demanding for couples. Not all couples have the heroic virtues necessary to abstain from intercourse for as long as nine to twelve

[17] Ibid., 212-13.

[18] Ibid., 212.

days per month. Morality does not demand the impossible. I *ought* to do such-and-such implies I *can* do such-and-such. Some people, good people, just cannot bring themselves to such a long period of abstention. Not everyone is called to heroism, and a lack of moral perfection should not be considered evil-doing in a moral sense.

To understand why this argument too fails on proportionalist grounds, one has to invoke a further distinction common to proportionalist writings, the distinction between goodness and rightness. Although in the early seventies proportionalists spoke of good and bad actions, through the intervention of William Frankena and more importantly Bruno Schiiller they came to insist on distinguishing moral goodness and badness from rightness and wrongness.

Unfortunately, there is no precise definition of this distinction upon which all authors agree. Some scholars describe goodness as a disposition or striving to do and know what is right and rightness as action in accordance with nature or reason. "Acting from love *(agape)* is morally good," writes Bruno Schiiller; "Doing what on the whole is impartially beneficial to all persons concerned is morally right. Therefore, an action may be morally bad because performed from pure selfishness, but nonetheless be morally right on account of its beneficial consequences."[19] Josef Fuchs offers this example of how to parse the distinction between goodness and rightness in a particular case:

> Perhaps someone makes a great contribution to the well-being of humankind but is only motivated in his activity by egotism-for instance, in order to be honored. He has done the morally *right* thing, for he has created premoral human goods or values; but he is not morally *good.*[20]

What is common to all the ways in which the distinction is made is this: Goodness and badness refer to persons in their motivations and in their striving or failing to strive to do what is right;

[19] Bruno Schiiller, "The Double Effect in Catholic Thought: A Reevaluation," in McCormick and Ramsey, eds., *Doing Evil to Achieve Good,* 165-92, at 183.

[20] Josef Fuchs, "Intrinsically Evil Acts?" in *Christian Ethics in a Secular Arena,* trans. Bernard Hoose and Brain McNeil (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1984), 81.

rightness and wrongness refer to acts. According to this view, one cannot resolve any question of the rightness or wrongness of an act by reference to virtues, that is, the interior dispositions of a person. The virtues are habits of seeking and desiring to do what is right; they cannot determine what is right.

How is the goodness/rightness distinction (GRD) justified? One argument given in favor of GRD is that it does not confuse the aretaic with the deontic realm of discourse.[21] Todd Salzman puts the point in the following way:

> Aretaic terms concern *moral* predicates that designate the goodness or badness of the agent, his or her motive, intention or disposition. Aretaic terms apply to acts as well when the description of the moral nature of the act includes the motive or intention of the agent. Deontic terms concern predicates of right or wrong acts.... In discussion of concrete norms that concern deontic judgments on the rightness or wrongness of an act, it is best to avoid aretaic terms.[22]

Virtue, vice, holiness, sin, and salvation are aretaic terms. Rightness and wrongness are deontic terms. For revisionists, rightness is determined on the basis of the premoral goods and evils involved, but goodness is determined by whether or not agents seek to do what is right. Hence, to invoke virtues or vices in determining the rightness or wrongness of an action is to use aretaic terms in answer to a deontic question, confusing the issue.

How does this relate to contraception? Let us assume that it is an empirical fact that many people cannot bring themselves to practice NFP. People who lack the requisite virtues of temperance and self-denial will find it difficult, if not practically impossible, to abstain during times when they judge abstinence is required. Granting that this is the case, if we invoke the goodness/rightness distinction the inability of such people would not alter the character of contraception as right or wrong in the least. Right or wrong, according to those who hold the GRD, is a matter of the objective premoral goods and evils brought about by a given act. Virtue, seeking what is right, pertains to goodness, not rightness. If someone lacks the virtues to seek and effect that which is

[21] Todd Salzman, *Deontology and Teleology* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1995), 510-11.

[22] Ibid.

objectively right, the consistent revisionist must hold that the person is lacking in the fullness of moral goodness. Even supposing that people with excellence in all the virtues, including temperance, cannot practice NFP, this still would not alter the rightness or wrongness of contraception, for moral rightness in human action is maximizing premoral human goods or values. If contraception brings about more premoral evils than NFP, it is wrong, even if people, good people, cannot bring themselves to seek to use NFP. According to those who invoke the goodness/rightness distinction, to invoke the virtues or vices of people in determining the rightness or wrongness of an act is to confuse the aretaic with the deontic realm of discourse.[23] Hence, the GRD undercuts one of the most common arguments given in favor of contraception and against NFP.

For the sake of argument, suppose that the GRD itself fails. Would the proportionalist premise then be acceptable? Does *ought* imply that most *can?* Of course, a lot depends upon what is meant by "can." Surely, the sense meant is that most people cannot bring themselves to do it. If this principle is invoked, however, many more "laws" will have to be abandoned. A good place to start would be with those two fundamental laws which none of us have successfully kept.

> "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matt 22:36-39)

These two laws in particular have not been obeyed since the beginning of human history. If we are to adjust the moral law to the practice of the people, then we will have to adjust it all the way down to its fundament.

Hence, proportionalism, though originally conceived as a way of justifying the use of contraception, in the course of clarifying itself and responding to objections ends by excluding the use of contraception. The development of the theory to exclude cases of bombing civilians in war or framing innocent people led to the

[23] Ibid.

conditions of necessity and chronological simultaneity in proportionate reason. These conditions exclude the most common motives for using contraception, including financial stability, family harmony, and career advancement. The condition of avoiding superfluous evil leads to the elimination of various means of contraception, including the pill. The principle that in conflict situations one should choose the lesser of two evils or the greater good leads to the conclusion that one should choose NFP over contraception. Finally, the goodness/rightness distinction undermines the frequently heard argument given in favor of contraception that the ideal of NFP is too difficult for most people to strive after or achieve because the common couple lacks the requisite virtues. Of course, I am not, in this discussion, taking any substantive views on the matters of proportionalism or contraception. Rather, I am only making the disquieting suggestion that either the developed view of proportionalism or approval of contraception must be abandoned by the many who advocate both.

The Thomist 63 (1999): 283-306

ECCLESIAL BEING AND ONE THEOLOGIAN: PANNENBERG'S DOCTRINE OF FAITH IN ITS SACRAMENTAL CONTEXT

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I. INTRODUCTION

THE APPEARANCE OF Wolfhart Pannenberg's *Systematic Theology, Volume 3*[1] completes his explorations into the God of Jesus Christ with an ecumenically oriented elaboration of the theological reality of the Christian Church. Readers familiar with Pannenberg's Christology and doctrine of God will be prepared for his distinctive treatment of the "provisional" and "proleptic" aspects of the Church as "sign and instrument" of an eschatological form of life wherein all sin, and the death and division that accompany sin, are overcome in the Kingdom of God.

Less well known, however, is the path taken by this ardent Lutheran opponent of theological subjectivism and authoritarianism in his explorations into the conditions for Christian consciousness and life in its essentially communal setting. In this final volume of his dogmatics,[2] the subjectivity of the Christian

[1] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 3,* trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1998). Henceforth cited as *ST3. Volume 1* (1988) and *Volume* 2 (1994) have the same translator and publisher as *ST3,* and are cited below as *ST1* and *ST2* respectively.

[2] I employ the term "dogmatics" here to underscore Pannenberg's emphasis on the primacy of the object (God) in theological science, though this object is investigated by Christian theologians in the subjectivity of faith. For Pannenberg, dogmatics is always reflection upon *dogmata theou,* which is distinguished from, but inseparably connected to, the doctrinal content of Scripture and the *articuli fidei* (the complex unity of revealed teaching that Aquinas and others called *sacra doctrina).* Dogmatics takes the form of

believer comes into view especially in Pannenberg's development of the theology of faith as both gift and personal appropriation of the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit in the sacramental life of the Church. For Pannenberg, saving faith is actualized most fully in the moment of Eucharistic doxology, understood as both sacrifice and "eschatological anamnesis." This understanding of the Eucharist, Pannenberg believes, can underscore the primacy of the eschatological Kingdom in a salvation-historical approach to theology, and at the same time affirm that it is the real presence of Christ and his passion in the present life of the Church that constitutes its identity as *Body of Christ* and its mission as *People of God.* Eucharistic doxology is for Pannenberg the supreme moment wherein Christ in his objective reality determines the identity of the believer, in the subjectivity of faith, as an adopted child of God the Father in fellowship with all those for whom the future eschatological life has already dawned.

Volume 3 begins with chapter 12, "The Outpouring of the Spirit, the Kingdom of God, and the Church," which shifts attention from the person and work of Christ (the theme of *Volume* 2) to that of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, at work in the creation and "continuous creation" of the world, consummates this work in the eschatological elevation of human creatures to an eternal, interpersonal form of life in the *communio* of Father, Son, and Spirit. In this pneumatological perspective, Pannenberg will identify the essence of the Church as a society that exists "between" a temporal social order governed by a rational quest for justice ("Law") and the arrival of the Kingdom of God, wherein the "new law" of grace alone governs all creatures.

systematic theology when faith initiates a search for understanding and rational confirmation of *dogmata theou* through exploration of the systematic coherence of revealed dogma 'Is an aspect of the reality of its truth-see *STl,* 48-61) in the Church *(STl,* 17-19), together with all other truth or claims to truth in philosophy, science, and especially the history of the religions. Citing Anselm, Pannenberg argues that the interpretive reconstruction of theological dogma in academic theology takes place *sola ratione* (in distinction from Karl Barth's interpretation of Anselm; see *STl,* 51). On this basis, many identify Pannenberg as a "rationalist." The present volume presents a more complex understanding of the relation between theological faith as an ecclesial reality and theology as systematic inquiry into the truth of dogma *sola ratione* (in the limited but important sense of truth attained by way of arguments of *convenientia;* see *STl,* 21).

Chapter 13, "The Messianic Community and Individuals," explores the working of the Spirit to establish individuals in relations of immediacy to Christ through the mediation of the Church and the sacraments. The depth of Pannenberg's ecumenical experience, reflections, and concern is on display here, particularly in his treatment of justification (211-36), and in the nearly two hundred pages dedicated to reflection upon the sacraments of the Church.[3] This section concludes with a discussion of ministry as a "sacrament" of the unity of the Church,[4] a ministry that ought to be exercised within the universal Church, according to Pannenberg, in a reformed papal office. The sacrament of ministry, however, is sharply differentiated from the Eucharist in terms of its power and effects: whereas the Eucharist constitutes the Church in its fundamental identity as the *Body of Christ*, the sacrament of ministry exists to serve the Body of Christ, constituting the Church as an elected *People of God* in history-"a sign of the future fellowship of humanity in the kingdom of God"-by the exercise of a spiritual *auctoritas* dedicated to reconciliation among Christians.[5]

Chapter 14, "Election and History," develops the doctrine of election as a theology of God's agency in the history of the Church. Pannenberg locates the problem faced by the doctrine of

[3] Pannenberg is concerned first to explore the analogical sense of the term "sacrament" when predicated of the seven symbolic liturgical actions in the Church defined at Trent as instituted by Christ, together with their significance and interdependence in the Christian life, and only then to determine the question of their number. Pannenberg that this approach to the question respects the complexity of theological judgments concerning Christ's institution of sacraments, though it cannot dismiss concern for such judgments. Institution by Christ remains for Pannenberg an indispensable condition for the judgment that a symbolic liturgical action imparts grace.

[4] Pannenberg argues that it is admissible to call ordination a sacrament insofar as it confers the grace of character, marking one for public service to the gospel. He parts ways with Aquinas's teaching that ordination confers sanctifying grace *(ST3,* 393-99)

[5] *ST3,* 429-32. Pannenberg does not strictly speaking deny that *potestas* belongs to the ministry of the bishop of Rome, but writes that the work of this office is "less a function of power *(potestas)* than of the ability to persuade *(auctoritas)."* Pannenberg's connection between divine election and the constitution of the Church as People of God would appear weakened if the basis of ministry lies solely in the moral authority of its ministers *(auctoritas).* In this same connection, however, he cites G. A. Lindbeck and others *(ST3,* 430 n. 1015) who argue that the problem in defining the authority of the Roman primacy lies in the inadequacy of the alternative between divine and human right.

predestination in the modern period in a concern for the eternal salvation of the individual considered in abstraction from the social and historical existence of the believer in the Church. For Pannenberg, election is a "repeating" *(Nachvollzug)* of the self-actualization of God in the history of Jesus in the lives of individuals empowered by the grace present in the sacraments of the Church.[6] While at one level this chapter is concerned with the history of the Church as a source of theological reflection, its deeper roots lie in Pannenberg's attempt to place the Church in the context of a universal historical process wherein the Triune God is active in drawing all creatures into the eschaton through his providential government.

In the concluding chapter, "The Consummation of Creation in the Kingdom of God," Pannenberg defends the realism of Christian belief in an "eschatological future" in the light of modern calls for a demythologization of the idea or its transformation into a this-worldly hope for universal reconciliation among peoples. Pannenberg wants to point out that theological investigation cannot remove completely the obscurity of the content of eschatological belief, especially in light of the ongoing existence of evil in the world, underscoring once again the provisional quality of faith's subjective certitude. Pannenberg's emphasis upon the *extra nos* of the truth of faith is summarized in his insistence that only God can justify himself beyond all questioning through the definitive revelation of his love and power in the eschaton. The truth of Christian belief has its basis in the God whose Triune identity has not yet been fully manifest in history. The Christian believer, who sacrifices his finite images and rational understanding of God in the moment of Eucharistic praise, is assured, according to Pannenberg, that "The distinction and unity of the immanent and economic Trinity constitute the heartbeat of the divine love, and with a single such heartbeat this love encompasses the whole world of creatures."[7]

[6] *ST3,* 435f. The term "self-actualization of God" summarizes Pannenberg's discussion of the incarnation in *ST2,* 389-96. The "repeating" of which Pannenberg speaks, however, must be distinguished from Mohler's idea that the Church is an "ongoing incarnation of the Son of God" (ST3, 26).

[7] *ST3,* 646.

The breadth of Pannenberg's achievement in this work makes it attractive to search for some single theme, the exploration of which might disclose central features of the author's theological vision as a whole. Pannenberg's theology of faith and the sacraments, inspired by what he regards as Luther's "breakthrough" into understanding the inseparability of faith from the personal relation to Christ *extra nos,* strikes me as a particularly fruitful way to engage Pannenberg's thought in *Volume 3,* and indeed the whole of the *Systematic Theology.* The present essay proceeds from this judgment into an exploration of Pannenberg's theology of faith in its coordination with other theological topics, according to this order: (1) faith and its general ecclesial, political, and moral setting; (2) faith and its object; (3) faith and the sacraments.

A further word might be said about a still larger context in which I will interpret Pannenberg's theological achievement. A number of Pannenberg's readers might concur with Hans Frei in his judgment that Pannenberg is among those theologians who seek to correlate Christian belief and general cultural assumptions against the background of a shared philosophical scheme.[8] Pannenberg shares with the so-called correlationist school the conviction that the structure of the relation between theology and philosophy is mediated in the light of an understanding of human consciousness as an openness to various modes of determination, one of these modes being that of Christian consciousness, or theo-

[8] Hans W. Frei, in *Types of Christian Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 3, writes that Pannenberg effects "the subsumption of theology under a general philosophical *Wissenschafrslehre,* but under the governing auspices of the latter seeks to correlate specifically Christian with general cultural meaning structures," a correlation "made possible by the same underlying transcendental philosophical structure." This charge can be traced back as least as far as R. Bultmann in his claim that Pannenberg's theology of revelation as universal history is a variant of Hegel's secularization of Christian eschatology in which "the content of history is reduced to the movement of ideas coordinated to man's rationality" (cited in J. M. Robinson, *TaH,* 18 n. 53). Pannenberg consistently rejects these interpretations of his work, arguing early in his career that "to locate a theological thought in German idealism is not automatically to condemn it" *(RaH,* 5). While there is no question that Pannenberg's thought borrows significantly from Hegelian phenomenology, he clearly indicates where he parts ways with Hegel (e.g., *Basic Questions in Theology,* vol. 1, trans. George H. Kehm [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970], 219-20; *Sf3,* 636) and identifies himself more nearly with both Aquinas and Barth on the strictly theological and *extra nos* character of divine revelation (e.g., *ST1,* 2, 16).

logical faith. But this observation left to itself tends to conceal Pannenberg's reliance upon Luther as a "pre-Enlightenment" source of reflection upon human subjectivity and identity, a reliance that displays itself in Pannenberg's vigorous concern to show that and how Christian theology must avoid the collapse into subjectivism (including the reduction of Christian theology to a purely philosophical mode of reflection). The question of whether Pannenberg's theology is "governed" by philosophy will be left for other readers to determine. My own interest in Pannenberg is guided by the belief that he seeks to "baptize" the post-idealist phenomenological tradition through incorporation of its categories and themes into a "Christian personalism" capable of establishing the ontological distinctions necessary for Christian theology. [9] This "Christian personalism" has its subjective basis in his theology of faith, a faith determined, however, by the object of Christian consciousness: God's historical appearance in the person of Jesus and his presence in the sacraments of the Church.

II. FAITH AND ITS GENERAL ECCLESIAL, POLITICAL, AND MORAL SETTING

One expects to find in Pannenberg's ecclesiology a confrontation with the question about the Church's essence in light of the immediacy of the relation of the individual believer to Christ. *Volume 3* sets this question within the doctrine of the Trinity by appropriating to the Holy Spirit the work of consummating the creation and redemption of the world "as he teaches us to know the eternal Son of the Father in Jesus of Nazareth and

[9] Connected with this thought is the work of Robert Sokolowski, *EucharisticPresence* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994) and his own distinction (5) between a "theology of disclosure" (rooted in phenomenology) and "speculative theology" (rooted in ontology), together with his suggestions about their relation in dependence upon the work of Edmund Husserl and Hans Urs von Balthasar. Balthasar's manner of speaking about the content of faith as lying *within* the visible appearance, and not *behind* it, resonates with Pannenberg's retrieval of similar themes in Luther. Distinctive in this regard is Pannenberg's effort throughout the whole of *Systematic Theology* to work out the relation between phenomenology and ontology in a Christian dogmatics within the categories of what he argues is a Hebraic concept of the relation of time and eternity.

moves our hearts to praise of God by faith, hope, and love."[10] The same Spirit who gives to all creatures their *own* ecstatic existence and life (Pannenberg appeals to impersonal metaphors such as "wind" or an "incomprehensible field of force" here)[11] is communicated, in connection with the manifestation of the Risen Christ, as a personal *donum* of divine life in fellowship with Christ and the *communio sanctorum.*[12] In sum, the Church is the sacrament-the sign and instrument-of the Kingdom of God, and as sacrament is rightly said to be the "mother" of believers.[13]

In Pannenberg's distinctive salvation-historical approach, the Church exists as sacramental presence of the Kingdom only in its *ontological* connection with that which remains absent: more specifically, the Church exists as an efficacious instrument of the consummating work of the Spirit only in the doxological act of acknowledging its distinction from the Kingdom as the work of God. Pannenberg's understanding of the "constitution" of Jesus' own divinity, mediated in his eternal act of self-distinction from the Father, lies in the background of the thesis that the participated divinity of the Church is mediated in its liturgical practice of distinguishing creature and Creator in the act of worship.[14] Pannenberg's emphasis upon the "relational" and in

[10] *ST1,* 1.

[11] *ST3,* 7; Pannenberg develops the "indirect" connections between the biblical *ruah 'elohim,* the Stoic *pneuma,* and field theories of motion in modern physics in *ST2,* 79-84; he also applies field theory to his concept of divine Spirit in *ST1,* 370-84.

[12] *ST3,* 8-9, 12-15, 99-110. It is impossible to do justice here to the profound way that Pannenberg brings together Greek and Latin sources on the relation between the Spirit, creation, Church, and eschaton at *ST3,* 1-20. Christian "personalism" shows itself here in the thesis that it is the "person," and not merely the "humanity," of Jesus who receives the Spirit, thereby breaking with Augustine's equating of *donum* and *processio,* and thus opening a space for a social, rather than psychological, analogy of the Trinity *(ST3,* 8-9; *ST1,* 300-336).

[13] *ST3,* 38-48. Even taking into account Pannenberg's suggestion that the notion of Church as *Ursakrament* is more properly communicated in speaking of the Church as a sacrament "in Christ," he presents his position as materially in agreement with the teaching of *Lumen gentium.* The *way* in which the Church exists as "mother" (a metaphor that stands in for Pannenberg's notion of signs as instrumental causes rather than an analogical reference to the Mother of God *[ST3,* 47)) does not follow the teaching of *Lumen gentium* at every point, as will appear below.

[14] *ST3,* 31-32; *ST1,* 375ff. Pannenberg's phenomenological approach to the doctrine of the Trinity yields a rather surprising reversal in the order in which systematic theology develops the doctrine of God. For Pannenberg, it is the Trinity of "social" identity-forming

this sense "provisional" understanding of the Church (such that the "provisional" can function as both a "mark" of the Church and moral imperative)[15] yields the conclusion that Church and Kingdom are not an undifferentiated identity: the Church exists as sacrament in "anticipation" of the arrival of the Kingdom.

Unlike some theologians working in the area of interreligious dialogue, Pannenberg does not find in the difference between Church and Kingdom the seeds of a "regnocentrism" that would undermine the essentially missionary nature of the Church. Such an approach would undermine the realism of Christian belief that eschatological hope for reconciliation among all human beings has already begun in Christ, and, further, that it is proclamation of Christ that prepares the way for the overcoming of the distinction between the visible Church and "the nations" in the Kingdom.[16] Pannenberg, rather, exploits the distinction between Church and Kingdom to develop an ecumenical understanding of the Church as a spiritually imperfect society for which faith remains a way *toward* a more perfect *communio* of believers with one another in Christ. Pannenberg's conviction that all the Christian Churches are historically implicated in the ongoing sin of separation among Christians leads him to deny that there exists "a full presence of the one Lord in their separated eucharistic celebrations." Here Pannenberg's *communio* ecclesiology seems to part ways with the teaching of *Lumen gentium* and *Unitatis redintegratio,* especially in the weight he gives to the subjective and moral dimensions of the Spirit's presence in the Church.[17]

relations in God that "appears" in the history of Jesus, whereas the unity of the divine essence is precisely what lies hidden in faith. Pannenberg demonstrates his concern for "ontological" theology precisely in his move beyond a "personalist" or social-analogical doctrine of the Trinity into a consideration of the oneness of the divine essence in *ST1,* 337-448.

[15] *ST3,* 32. "Only in the spiritual poverty and humility of this self-distinction [between Church and Kingdom] is it the place at which, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the eschatological future of God's lordship is already present and at work for human salvation."

[16] SI3, 45-46.

[17] In particular, *LG* 8, 26, and *UR* 3. For more detail, see Pannenberg's dialogue with Tillard, Rabner, Ratzinger, and others in ST3, 103-10. Pannenberg believes his position is logically entailed (though not intended) in J. Ratzinger's statement (in "The Ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council," *Communio* 13 [1986], 239-52, at 244) that "Christ is everywhere wholly.... But he is also everywhere only one, and therefore I can have the one

The presence of Christ in the Church appears more clearly when the Church is considered in relation to political society and the legal norms that animate its life. Considered from this point of view, Pannenberg describes the relation of Church and political society as a relation of ultimate and provisional, though in such a way that the theologically "provisional" character of the Church checks Christian aspirations toward the establishment of a theocracy.[18] According to Pannenberg, the irreducible distinction between Church and State (what Murray called "social dualism") is implicit in the eschatological nature of the Christian reality. But what is their relation?

Pannenberg, developing his position primarily in dialogue with the Lutheran tradition, follows a path between what he takes to be two extremes: the first, a Scholasticism that would place natural law "within" the gospel of grace as an ethical demand, the contents of which are accessible to universal reason; the other, Luther's own one-sided restriction of the "theological use" of law to its function in accusing the believer of sin. For Pannenberg, the Pauline dialectic of law and faith yields a broader theological understanding of law as prophetic foretelling of Christ, which means that the political task of establishing a social order rooted in justice is properly understood as standing in a constitutive relation to the Kingdom of God.[19] For Christians, on the other hand, the law is abrogated, not in the antinomian sense, but as taken up into apostolic paraclesis as an exposition of the new being in Christ.[20]

Pannenberg affirms the importance of the insight of both Augustine and Aquinas concerning *caritas* as the deeper element of law, precisely in that the gift of the Holy Spirit brings the law to fulfillment in us. Affirmed as well is the medieval synthesis of

Lord only in the unity that he himself is, in unity with others who are also his body and are constantly to become this afresh in the Eucharist. Thus the unity of congregations that celebrate the Eucharist one with another is not an external addition to eucharistic ecclesiology but its basic condition" *(ST3,* 105).

[18] See *ST3,* 96, for Pannenberg's concluding thoughts on the relation between Church, state, and law.

[19] *ST3,* 49.

[20] *ST3,* 89.

the concepts of "natural law" and "human nature" with the Thomistic insight into the "new law" of grace, especially as concerns the function of natural law in mediating the relation between the Church and political society.[21] Despite these achievements, Pannenberg continues to set the Lutheran refusal to interpret the Gospel as "ethical demand" above any synthesis of natural law and grace, though he acknowledges that the difference between Reformation and medieval perspectives here is not as great as it is often presented.[22] The deeper question, Pannenberg contends, concerns what might be called the "ontology" of Christian freedom, considered in distinction from how one conceives the relation between grace and law from a moral point of view. Pannenberg seems to locate the Lutheran insistence upon the difference between Gospel and law in the idea that

> the gift of faith that always determines the Christian life precedes all action. Faith must have a precedence that proclamation of the gospel has constantly to recall, though this must not result in a quietistic attitude that does not let one's own life be drawn into the dynamic of love that issues from the content of faith.[23]

[21] *ST3,* 70-74. Pannenberg, however, stresses the historical and cultural "relativity" of the natural law considered in its Christian setting, attributable both to the brokenness of our insight into its contents because of sin and the tradition-guided character of its development. Pannenberg also points out that the modern natural-law tradition departs sharply from 'T!edievaland Reformation natural-law traditions in its theses concerning the clarity with which the natural law is known and its basis in individual freedom as distinct from the traditions of a community.

[22] That is, for Luther the law condemns in order to open the space for forgiveness of sin, which is the basis for our living in freedom according to divine law. Aquinas seems to recognize this function in his own way *(SI'h* I-II, q. 106, a. 1, ad 1), though he adds the perspective that human nature possesses an *instinctus* toward the good in which grace can work dispositively, such that this personal *instinctus* can receive the proclamation of the new law in its subordinate sense as ethical demand *(SI'h* I-II, q. 108, a. 1). In another context, Pannenberg appeals to Scotus's argument that *instinctus* cannot be a basis for faith, for as an intellectual act it must have the judgment of credibility, and not a preconceptual instinct, as a component of its motive *(SI'l,* 25).

[23] *SI'3,* 79. Pannenberg connects this theme of the effect of grace prior to human action in speaking not of an "ontology" of freedom, but rather'a "force field *(ein Kraftfeld)* that comes from God and binds us to him" (ST3, 78). This can be compared favorably, I think, with Aquinas's "ontological" perspective on the grace of the new law in *STh* I-II, q. 110, aa. 3 and4.

These reflections contribute to Pannenberg's view of the relation between Church and political society. As noted above, he argues for putting aside the sharp Lutheran separation between the principles that govern political and Christian life, especially in his thesis that the political quest for justice stands in a constitutive relation to the Kingdom (as prophetic foretelling of Christ). His understanding of the difference between gospel and law, however,[24] leads him to the conclusion that the mission of the Church to society lies primarily in calling the world to Eucharistic worship of the true God, while it belongs to secular institutions to govern the temporal order of human life according to autonomous rational principles in a world that is destined to pass away.[25] It is somewhat disappointing that Pannenberg did not introduce the theme of conflict between Church and state here in a more explicit way, especially in light of his analysis of the anti-Christian basis of modern secular law and his claim that modern doctrines of "human rights" are in many situations implicitly atheistic in character. For Pannenberg, the Church as a society is situated today between two social "illusions": a false eschatology arising out of certain forms of liberation theology, and liberalism, with its autonomous conception of natural law and "human rights." Where does the Church stand amid these "illusions"? Does the faith of the Church shed a distinct light upon political reality that authorizes the Church to teach the "new law" as "ethical demand" in response to developments in modern political life, and is this teaching authority as constitutive an aspect of the Church in its proclamation of the gospel as the theme of justice is constitutive of the life of the state? Or is the voice of the Church as provisional as that of autonomous reason in matters of social justice?[26]

[24] Pannenberg summarizes this difference in pointing out (1) the cultural relativity of expressions of "natural law"; (2) the limits of law generally in its orientation to abstract universality compared with the spontaneity and particularity of love; and (3) the priority of the "divine field of love" (grace) over human action.

[25] *IT3,* 54, 95.

[26] These issues concerning the question of a moral authority derived from the freedom of the gospel surface again in Pannenberg's distinction between the Church as Body of Christ and as People of God, discussed below.

III. CHRISTIAN FAITH AND ITS OBJECT

According to Pannenberg, "Faith is a form of the way we relate to truth and is comparable in this regard to knowledge."[27] He develops his understanding of Christian faith in connection with Christian hope and love, opening out to the still larger context of the doctrine of justification, wherein the Christocentric and ecclesial character of the gift of faith is secured. He explains that the Christian faith is the most perfect form of the human relation to truth, for Christian faith involves personal knowledge of the *eternal* identity of the Triune God disclosed in a historical mode proportioned to our way of knowing, above all in the history of Jesus' life, crucifixion, and resurrection.

From the start, Pannenberg's career has been dedicated to a rigorous defense of the constitutive role of the historical events of the incarnation and resurrection in Christian understanding of revelation and faith. Christian faith, as personal entrusting of the self to God, exists in an inseparable connection with a knowledge of, and assent to, the meaning of the historical events in which God presents himself to be known in faith. In this way, Pannenberg seeks, proximately, to overturn a broad movement in modern Protestant ("pietist") theology which "separates" the act of "God revealing" from "the event in which God is revealed" in a strategy of retreat, he argues, from critical historical interpretation of the Scriptures.[28] A more remote target of his criticism, however, which he believes lies in the background of the pietist retreat from history, is Aristotelian-oriented Scholasticism, with its characteristic distinction between natural and supernatural realms of knowing.[29] Representative here is Aquinas, according to Pannenberg, who taught that the material object of faith is the

[27] *SI'3,* 136.

[28] *SI'3,* 146-52. Pannenberg speaks of "God revealing" as the formal object, and the interpreted event in which God is revealed as the material object. He affirms the theological intention at work in pietist and existentialist Protestantism, that is, to secure both the certitude of faith and a "personalist" rather than propositionalist or moralist view of faith.

[29] Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology,* 1:13: "The origins of the 'positivism of revelation,' underlying the rise of Protestant theology, are to be found in the setting of intrinsic limits between a realm of supernatural knowledge and a contrasting realm of so-called natural knowledge."

term of an assent motivated by faith's formal object, the authority of God, and not by the evident intelligibility of the material object itself.[30] Against these traditions, Pannenberg proposes a contemporary retrieval of Luther's theology of faith, which does not emphasize the distinction between a formal and material object of faith, but rather their unity when considered from the perspective of faith's supreme moment, the personal act of entrusting the self to God *(fiducia).* But how does human understanding grasp the complex notion of "trust in God's Word to man" in its unity?

Pannenberg argues, first, that for Luther the material content of faith ("the gospel") is convertible with the significance of the historical events to which the Scriptures testify. Secondly, he recalls Luther's denial that Christian faith could separate itself from the perspicuous and manifest content of this gospel. Pannenberg believes that both of these doctrines have their basis in the principles of medieval Scholastic exegesis, and he seeks to rehabilitate these principles for contemporary theology, though actualized in a new mode: whereas Luther's appeal to the perspicacity of faith's content in the Scriptures rested upon the philologically mediated principle of *sola scriptura,* modern theology must be based upon an historical-critical mediation of this principle.

In this way, according to Pannenberg, Christian faith and theology are shown to be rooted in the *extra nos* of its object, God's historical self-revelation, against all fideistic efforts to make the subjective act of faith its own basis. Christian faith must incorporate rational reflection upon its object as the "presupposition and basis" of the salutary act of faith considered as

[30] *ST3,* 138, 141. Pannenberg acknowledges that there is an immediacy to God in Aquinas's account of faith, but refers to this immediacy as "indirect," insofar as the intellectual assent of faith to authoritative Church teaching is itself motivated by the will in its going "immediately" to God in charity. On this basis, Pannenberg concludes that the intentionality of the assent of faith is oriented not to God, or the divine promise, but to "some different sacramental impartation" (Sf3, 141), in such a way that the unity of formal and material objects is severed. Aquinas teaches that the graced movement of the will in the act of faith is a modification of its own natural desire for the good, and not supernatural hope or charity, and that the intellectual assent is itself a supernatural act of judgment, which, as is well known, terminates not in the *enuntiabile* but in the *res.*

personal trust in God revealing himself in the event.[31] The assent of faith is an "assertion" that resolves, provisionally, the rational effort to understand the object, and, because this object is God, the assent is taken up into a total entrusting of the self to *this* God in a synergy of reason and affect-charged volition. This entrusting of the self to God in faith finds its most perfect expression in the doxological act of surrendering the finite conceptual content of faith in the Eucharistic praise of the Infinite God, such that the assent of faith is properly said not to have "attained" the reality analogically, but rather to stand in a relatively adequate relation of "anticipation" towards the object as it presents itself to the believer. [32]

From this reader's perspective, Pannenberg's approach, insofar as it tends toward the simple identification of God's self-revelation with the form of the historical appearance, does not bring out the complexity of faith as an assent to God who is Truth Itself, disclosed, nevertheless, in a relative form (an historical event and its interpretation) proportioned to the human mode of understanding. An appeal to the "historical event" as the object of faith is undifferentiated at best, for this at least poses the problem that something relative and subjective (historical events and their interpretation) lies at the basis of the assent of faith. Pannenberg contributes two points here: (1) faith considered as *fiducia* must be said to supplement merely historical knowledge of the object (which is gained through *notitia* and *assensus);* and (2) the certitude of Christian faith must always be understood in connection with its historical relativity.

The first point may strike some readers as a retreat to the position that Pannenberg appears to have criticized throughout his career, especially when he writes that "historical knowledge needs to be supplemented by confident trust that grasps the true meaning, 'the effect' of the history of Jesus, namely the forgive-

[31] *ST3,* 150. It must be made clear that Pannenberg does not identify Christian faith with assent to the evident intelligibility of its material content, but that this content is "presupposition and basis."

[32] The connection between Christian faith and Eucharistic doxology as sacrifice is most clearly illustrated at this point in this rather powerful systematic connection in Pannenberg's thought.

ness of sins."[33] Here trust appears to be associated with insight into a meaning that is not evident in the mere appearance of the object, suggesting a more complex relation between formal and material object than Pannenberg indicates in his appeal to Luther's "personalist" breakthrough. While he does not investigate this complexity in great depth, Pannenberg acknowledges the real distinction between "God's act of historical revelation"and "the historical event in which God acts" in locating the motive (formal object) of faith not in the perspicuous meaning of the event but in "the broad sphere of the ineffable relation of human existence to the divine mystery that surrounds and sustains our living it."[34] One can acknowledge the importance of Pannenberg's insights into the intelligibility of the material object as preparatory (in the *assensus)*to the full act of Christian faith *(fiducia).*His effort to unify what Scholasticism (and, in its own way, pietism) distinguishes as the material and formal object of faith appears unstable, however, to this reader at least, in light of his appeal to

[33] *ST3,* 143. One can hardly help but interpret this appeal to *fiducia* as a kind of *lumen fidei* which not only moves the will, thereby securing the certitude of the assent, but also illuminates the meaning of the event in terms of its final cause, as Pannenberg himself points out in reference to Luther's own position on the matter. Compare this position to *Basic Questions in Theology,* 1:86, where Pannenberg cites M. Kiihler's distinction between an historical fact and "testimony to its revelatory value, which is supplementary to it and exists precisely for faith alone," and argues that "the whole problem is already contained in this distinction. Is not the 'revelatory value' related to the 'fact' as added from the outside?" In the final analysis, Pannenberg eschews distinctions between intellect and will in the analysis offaith, "as long as the 'dialectical interplay' between the two is preserved" (Braaten/Clayton, 319).

[34] *ST3,* 150. Pannenberg acknowledges his indebtedness to K. Rabner for this particular formulation of the formal object, and in other places appeals to Max Seckler's work on *instinctus fidei* in Aquinas. It should be noted that Pannenberg moves here in the world of transcendental Thomism, which has been charged with a failure adequately to distinguish the formal object of faith from the self-transcendent movement of the human spirit by those who reject the transcendental interpretation of Thomas. Whereas transcendental Thomists such as Rabner worked with a dogmatically mediated material object, Pannenberg remains in the *sola scriptura* tradition in his dedication to an historical-critical mediation of the material object; however, they converge in that they tend to locate the act of faith, with Augustine, in the will.

the supplemental character of faith as *fiducia* in distinction from historical knowledge and assent.[35]

Concerning the question of the certitude and relativity of faith, Pannenberg argues that while Christian faith has for its object "God alone," the "personal relation of faith to God comes through the historical self-revelation of God and through our knowledge of it."[36] Appeals to either the authority of the Scriptures or the teaching Church cannot overcome the relativity of a faith that has its basis in a revelation inseparably connected with historical events and their interpretation. There remains, however, an important sense in which Christians can speak of subjective assurance, and Pannenberg identifies Newman as a primary source for an authentic understanding of this aspect of faith. For Newman, Pannenberg writes, the "repose of mind" associated with subjective certitude can be attained "in the process of increasing confirmation and certainty in forming our judgments by way of the integration of individual experiences into broader contexts," or in what Newman called the advance "from wholes to wholes."[37]

Nevertheless, Pannenberg cannot follow Newman's doctrine of an "infallible certitude" and argues that "the certainty of judgment can never be more than provisional and anticipatory, to be tested in the further course of experience and hence always exposed to the danger that it might be undermined and proved null."[38] Moreover, the appropriation of a coherence theory of truth to explain the subjective certitude of faith must be comple-

[35] Pannenberg suppresses the difference that *fiducia* makes in faith's perception of the object in its difference from mere *(ides historica.* This shows up in his disagreement with Barth's claim that "obedient acknowledgment" *(assensus)* is prior to *notitia.* While Barth's claim that acknowledgment "is not preceded by any other kind of knowledge" certainly needs qualification, Pannenberg avoids the deeper issue here, namely, the nature of the act which is prior to *personal knowledge* of the revealing God in its distinction from a knowledge of the historical event.

[36] *ST3,* 152.

[37] *ST3,* 168. The quotation from Newman is found in *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (Oxford and New York, 1870; repr. 1973), 301ff.

[38] *STJ,* 168, 170. In *STl,* 56ff., Pannenberg explains that the statements of Christian doctrine have the logical form of "hypotheses" when they become the focus of theological reflection, but he denies that the believer actually doubts the content of what is believed in the act of faith itself *(STl,* 57 n. 127).

mented, Pannenberg argues, by an insistence that correspondence of understanding to the reality is, together with coherence, a necessary element of truth. Yet the knowing that Christian faith brings, Pannenberg never ceases to emphasize, cannot deliver one from the limited conditions of our present existence to a point of view wherein one can verify the relation of correspondence between the understanding that faith brings and the reality to which it refers. How is one to interpret Pannenberg's emphasis on the provisional character and hypothetical structure of the truth-claims of Christian faith? Does this emphasis verify H. Fries's claim that Pannenberg subsumes theology under a general philosophical *Wissenschaftslehre?* Or is this emphasis upon the limits of the subjective certitude of faith a theological expression of the "absolute priority of God and God's revelation over all human opinions and judgments," as Pannenberg himself insists?[39]

In summary, it can be concluded that the subjective restlessness of faith emerges as a central theme in Pannenberg because of the real though subordinate place he assigns to the propositional character of the assent of faith. Rational understanding of and assent to the material object is constitutive for faith (as *notitia* and *assensus),* but not exhaustive of the act, as the "reasons" for faith considered as *fiducia* both determine and are determined by the affective and volitional effects of the Holy Spirit active in Christian hope and charity. Following Luther and his exegesis of Romans 3:22-26, Pannenberg argues that justifying faith already contains charity as its form and hence is inseparable from it, though faith, hope, and charity are nevertheless distinguishable

[39] *ST1,* 24. In *IT3,* 154, Pannenberg argues that the restlessness of faith and its provisional certitude may exist together with a trust in God that "can be the basis of quiet confidence that no historical criticism can destroy the truth of God's revelation but that this truth will emerge even from the results of critical exegesis and reconstruction of the history of Jesus if revelation really did take place in that history." While he insists that the Christian faith can be presented as a form of knowledge only if it acknowledges its openness to rational criticism on the pattern of procedures in modern science (placing the emphasis upon the hypothetical or "as if" character of knowledge), and thereby opens the door to Fries's criticism, Pannenberg also links his discussion to Christian testimony to the subjective absence of certitude in faith, especially Luther's experience *ofAnfechtung (ST3,* 171).

one from the other.[40] The larger theological task at this point, according to Pannenberg, is to deliver an account of how "faith" in this comprehensive sense works concretely to initiate believers into the divine life as adopted children of God, a life which is both *extra nos* as divine favor and immanent in our own being as divine gift.[41]

IV. FAITH AND THE SACRAMENTS

At the conclusion of his discussion of faith, Pannenberg argues that justification by faith can be properly understood only in connection with the sacraments of the Church as the efficacious significatory form of the presence of Christ to the believer.

> The immediacy of fellowship with Jesus Christ by the Spirit in which the aim of the event of reconciliation with God is reached comes into effect basically as faith, hope, and love. Dogmatically it thus forms a theme in the doctrine of the regeneration and justification of believers and their adoption into the filial relation of Jesus to the Father.
>
> According to the NT witness, however, the event of the regeneration of believers takes place in baptism. Here again, then, we see the mediation of the faith fellowship of individuals with Christ by the Church.[42]

With this thesis concerning the inseparability of faith and sacraments, Pannenberg begins his exploration into the way in

[40] *ST3,* 222. Pannenberg identifies the teaching that faith is the *fundamentum et radix* of justification as "the most severe defect of the Tridentine decree," as faith ought not be abstracted from charity or *crederein Deum* as in the thesis of an "unformed theological faith" (see *ST3,* 190-92). Concerning the centrality of the doctrine of justification in Lutheran dogmatics, Pannenberg acknowledges that its abiding significance lies in its power to criticize moralism in religion, as in the Pauline doctrine, and in this way serves as a corrective to misguided emphasis upon human acts of love and obedience as completions of the divine gift (ST3, 236 n. 450)

[41] Pannenberg parts ways with the purely "forensic" doctrine of justification inaugurated by Melanchthon, and stresses the importance of Luther's metaphors drawn from bridal mysticism alongside his forensic descriptions of justification. For Pannenberg, the new life of the believer in his relation to Christ through the gift of faith is the *ob;ect* of God's judgment of righteousness, not its consequence (ST3, 213-31).

[42] *ST3,* 237. Pannenberg argues that Luther's *sola fide* is far removed from any position that would separate faith from the sacraments, and finds evidence that Luther's theology of baptism, though incomplete, is consistent with Trent when it "rightly put baptism at the heart of its justification decree" (ST3, 233).

which sacraments, as instruments of the person of Christ, are efficacious in the Christian life.

In the background of Pannenberg's sacramental theology lies a theory of personal identity formation derived theologically from reflection upon the relation between Jesus and the Father in light of modern dialogical personalism, or those efforts which view the "self" as dynamically constituted in the ongoing ego-Thou relation.[43] Sacramental *theology,* for Pannenberg, is concerned with how this self is *reconstituted* by a "Triune Thou" made present in efficacious signs instituted by Christ. Faithful to the insights of Christian personalism, Pannenberg makes it clear that in the sacramental life the relation between subjective faith and the divine Thou present in the efficacious sacramental sign is reciprocal, as the sacrament of baptism makes clear: faith is constituted only in its assent to and trust in the reality made present in baptism (the "seal of faith"), and baptism depends upon faith for its reception (and hence, is "the sacrament of faith").

In this complex relation, Pannenberg will emphasize the priority of the sacramental sign in keeping with Luther's insistence upon "the constitution of the identity of believers *outside themselves in Christ.*"[44] Pannenberg will repeatedly differentiate his position from theories that diminish the place of the outward sign, as he does here in speaking of baptism:

> Baptism is not just a depiction of individual self-givenness in general along the lines of an illustration of something universal. . . . In other words, the appropriation and outworking of baptism are done *by Christians,* i.e., by subjects newly constituted in the act of baptism, not subjects that are supposedly present already behind all experience and that remain the same as its contents change.[45]

Pannenberg considers another aspect of this reciprocal relation in recalling Luther's attack upon Scholasticism, when Luther argued

[43] The anthropological background to Pannenberg's sacramental theology is developed more fully in *ST3,* 181-202, and his *Anthropology in Theological Perspective,* trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 157-312.

[44] *ST3,* 273-74. Pannenberg insists that Luther's *sola fide* was corrupted in the seventeenth century, and issued in a turn to faith as an inward subjectivity that Luther never had in mind.

[45] *ST3,* 274. He writes similarly about the sacrament of the Eucharist at 291-93.

that the efficacy of the sacraments depends upon faith and not "sacramental administration." Pannenberg points out, however, that Aquinas had already taught the necessity of faith for the efficacy of the sacraments before Trent made this its teaching in its decree on justification. But Luther's attack upon what he took to be Scholastic "extrinsicism" does raise what Pannenberg takes to be an unresolved issue in sacramental theology: how to explain the efficacy of the sacramental sign without undermining an understanding of the immediacy of the believer's personal relation to Christ in faith.

Pannenberg negotiates this issue by setting up a dialogue with G. Ebeling and Aquinas on the efficacious nature of the sacrament as a *verbum visibile*. According to Ebeling, Aquinas's doctrine that *sacraments* effect what they signify *in the present* overtakes the place of *Jesus*, the *promissory* Word, as the efficacious object of faith. Pannenberg, who agrees that the Christian sacraments have a promissory dimension, argues that the incarnation of Christ makes undifferentiated speech about a "Word of promise" inadequate. Ebeling's approach, in sum, does not fully appreciate that the incarnation is a fulfillment of prophetic promises that makes participation in this fulfillment possible now, though we also await its consummation. According to Pannenberg, Aquinas's understanding of the causal relation between Christ's passion and its sacramental sign, with its threefold reference to the passion itself, its present effects, and its prognosis of future glory, more adequately captures the realism of the incarnation as historical event. Pannenberg will not follow Aquinas, however, in his emphasis on instrumental efficient causality as the explanatory key to a sacramental theory. Pannenberg believes that this approach tends toward an extrinsicist doctrine of grace that fails to grasp the unity of the relation between Christ and the subject's appropriation of his work in the complexity of its sacramental mediation, together with its interpersonal character.

The limits of Aquinas's theory, according to Pannenberg, are contained already in Augustine's sharp distinction between sign and reality, an approach that fails to do justice to the presence of Christ *in* the sacramental sign itself. Pannenberg cites Luther's argument that "sign" must be evaluated differently in theological

and philosophical understanding (implicating Augustine here): "The sign considered philosophically denotes the absence of the thing, the sign considered theologically denotes its presence." Pannenberg acknowledges that it is difficult "to make this distinction with any precision conceptually," and even insists further that sign and reality cannot be completely identified in sacramental theology, above all when one considers the *temporal* difference between the present of the sign's appearance, on the one hand, and the past event and eschatological future present within it, on the other. Pannenberg's more phenomenologically oriented distinction between sign and reality (relying primarily upon human consciousness of time) is very different from Aquinas's reliance upon an ontological distinction between created and uncreated acts of existence, and this difference allows Pannenberg to locate the efficacy of the sacraments in a theory of anamnetic participation, that is, in a "quasi-formal" theory of sacramental causality.

Pannenberg credits Rahner with the initial insight into a possible theology of grace based on a quasi-formally causal self-impartation of God to the soul in the beatific vision, and seeks to take it a step further in the direction of "biblical concreteness": the sacramental sign causes the believer, through faith, to "share the 'form' of Uesus'] sonship in the relation to the Father."[46] This takes place above all in Eucharistic anamnesis, which Pannenberg describes as the Church's participation in the one act of Christ's self-gift in obedience to the mission of the Father, such that "faith's offering of praise and thanksgiving is then a letting oneself be taken up into the actual sacrifice of Jesus Christ, not an additional offering to God."[47]

Anamnesis, wherein the "form" of Jesus' relation to the Father becomes present for our participation in it, is not to be understood as the cause of this participation, but rather its condition. The efficacy of the sacraments resides in the action of both the Word and the Spirit, considered in a relation of mutual causality. Pannenberg takes this occasion to incorporate Orthodox insight into the place of epiclesis in the Eucharist, underscoring the point

[46] *ST3,* 201.
[47] *ST3.* 316.

that human recollection alone cannot empower the ecstatic movement of a creature beyond itself to participation in the Trinitarian life. A complete account of sacramental efficacy, for Pannenberg, must link anamnesis of Christ, through the sign instituted by him, *and* the invocation of the power of the Spirit, who responds to the prayer of the assembly and elevates believers to a share in Christ's relation to the Father. In the example of the Eucharist, the Word is active in the words of institution (as the "center" of a larger, communal liturgical act), but this action can never be understood apart from epiclesis, wherein the Spirit responds to the prayer of the assembly to make Christ "actually" or "personally" present among them, and "really" present in the bread and wine.[48]

How does all of this relate to Pannenberg's critique of Aquinas's deployment of instrumental efficient causality in his sacramental theory? Pannenberg' s correlation of operations of the human soul, recollection and prayer, with actions of the Word and Spirit respectively, enables him to avoid an overly extrinsicist account of divine action, especially as this approach permits him to locate this action in the human signs themselves as efficacious in communicating the "form" of Christ's relation to the Father. His reliance upon the reciprocal action of Word and Spirit in his interpretation of the dynamics of faith within the sacramental life may also suggest ways beyond one-sided emphases upon either spiritual interiority or the external word. For Pannenberg, the Word is not merely an expression of the depths of the Spirit's activity in the soul, but a Thou differentiated from the believer in the form of an historical Other, the God-man Jesus; conversely, the Spirit is not extrinsic to the incarnate Word active in the sacramental sign (in which case the sign would exist merely as a human artifact), but is already active as the "depth dimension" of all activity in creation, including human religious consciousness,

[48] Pannenbergborrows this distinction fromJ. Betz, "Eucharistie als zentrales Mysterium," in *Mysterium Salutis* IV/2 (Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1973) 267ff. His own discussion of "real presence" interprets "transubstantiation" as the essential change in a thing's nature based not on human intentionality or conferral of meaning, nor upon "extrinsicist" appeals to Christ's deity, but upon the "divine lordship" present in Jesus' activity at the Last Supper. Pannenberg's Christological doctrine of "revelational presence" is at work here as well.

though this consciousness does not already constitute the self as "Christian" apart from the encounter with the Word in its sacramental form.

V. PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

The question was posed above concerning the balance Pannenberg strikes in his understanding of the place of critical reason in theology and his equally strong emphasis upon the transcendence of God, who can be worshiped by Christians only in their sacrifice of the rational content of their belief in an ecclesial act of praise. This survey of Pannenberg's development of the doctrine of faith and sacraments in their ecclesial context was aimed at bringing out these two diverging aspects of his thought. A common and perhaps unifying theme in Pannenberg's treatment of faith and sacraments is his appeal to Luther's distinctive emphasis upon the immediacy of the believer's encounter with Christ, not in some invisible Word, but *in* the sacramental sign itself. So emphatic is Pannenberg's insistence upon the "identity" of Christ and the sacramental sign in its appearance (or the identity of the formal and material object of faith) that the reality of their difference-ultimately a difference between the Creator and the creature-becomes secondary.

It is this initial suppression of the difference between sign and reality that makes it possible for Pannenberg to give greater scope to the place of critical reason in its relation to the revelatory object (and thereby avoiding appeals to extrinsic authority or special states of consciousness), applying the force of his doctrine of the divine transcendence to the relation, not of critical reason, but of "the whole person," as a synergy of reason and affective willing *(credere in Deum),* to the Infinite God. The transcendence of Jesus in relation to the believer is secured through critical historical judgment, whereas the transcendence of God, whom Jesus makes present, is secured anthropologically, that is, not so much by appeal to the essential incomprehensibility of the divine being as by the inherent limits of reason. The fiducial quality of the act of faith leaves space for critical reason to do the work of theology, as faith's object is, from the phenomenological point of

view, genuinely proportioned to reason; it is the disproportion, however, that moves the whole person beyond "reason" into the infinity of the Triune life through faith.

The judgments submitted here in the interpretation of Pannenberg's work ought to be taken in the spirit that this twentieth-century master of ecumenical theology would heartily endorse: as provisional and open to the correction of the theological community. It goes without saying that this brief survey of select themes in Pannenberg's ecclesial understanding of faith cannot begin to do justice to the erudition, subtlety of thought, and brilliance of insight that inform Pannenberg's work, as anyone who has approached these volumes of his *Systematic Theology* already knows.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Exercise of the Primacy: Continuing the Dialogue. Edited by PHYLLIS ZAGANO and TERRENCE W. TILLEY. New York: Crossroad, 1998. Pp. 192. $14.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8245-1744-X.

Papal Primacy and the Episcopate: Toward a Relational Understanding. By MICHAEL J. BUCKLEY. New York: Crossroad, 1998. Pp. 96. $12.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8245-1745-8.

Towards a Papacy in Communion: Perspectives from Vatican Councils I & 11. By HERMANN J. POTMEYER New York: Crossroad, 1998. Pp. 140. $14.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8245-1776-8.

Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Ut unum sint* asked for suggestions regarding ways of exercising papal primacy that are open to the new situation and yet renounce nothing essential to the mission of the papacy. The pope's request was directed in the first place to leaders and theologians of non-Roman Catholic churches, but it has provoked no small amount of discussion within the Church itself, as attested by the three books here under review.

Among the early Catholic responses was a lecture on "The Exercise of the Primacy and the Costly Call to Unity," given on June 29; 1996, at Campion Hall, Oxford, by John R. Quinn, retired archbishop of San Francisco, which is the focal essay in *The Exercise of the Primacy.* In essence, this lecture is a plea for a more collegial exercise of the primacy. Quinn finds a lack of collegiality in a number of recent decisions and current policies including the appointment of bishops, the approval of documents such as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* the celibacy of the clergy, the ordination of women, the role of women in the Church, the permissibility of contraception, the conditions for general absolution, the treatment of divorced and remarried Catholics, the inculturation of the liturgy, and the procedures of the Synod of Bishops. The real questions, Quinn asserts, are not simply about the manner in which the primacy is exercised but rather, he suggests, about substantive claims.

On the whole, Quinn refrains from direct criticism of the Pope and puts the blame on the Roman Curia and the papal diplomatic corps. Both these agencies, he holds, tend to wield authority over residential bishops, thus violating the principle of collegiality. Among his positive proposals are a reorganization of the Curia under the direction of a committee with three presidents-a representative of an episcopal conference, a representative of the Curia, and a lay person. Quinn favors an ecumenical council to mark the beginning of the new millennium and regular councils thereafter-perhaps

every ten years, according to the decree of the Council of Constance. He proposes that the Synod of Bishops should be given a deliberative rather than a merely consultative vote. He calls for serious consultation of bishops and episcopal conferences before major doctrinal pronouncements are issued. He maintains that the principle of subsidiarity can and should be applied in the Church. His proposals, he contends, reflect an "ecclesial" rather than a "political" model of ecclesiology.

The Exercise of the Primacy, after reprinting the lecture of Archbishop Quinn, adds five responses delivered at the November 22, 1997, meeting of the Roman Catholic Studies Group of the American Academy of Religion. The responses focus on two main questions-the "new situation" and structural reform-but they have more to say about the former than the latter. Unfortunately, also, the respondents are more intent on promoting the particular concerns and agendas of their writers than on discussing the concrete reforms proposed by the archbishop.

In the first response, R. Scott Appleby compares the present situation with the integralism that "pervaded the Roman curia during the Americanist-Modernist crisis." He portrays Archbishop Quinn as a new Joho Ireland standing up against the Romanization of the American hierarchy. But he also points out that younger Catholics of his generation are uninterested in debates about primacy and collegiality. They are asking whether it is possible to believe in the existence of any objective moral order.

The second respondent, Elizabeth A Johnson, offers a feminist reaction to Archbishop Quinn's proposals. Pressing for an egalitarian model of the Church based on baptism, she rejects structures that are clerical, hierarchical, and patriarchal. God's will for Peter, in her view, is that he listen to Mary Magdalene.

John F. Kane, the third respondent, agrees with John Paul II's perception of the current crisis of moral and religious authority, but he is convinced that Roman centralism makes the crisis worse and that Quinn's proposed reforms have little chance of being accepted. He places his hopes in grass-roots initiatives, even while recognizing that these initiatives may tend to sectarian fragmentation.

Thomas Rausch, in the fourth response, points out that the issues dividing Christians go far beyond questions of style in the conduct of the primacy. He also observes that the prevalent religious individualism makes any exercise of authority in the Church very difficult. But, with these preambles, he gives a cautiously favorable response to the Quinn proposals. Several of them, he points out, run contrary to the current canon law of the Church, and others, such as his call for an ecumenical council, seem premature.

Wendy Wright, the final respondent, reflects on the Quinn lecture from the perspective of spirituality. The "new situation" in spirituality, she remarks, involves two major shifts. In ecumenical and interreligious discourse the borders between different groups are melting away. And in American society, she holds, the medieval emphasis on states in life and social roles is vanishing. Thus we must be prepared to hear the word of God wherever the Spirit is

pleased to speak. Her "family model of mutual discernment" goes beyond Archbishop Quinn's proposals, though it is, like his, intended to be "ecclesial."

Each of the respondents speaks on the basis of considerable thought and experience. While their contentions deserve to be taken seriously, they are too numerous, complex, and far-reaching to be adequately set forth, not to say defended, in so brief a volume. With the exception of Rausch's, these essays pay little attention to the specific proposals in the focal essay.

In his response to his critics Archbishop Quinn is on guard against efforts to extend his principles beyond his own intentions. He reminds Rausch that he is not calling for changes of doctrine but only of style and manner in the exercise of the primacy. To Appleby, he replies that the term "Romanization" ought not to be taken in a pejorative sense, since true Romanization involves a rediscovery of Rome as the center of communion and the guardian of legitimate diversity. To Kane he answers that "subsidiarity" should mean simply giving to bishops the authority they need to govern and serve their Churches. To Johnson he remarks that the "discipleship of equals" should not be interpreted in ways that infringe on the power of orders or on the unique role and prerogatives of the successor of Peter. And finally he insists, in his answer to Wright, that the Church has a solemn and specific responsibility to guard the deposit of faith.

The issues raised by Archbishop Quinn, not to mention those raised by the respondents, must be treated all too summarily in this short review. I agree with Quinn that the "new situation," however it be appraised, should never be allowed to erode the deposit of faith. His proposals are not new. Many of them have been debated for generations. As for the principle of subsidiarity, Joseph Komonchak, whom Quinn invokes as an authority, concludes that its applicability to the Church is "not yet ripe for solution" <*Jurist* [1988]: 352). The special charisms of the papal office, I believe, are especially important in the present era of globalization, when episcopal conferences are exerting unprecedented power. Great vigilance is needed to prevent multiple inculturation and the dispersion of authority from becoming divisive. Collegiality is essential, but it should not be understood in opposition to primacy, since the college of bishops cannot exist or function except with and under the primacy of Peter. Before demanding that the Synod of Bishops have a deliberative vote one should carefully ponder who would be bound by its decrees. Does the whole Church really want to be legally bound by the majority vote of a hasty gathering of selected bishops? The enthusiasm for the election of bishops that exists in some quarters might be tempered if Catholics had some experience of the party politics and electioneering that this could involve.

I register these reservations without wishing to make light of Archbishop Quinn's concerns, which are more carefully phrased than I have been able to indicate. Quite evidently, relationships between Rome and the episcopate can always be improved. The current procedures for the appointment of bishops are no doubt imperfect. The mode of exercise of the papal office is subject to

change. Each pope has his own style, reflecting his own gifts and his appraisal of the current situation.

Buckley's slim volume, *Papal Primacy and the Episcopate,* is another outcome of the discussion initiated by the pope. It grows out of a paper composed for a meeting convened by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith to consider the nature of papal leadership in the Church. Buckley was asked to provide a theological synthesis that would identify the indispensable elements of the papacy, distinguishing them from others that are dispensable.

Buckley goes about this task in a serious and deliberate way, carefully delineating the steps of his argument. After defining the problem he calls for purity of heart or lgnatian "indifference" as a condition for finding the right solution. He establishes, rather too laboriously, that both primacy and collegiality belong to the Aristotelian category of "relation." Episcopal ordination, he recalls, involves the conferral of the threefold office of teaching, sanctifying, and governing. Primacy adds to this a responsibility for overseeing the unity of the whole Church and the whole episcopate in faith and communion. The theology of communion, happily recovered at Vatican II, calls attention to the nature of the Church as a communion of persons and of particular Churches. The primatial office therefore involves a responsibility to strengthen the bonds of communion among Catholics and between them and Christians who are not in full communion with the Catholic Church. The primacy of Rome is, as Vatican I declared, truly episcopal. It emerges from within the episcopal college and serves the unity of that college.

At this point in his argument Buckley makes a crucial distinction between the habitual and the substitutional functions of authority-two terms borrowed from Yves Simon. The habitual functions are permanent and essential. Substitutional functions are those assumed in some particular crisis, when the local bishop or his Church lacks the needed resources to perform its tasks. Among the habitual functions of the Apostolic See Buckley emphasizes its unitive role but passes rather lightly over its mission to maintain purity of doctrine. He also calls attention to the symbolic value of the Petrine office-a function that some authors neglect.

Crucial to Buckley's argument is the principle that the effectiveness of the primacy is measured by its success in strengthening the bishops and their collegial union. The authority of the bishop of Rome, therefore, does not enter into competition with that of other bishops in the Church.

Toward the end of his essay Buckley discusses two problem areas. The first is the lack of effective participation of the local Church in the naming of its bishop-a point on which he quotes from Archbishop Quinn's lecture mentioned above. The other problematic issue is the frequent transfer of bishops from smaller to greater sees. This practice, he contends, weakens the quasi-nuptial relationship between the bishop and his Church; it also stimulates ambition and maneuvering for power.

Altogether, Buckley has written a very solid essay that takes account of the complexity of the problems. On points where he tends to be critical he

expresses himself in measured language. He leaves a number of matters, such as the Synod of Bishops and episcopal conferences, for future study. I personally wish he had said more about the importance of guarding and heralding the deposit of faith and about the "charism of truth and unfailing faith" that Vatican I attributes to the successors of Peter. Perhaps, also, he minimizes the importance of papal primacy in offsetting recurrent threats to ecclesial unity. He has, however, made a useful contribution to the existing literature.

In *Towards a Papacy in Communion* the German professor Hermann Pottmeyer, like the authors already discussed, seeks to answer the question raised by John Paul II about the style of exercise of the primacy. He asks more specifically whether primacy must, in fidelity to the recent councils, be exercised centralistically.

In a brief sketch of the early history at the beginning of his book, Pottmeyer contrasts the first millennium with the second. In the first millennium, he believes, the idea of communion;was fundamental, whereas in the second sovereignty and jurisdiction became the dominant categories. If communion is pitted against jurisdiction, one's preference will have to be, as Pottmeyer's plainly is, for the former. But jurisdiction itself, I believe, can be understood as a modality of pastoral government and as a guarantor of communion. Although legalism can be pressed too far, the Church as an enduring visible society surely needs legislation and jurisdiction. Pottmeyer, like many other authors since Yves Congar, seems overinclined to idealize the first millennium and to dismiss the second as a regression.

In the early nineteenth century, Pottmeyer believes, the juridical model led to an exaltation of the pope as an absolute monarch. This view was enthusiastically embraced by the Ultramontanist party in France, but was opposed by Bishop Henri Maret, who believed that sovereignty could be shared by the pope and the bishops. Maret's view, although condemned by Vatican I, expressed concerns that would resurface at Vatican II.

Pottmeyer's account of Vatican I, including the official *relatio* of Vincenz Gasser, is a model of clarity and objectivity. He convincingly shows that Vatican I did not embrace the extreme infallibilism of the Ultramontane party, even though much Catholic theology in the ensuing century did portray the papacy in absolutist terms.

Vatican II, in Pottmeyer's estimation, was a healthy retrieval of the patristic *communio* model. The majority of the bishops, anxious to correct the excesses of Roman centralism, successfully incorporated into conciliar teaching many of the ideas that Gasser had expounded in his *relatio.* The minority, however, saw to it that no limitations were placed on the freedom and independence of the pope. Hence Vatican II did not effectively offset Roman centralism. This failure, Pottmeyer contends, is exemplified by the Synod of Bishops, which has not functioned as a check on papal and curial dominance.

Pottmeyer describes two views of collegiality. The first, which he attributes to Karl Rahner, is universalist. Defining the episcopate by reference to the college into which one gains admission by episcopal ordination, it depicts the

government of dioceses as one of the ministries most appropriate to bishops. The second view, which Pottmeyer attributes to the early Ratzinger, begins from below. It defines the bishop primarily as the head of a particular Church and treats membership in the episcopal college as a consequence of such headship. Pottmeyer's preference is dearly for the second view, which seems to have a better patristic grounding and to be more ecumenically acceptable.

Against Pottmeyer it can be argued, I believe, that Rahner's universalism has the stronger biblical basis. Peter was the primate before the other apostles became heads of local Churches, if they ever did. In our own day nearly half the bishops-and more than half in countries such as the United States-are not in charge of dioceses. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in 1992, firmly rejected the view that the universal Church arose as a fellowship of local Churches. The universal Church, said the document, is not the result of such a communion of Churches but rather its source. The Church "in its essential mystery ... is a reality ontologically and temporally prior to every individual particular Church." It is surprising that Pottmeyer nowhere alludes to this important document, which seems to teach the opposite of his own thesis.

A further contention of Pottmeyer is that the Church of our day should restore the triadic model, dominant in patristic times, in which patriarchates exercised a role intermediate between the universal and the local Church. While something analogous has been coming to the fore in regional bishops' conferences, the experience of history gives many reasons for caution. The patriarchates quarreled among themselves, with Antioch against Alexandria and Constantinople against both. Eventually Constantinople itself split off from Rome. In the Eastern Churches today, the historic rivalries between Constantinople and Moscow, and among the autocephalous national Churches of Eastern Europe, exhibit the need for a strong universal authority. Even in the West, ecclesiastical nationalism in England, France, Germany, and Austria has wrought great harm. These negative experiences do not invalidate Pottmeyer's proposal, but they disclose problems that he does not consider in this brief work.

Like several of the authors already mentioned, Pottmeyer is favorable to the principle of subsidiarity. Here again, caution is in order. This principle would be self-evident if the Church were considered to have arisen from below, through the association of local Churches, which gradually cede certain powers to a higher central authority. But the universal ministry is not in fact a *subsidium* contrived to make up for the limitations of local ministries. From the New Testament it would seem that the powers of teaching, sanctifying, and governing were originally conferred upon the total college, with Peter at its head, and were only later apportioned to particular or local sees. Thus the principle of subsidiarity, if it has any application to the Church, functions in a vastly different way in ecclesiastical than in secular society.

In saying this, I in no way deny the entirely valid point that particular Churches should enjoy an appropriate measure of autonomy in their own jurisdictions. They are not mere administrative districts but realizations of the

universal Church in a particular place. Bishops acquire their ordinary powers by episcopal ordination, not simply by delegation from the See of Rome. These points are uncontroversial.

Pottmeyer, to be sure, is no Gallican. He recognizes that the Gallicans and Maret himself erred in taking insufficient account of the special position of the pope. Yet he agrees with Maret that the bishops ought to have a role in framing legislation for the universal Church. While this may well be desirable in principle, it is difficult to devise structures whereby the entire episcopate can be actively engaged in drawing up legislation. Under present procedures, the bishops' conferences are normally consulted, though there may be instances of insufficient consultation. The consultation with regard to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was exemplary.

Another proposal of Pottmeyer is that, for the sake of greater force and credibility, papal teaching should be issued collegially, with the evident consensus of the whole episcopate behind it. On the whole, the point may be conceded. But this would normally require a prior public consultation, which might actually excite opposition. The widespread discussion leading up to *Humanae vitae* shows that public debates are unhelpful unless the Church is prepared to adopt the position favored by the opinion-makers of the day. If the Church considers itself obliged to maintain a tradition that runs against the tide of public opinion, it is unwise to raise false expectations by seeming to open the question up for reconsideration. Pottmeyer's proposals on public consultation prior to decision-making do not take account of this difficulty.

The reservations I have expressed about Pottmeyer's book would probably not be shared by Michael Buckley, Archbishop Quinn, or Quinn's five commentators. All three books represent a similar tendency, which is probably dominant among the Catholic intelligentsia of Western Europe and North America. The prevailing opinion seems to be that the minority at Vatican II prevented the majority from fully succeeding in their laudable efforts at reform. It might be more correct to hold that the minority enabled the council to maintain proper continuity with the Catholic tradition.

All three books raise issues that deserve to be carefully weighed. Of the three Pottmeyer's is the most substantial. In precise and lucid prose (admirably translated by Matthew J. O'Connell) he shares the fruits of many decades of scholarly study, especially in the history of nineteenth-century European Catholicism. Even readers who differ, as I do, from some of Pottmeyer's opinions will be in his debt for his concise and insightful history and his clear delineation of the alternatives.

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Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas. By JOHN I. JENI<INS, C.S.C. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pp. 267. $59.95 (doth). ISBN 0-521-58126-5.

This work is motivated by the conviction "that Aquinas's distinctive notion of *scientia* shaped his thought and writing in ways that have not been fully appreciated in the literature" (3). According to Jenkins, the principal reason for this has been the tendency to read the central cluster of Aquinas's epistemic concepts through a post-Cartesian lens that distorts the original, premodern meanings of those concepts. Jenkins's project is to recover the authentic, premodern notion of *scientia* at work in Aquinas in order to show how this sheds new light on the notion of theology operative in the *Summa Theologiae. As* this description and the title indicate, the book has both an epistemological and a theological agenda. My review will argue that Jenkins is more successful in the former area than in the latter.

The first chapter aims at the recovery of Aquinas's understanding of *scientia* in Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* as revealed in his commentary on that work. Jenkins offers an interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine of *episteme* that has acknowledged affinities with the work of Myles Burnyeat and Richard McKirahan. According to this interpretation, the premises of a demonstrative syllogism must express the prior grounds for one's belief that the conclusion is true. The premises (which must be true) therefore have to meet the following criteria: they must be *primitive* (universal and *per se); prior,* both epistemically and metaphysically; *immediate; state the cause of the conclusion;* and *better known* than the conclusion. According to Jenkins, the last criterion has been much misunderstood; what it essentially enunciates is a restriction on the doxastic structure of the inquirer such that the prior knowledge must be doxastically causal of the conclusion. This kind of *scientia* is premodern in the sense that it is not formulated to meet the demands of skepticism, even though it is a kind of foundationalism insofar as it requires that all derivative knowledge have the appropriate relationship to what is epistemically basic. There is a robust epistemological optimism ingredient in such *scientia,* particularly concerning our ability to grasp essences as the starting point of demonstrative knowledge. It is central to Jenkins's project that there can be genuine *scientia* even when not all the priority conditions obtain. The paradigm case of *scientia* does indeed have strict conditions, but there is the possibility of qualified *scientia* when limitations in the knower or the known make the paradigm unrealizable. How this is so becomes intelligible when it is remembered that the *Posterior Analytics* is more about the logic of pedagogy than the logic of discovery; it is more about how an intellectual tradition organizes its knowledge for teaching than about how it begins new research programs. When one is a pupil, one serves an intellectual apprenticeship involving a two-stage process that begins with the movement from basic principles to *quia* demonstrations and then culminates with *propter quid* knowledge wherein one's doxastic

structure mirrors the causal structure of the real. Prior to achieving full intellectual habituation, the apprentice has genuine but limited *scientia* that is ordered towards and dependent upon that of the teacher.

The second chapter argues that the understanding of *scientia* operative in Aquinas's *sacra doctrina* reflects the essential features outlined in the first chapter. Jenkins acknowledges that Aquinas adapts Aristotelian *episteme* to the needs of theology (hence there is not simple or strict identity), but Jenkins maintains that there is a "deep continuity" with the *Posterior Analytics's* ideal that has not been hitherto sufficiently recognized. Jenkins thus specifically contests the influential view of M.-D. Chenu, who argued that *sacra doctrina* cannot be a *scientia* in a strong sense principally because its principles (the articles of faith) are not *per se nota* to us. Even when it is considered as subalternate to the *scientia Dei et beatorum,* it still remains suspect according to Aristotelian canons of subalternation. Chenu therefore concluded that theology can only be a science in a special and attenuated sense, as *quasi-subalternate.* Jenkins disputes Chenu by offering alternative interpretations of some key passages on *sacra doctrina,* arguing that the usage of *scientia* in the *Summa Theologiae* reflects an analogous relationship to the focal meaning of *scientia* in the *Posterior Analytics,* and asserting that Chenu's interpretation is infected by modern presuppositions. Jenkins concludes that *sacra doctrina* is a genuine *scientia* in two basic ways: it moves discursively from cause to effect and it meets the doxastic causality condition.

The third chapter goes on to show how the recovered sense of *scientia* sheds new light on the purpose and structure of the *Summa Theologiae.* If Jenkins is right about the meaning of *scientia,* then it follows that the *Summa* must have been intended as a work of second-order pedagogy rather than as a textbook for beginners. Jenkins therefore argues that the *incipientes* mentioned in the prologue to the *Summa* could not be students just beginning their study of theology in a Dominican studium but rather must be relatively advanced theology students who had already had been through a first-order pedagogy. These future teachers now would be taken through the material previously assimilated so as to induce in them the right kind of doxastic causality conditions. In advancing this view of the purpose of the *Summa,* Jenkins explicitly rejects the conclusions drawn by Chenu, James Weisheipl, and especially Leonard Boyle in their previous historical studies. Jenkins goes on to argue that the very high-level and complex formal structure of the *Summa Theologiae* is best understood according to the model of second-level pedagogy that is articulated in the *Posterior Analytics.* He concludes this first part of the book by formulating some objections to his thesis that he will answer in the second part.

Before considering how Jenkins handles his own objections, however, let me raise some of my own. In the first stage of his approach, Jenkins attributes to Aquinas a reading of *episteme* in the *Posterior Analytics* that has strong affinities with an important current of contemporary Aristotelian scholarship. While this contemporary resonance makes Jenkins's reading of Aquinas quite

attractive, it does raise a worrisome question that Jenkins does not ask: Do these medieval and contemporary interpretations converge because we have gotten out from under the baneful influence of modern foundationalism so that we can finally appreciate how a premodern nonfoundationalist like Aquinas would read Aristotle, or because we are reading Aquinas on Aristotle too much through a certain set of late-twentieth-century lenses? Jenkins could have addressed this issue by showing how his reading of *scientia* is plausible in the light of what is known regarding the interpretation of Aristotelian *scientia* in Aquinas's own day. The second stage of Jenkins's argument involves attributing a much stronger sense of *scientia* to *sacra doctrina* than would be admitted within the scholarly tradition established by Chenu. His critique of Chenu is unpersuasive and severely weakened by the fact that he never directly engages any of the subsequent scholarship by specialists in thirteenth-century theology that corroborate Chenu's reading (see Jean-Pierre Torrell's amply documented "Le savoir thfologique chez saint Thomas," *Revue Thomiste* 96 [1996): 355-96). I find it odd and somewhat gratuitous when Jenkins imputes to Chenu (and other medievalists) a post-Cartesian understanding of *scientia* as a partial explanation of their alleged misinterpretation. When Jenkins tries to show that Aquinas's general use of *scientia* in the *Summa* presupposes the strong *Posterior Analytics* sense as its focal meaning, he runs into serious problems with God's *scientia;* specifically, his argument that the relevant sense of necessity applies even to God's knowledge of contingents involves equivocation (65). With respect to the original purpose of the *Summa,* Jenkins's argument against Boyle is essentially that if Aquinas had meant it to be a first-order pedagogy textbook for the *fratres communes,* then his influence in his own province was such that it would have become the common textbook. But it did not. Ergo Aquinas could not have meant it as such. I would deny the major premise of this argument on the grounds that there are more plausible construals of the pedagogical fate of the *Summa.* This is another point where Jenkins does not engage the most authoritative recent historical work on Aquinas (i.e., Torrell) that endorses Boyle's view. When it comes to the claim that the formal structure of the *Summa* reflects second-order pedagogy, Jenkins does not do much to show how that is so and he does not engage the long-standing scholarly debates on the structure of the *Summa.*

Overall, Jenkins's failure to engage the latest historical and theological scholarship on the *Summa Theologiae* means that his provocative thesis is not likely to get a sympathetic hearing from those steeped in that literature. Yet I do not think this is his intended audience, since his consideration of anticipated objections ind,icates that his main concern is in a dialogue with contemporary analytically trained philosophical readers of Aquinas. These readers are presumably less interested in whether Jenkins's claims fit the original context and more concerned with whether it makes sense in the contemporary context.

The first objection that Jenkins explicitly considers in chapter 4 questions the very possibility of grasping the first principles of a *scientia.* Jenkins focuses

on what he calls the "indefectibility doctrine" of Aquinas: the claim that in the first operation of the mind, the grasping of essences or quiddities, the intellect cannot be false. Jenkins argues against others (especially Lonergan) for a "strong reading" of the doctrine: "the ideas of natural, essential kinds which the intellect forms spontaneously in its first operation, invariably correspond to the essences of things with whose *phantasmata* the intellect is presented" (114). He notes this does not mean that the intellect's first grasp of an essence is perfect or complete, but rather only that it is a good initial purchase for further investigation. His overall reading makes Aquinas a conceptual externalist by contemporary categories. Jenkins argues that this prepredicational grasp of essences is what justifies the basic judgments of first principles. Overall, his discussion is insightful and helpful, yet one does wish that he had spent some more time on the connection between the grasp of essences in the first act of the mind and the subsequent formation of judgments that can serve as first principles; there is some serious epistemological work to be done in making the transition from one to the other. There are also some particular points where one might take exception to Jenkins's account of Aquinas on knowledge. For example, there is a misleading reference to the respective roles of the agent intellect and the possible intellect in human knowledge (125); like many contemporary readers of Aquinas, Jenkins attributes too much activity to the former and not enough to the latter.

In order to deal with objections regarding the nature of faith, Jenkins devotes the fifth chapter to an overview of Aquinas's understanding of grace. He acknowledges that it is nearly impossible to do justice to this large topic in the space of thirty-one pages and specialists will find much there to dispute. For example, there is no mention (that I can find) of the idea that the life of grace includes infused moral virtues. More troublingly, Jenkins attributes to Aquinas the view that God's causal action with respect to the free activity of rational creatures is purely final and in no way efficient. I have argued elsewhere that this is not Aquinas's view; at the very least, Jenkins's interpretation is at odds with the standard reading and so it is puzzling that he offers it without any reference to the alternative view or the obviously problematic texts for his position. This is symptomatic of a major deficiency in Jenkins's account of Aquinas's theology: there is no reference to any standard treatments of the central issues. He offers his own reading without any dialectical encounter with the scholarly literature and without any indication of what has influenced his reading of Aquinas.

The sixth and longest chapter in the book is a defense of the claim that faith is enough like *intellectus* to make theology a genuine science. Jenkins begins by arguing against some prevalent misinterpretations of Aquinas on faith by contemporary philosophers. The first is a *naturalistic* view of faith; that is, the claim that faith is justified by rational arguments of credibility (e.g., Penelhum). Jenkins succeeds in showing that this is a misinterpretation of Aquinas. He then argues against *voluntarism:* that is, interpretations that overemphasize the role

of the will in faith's assent. He argues successfully that James Ross and Eleonore Stump do not get Aquinas right on the role of the will. Jenkins's own view is that Aquinas's account of faith makes him a "supernatural externalist" in a way parallel to his externalism about first principles; the "supernatural" quality of the externalism here is a reference to the way in which the grasp of the first principles of faith requires the grace of God. He goes on to provide an account of the relationship between the theological virtue of faith and its attendant gifts of the Holy Spirit, *intellectus* and *scientia.* Jenkins argues that in the mature view of Aquinas the theological virtues are only "inclinations toward their actions, but not yet steady dispositions or habits. For this steady disposition the prompting of the Holy Spirit is required, along with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are dispositions to respond to such promptings. Thus a theological virtue is complemented by its corresponding Gift so that a steady disposition to the corresponding act results" (188). I would argue that Jenkins has misunderstood Aquinas on the relationship between the theological virtues and the gifts. If the theological virtues are genuine *virtues,* then they must dispose the agent as a habit toward the relevant operations. What the gifts do over and above the theological virtues (which they presuppose) is dispose the agent to the special promptings of the Holy Spirit in actively exercising the life of the virtues; the gifts are necessary for the perfect operations of the virtues, especially in the face of our human weakness and in difficult situations, but they are not related to them as a virtue is related to an inclination. Jenkins's specific accounts of the gifts of *intellectus* and *scientia* and their roles in the overall process of faith are likewise problematic. He says that through the gift of *intellectus* a person "understands that the articles are to be adhered to on divine authority even in the face of considerations which seem to render them implausible.... This is understood in a non-discursive intuition in the first operation of the intellect in the process leading to the assent of faith" (194). Then in an alleged second moment, one judges that these propositions which are to be believed are true (how we moved from the nondiscursive intuition of the first operation of the intellect to a second act proposition is not dear). Here is where the will is necessary to explain the assent and the gift of *scientia* comes into play as helping the assent of the will. Once again Jenkins offers his reading without engaging any other scholarly views, and it leads him to get Aquinas wrong on both the psychogenesis of faith and its relationship to the gifts and the other virtues (especially charity).

In offering an overall assessment of *Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas* it is necessary to distinguish along the lines of the title. The analysis of knowledge contains much that is of value as a contemporary reading of Aquinas. One would like to see Jenkins fill out his epistemological picture in the future so as to show what his comprehensive account of Aquinas on knowledge would look like. When it comes to his analysis of faith, however, Jenkins falters. He sees correctly that most contemporary accounts fail to get Aquinas right because they do not appreciate the essentially theological

dimension of faith. But Jenkins himself is unable to provide a comprehensive theological account of faith in the broader context of Aquinas's doctrine of grace. There is ultimately something ironic about the failure of the theological side of Jenkins's project because it results from his failure to adhere to his own account of the need for intellectual apprenticeship within a tradition: you cannot acquire *scientia* about *sacra doctrina* without a long period of apprenticeship within a Thomistic theological tradition. Jenkins could learn a lot about *sacra doctrina,* grace, faith, and the structure of the *Summa* from the Dominican tradition that he wants to correct about *scientia.*

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Quaestiones de quolibet in *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia* (Editio Leonina). Edited by RENE ANTOINE GAUTHIER and others. Tomus 25/1 and 25/2. Rome: Ad Sanctae Sabinae, 1996. Pp. 160* + 174; xxi + 502.

Although the literary genre of the quodlibetal question is well known to students of medieval philosophy, theology, and canon law, it appears to be among the least-consulted portions of St. Thomas's literary legacy, as scholars prefer consulting his more thorough and magisterial texts, such as the *Summa Theologiae* and *Summa contra Gentiles,* or the various sets of disputed questions on narrowly-defined topics (e.g., *De anima, De malo,* etc.). And perhaps this should not be a surprise, given the nature of the quodlibetal question, and the collections comprised of such questions. Like its sibling the disputed question, the quodlibet was a public event, attended by interested parties, in which a master would offer his answers to questions presented for discussion. Those gathered would raise single doubts or concerns about the question at hand, and the master would see to it that his answer laid the groundwork for answering those doubts in their turn. What characterized the disputed question was that it was the master himself who set the topics for consideration. The topics might be ones he specialized in, or ones he was considering at the moment for some other purpose; perhaps he was working on a *summa* in which that topic figured prominently.

The quodlibetal question differed from the standard disputed question in a few ways, as we know from the work of Palemon Glorieux *(La litterature quodlibetique de 1260 a 1320* (Vol. 1 [Paris: Le Saulchoir, 1925]; Vol. 2 [Paris: J. Vrin, 1935]) and John Wippel ("Quodlibetal Questions Chiefly in Theology

Faculties," in B. Bazan, et al., *Les questions disputees et Jes questions quodlibetiques dans Jes facuJtes de theologie de droit et de medecine* [Turnhout: Brepols, 1985], 155-222). The chief difference in the quodlibetal question was that the subject to be considered by the master was decided upon by those in attendance, and it could be literally "anything you like," or, as the Master General of the Dominican Order, Humbert of Romans, described it, it was "about anything, at anyone's pleasure" *(de quoJibet, ad voJuntatem cuius libet)* -though he was speaking more narrowly about the tasks of the Master of Students in Dominican houses of study ("De officio magistri studentium," in Humbert of Romans, *Opera de vita reguJari,* ed. J. J. Berthier [Turin: Marietti, 1956], 2:260).

Other differences doubtless existed, but we should in honesty admit to less certainty about their origin or actual practice, at least as regards how quodlibetal questions would have functioned at the University of Paris during Thomas's two regencies there (1256-59; 1268-72); the university statutes that survive date from the fourteenth century, and it is all too easy to fall into *ante hoc sicut hoc* historical reasoning. Generally, though, it is thought that a quodlibet at a university was a two-day affair, in which the master and his bachelor would function as something of a team. At the first meeting, the *disputatio,* the topics to be discussed would be set, and various arguments *pro* and *con* would be given, with the bachelor, not the master, fielding these objections *(obiecta);* it seems that a goal for the quodlibet was a kind of on-the-job training for the bachelor. The master might jump in, but only regarding small details, or perhaps to direct the intellectual traffic. All would retire, the master would go through the objections one by one, arrive at his answer, then return on a second day (though not necessarily the following day) to give his presentation, the *determinatio.* At this session the master would answer the question originally addressed to him, and take up the various objections that had been fielded. With this exercise in intellectual dialogue and academic training completed, he would take whatever written account of the proceedings there might have been (a *reportatio)* and mull over the material, and the success or failures of his answers to objections. He would then either tidy up the written report, thereby creating an *ordinatio,* or render in writing the whole thing from scratch.

As a Dominican Thomas would have been quite familiar with the format of the quodlibetal dispute, even had he not spent part of his career in the rarified air of the University of Paris, for quodlibetal dispute was a piece of the intellectual training of Dominicans, and was often a part of daily Dominican life. Dominican houses throughout Europe were to have a house *Jector* whose task it was to ensure that the brethren's intellectual faculties were constantly challenged, and Humbert of Romans, in his description of the *Jector's* duties, suggests that there be regular discussions on this or that point in standard *summae* of canon law (e.g., Raymond of Peiiafort, Godfrey of Trano, William of Rennes) or of individual cases known to the brethren, or even *de quoJibet,* as quoted above. Indeed, some have suggested that it was the Dominicans who

brought the format of the quodlibetal dispute with them to Paris from the canon law classrooms of Bologna, where the order thrived early on.

Whatever the case with the origins of the quodlibetal dispute, we known that Thomas, holding one of the two Dominican chairs of theology at the University of Paris, produced two sets of quodlibetal questions, now edited critically and authoritatively by the Leonine Commission for the critical edition of all of Thomas's writings, under the lead editorship of Rene-Antoine Gauthier, O.P. Like the other Leonine editions published since the edition of the *Summa contra Gentiles* in 1930 (i.e., beginning with the publication of the *De Veritate* in 1970), this edition sets a high watermark, employing the best in editorial techniques and historical research. Because of the Leonine Commission's efforts, students of Thomas's thought now have another top-flight resource for learning from the Common Doctor.

The mass of material in the edition necessitated dividing the edition into two large folio volumes, which is probably for the best, given the particular, and curious, history of this portion of Thomas's literary corpus. Since Thomas was master at Paris twice, and since he followed the custom of holding quodlibetal disputations during the Christmas and Easter seasons of the academic years during which he held tenure, we have two sets of quodlibetal questions from him; Gauthier duly places the twelve quodlibets in separate volumes, from the first Parisian regency (1256-59) and the second (1268-72), respectively. Yet the matter is not so simple as that, for the internal chronological order of Thomas's quodlibets is all hash, a result of the haphazard way in which they were originally published. As it happened, the "traditional" sequencing of the quodlibets was set with a Cologne edition from 1471 with the later set of Thomas's quodlibets placed first, and the earlier set placed second. To muddle matters further, the last numbered quodlibet, nunber 12, while contained in the second set, turned out to be the last quodlibet Thomas held (Easter, 1272), but never matured from its *reportatio* form because of Thomas's departure from Paris back to Naples.

So what was Gauthier to do in editing the all the quodlibets, tracing them *pro more* back to the base-families ($+_1$ and $+_2$) via the pecia markings, and therefore being able to detect which manuscripts had their origin in the earlier publication by the Parisian stationers, and which from the later? Why not just start a whole new scheme of numbering and ordering the quodlibets? Gauthier made the judgment call-the right call-that changing the numbering of the quodlibets would create massive confusion in the way things were cited in the literature; what he chose to do instead was to keep the bogus numbering, but to arrange the quodlibets in his edition in their chronological order. In the present edition that means at least three things of importance: (1) volume 1 contains the quodlibets disputed during Thomas's first Parisian regency (1256-59), and volume 2 contains those disputed during the second; (2) the orphaned quodlibet 12 is now reunited with its chronological family in the second volume; {3) quodlibet 6 is placed in its proper place within the second

set of quodlibets, between 3 and 4. Thus, at the end of the day, the Leonine editions two volumes are: Volume 25/l (quodlibets 7-11) and Volume 25/2 (quodlibets 1-3, 6, 4-5, 12).

Users of the Leonine editions have long been spoiled by the quantity and quality of the information located in the *apparatus fontium* at the bottom of each page, and the same holds true in this edition. But this is particularly welcome here, for the often historical, particular, character of an article makes the reader crave for detailed historical information about the context in which a question is asked, and the sources Thomas uses to formulate his answer. To take but a single example, Gauthier did a splendid job of tracking down crucial historical references in *Quodlibetum* 8, q. 6, a. 3, and its sibling, *Quodlibetum* 9, q. 7, a. 2, on the morality of a plurality of benefices. He provides the reader with citations from a few modern critical editions, from older editions (e.g., William of Auvergne's *Tractatus de col/atione beneficiorum),* and from solitary manuscripts containing Thomas's oft-employed notion of the moral indeterminacy of "picking up a stick off of the ground" (John of La Rochelle, *Summa de vitiis* [Ms. Assisi Com. 587)). But Gauthier is human, too, and in the second question on plurality he was not able to track down two references Thomas makes-somewhat to my relief, as I had announced in an article once that the references in question simply could not be found where Thomas said they were!

While even full-time students of Thomas's thought might not wade through the dense editor's preface, which explains in detail the constituent elements of each pecia that helped comprise the manuscripts containing the quodlibets, they might want to look occasionally at the *apparatus criticus* on each page, which gives variant readings found in the manuscripts. In some cases Gauthier now provides a reading that is of equal manuscript authority to the one he has selected for inclusion in the body of the Thomas's text, signaled in the *apparatus* with a small black diamond (+). Other small, but nice, touches help the reader. Varying editions through the ages did away with the question/article enumeration and simply listed a quodlibet's articles in ordinal form (e.g., *Quodlibetum* 8, a. 16), as distinct from the more standard way (e.g., *Quodlibetum* 8, q. 8, a. l); Gauthier provides both types of references, which will help scholars as they migrate to this new, finalized edition. Also, the indexes are particularly useful. One index lists all the references that Thomas himself makes throughout the course of the twelve quodlibets, while another lists the texts the editors have referred to in the *apparatus fontium,* including texts of Thomas, which are listed in chronological order, occasionally departing from the authoritative order of Fr. Torrell.

In conclusion, we have here the very best of the craft of producing critical editions of medieval theological texts. The quodlibetal questions are usually consulted because this or that article is listed in, say, the *Summa Theo/ogiae* as a "parallel place," and for such usage the edition is a godsend. But the quodlibets on their own, *seorsum,* constitute informative and occasionally-if

one is interested in the vibrant intellectual milieu in which Thomas actually worked-even riveting reading. Unfortunately the cost of the volumes, which is understandable, prohibits all but committed research libraries from acquiring them, even if what they contain is essential to the scholar's task. Now, if only the Leonine Commission and Editions du Cerf can start producing manual editions of this and other Leonine texts ...

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The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200-1350), vol. 3 of *The Presence of God: A History of Western Mysticism.* By BERNARD MCGINN. New York: Crossroad, 1998. Pp. xiv + 526. $59.95 (cloth), $24.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8245-1742-3 (cloth), 0-8245-1743-1 (paper).

This is a work of encyclopaedic scholarship on a Teutonic scale (over two hundred of its xiv-plus-526 pages are devoted to notes, bibliography, indices). It should really have been sent to a Franciscan not a Dominican reviewer, for reasons which will become clear. But its combination of material informativeness, religious vitality, and methodological clarity give its author an affinity with the Dominican and Thomist tradition nonetheless.

In his Preface Professor McGinn explains the change of plan which leaves this book somewhat out of kilter if placed in a line with its predecessors in the early 1990s *(The Foundations of Mysticism* [1991], and *The Growth of Mysticism* [1994]). Those volumes were straighforwardly chronological in scope, assessing, as their titles imply, the origins and development of the Christian mystical tradition, above all in the West, between (as it turned out) the third and twelfth centuries. In the work under review, by contrast, McGinn determined to abandon a strictly time-based scheme for one that combines theme and context with chronology. Essentially, if I understand him aright, the first of two overlapping volumes on the mediaeval inheritance is to consider the Franciscan mystics and the women mystics of the early Middle Ages in separation from that other influential contemporary tradition, the Dominican, not simply for reasons of space (though that was certainly a consideration), but also because of a greater family-resemblance between the more devotional mysticisms of the Franciscans and the early mediaeval women, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the more speculative mysticisms adopted by the

Dominicans and (to some extent at least) the later mediaeval women. The *inconveniens* of this approach is that it means regarding Meister Eckhart as the fulcrum of Dominican mystical thought and sensibility, and treating the masters of the early Dominican school as harbingers and premonitions of the Eckhartian dawn, while also regarding Eckhart's "moment" as the true center from which later mediaeval spirituality is to be interpreted. Whether this (prima fade somewhat questionable) schema can be justified will of course turn on what McGinn makes of it, as a way of organizing his materials, in the as yet unpublished fourth volume of what will be eventually a five-volume series.

The Preface also contains some animadversions, prompted, we are given to think, by the skirmishing of reviewers, on the method of his study-in which, in mild and courteous tones, the author announces his refusal to be shaken, either by the anti-experiential school of interpretation of the mediaeval mystical corpus whose doyen is Professor Denys Turner, or by the rumblings of feminist critics complaining that his earlier volumes were excessively dosed to women's voices.

In the Introduction McGinn states his approach more positively in his own terms. We can note first that, despite (or because of?) his anxiety not to be wrongfooted as a methodical investigator of the mystical, he presents himself as above all a Church historian. The texts of mediaeval mysticism are firmly located within the wider *institutional* movement in the high mediaeval Church to recover the *vita apostolica,* not simply as the common ecdesial life ascribed to the apostolic community in Jerusalem in the Book of Acts but as an evangelical life with three key components: penance, poverty, preaching-understanding the latter, in the case of those other than bishops and priests, as the *verbum exhortationis,* exhortation to conversion of life. Such a refiguring of Christian existence in its maximal form encouraged the belief that the properly disposed could find God's intimate presence outside of monastic cloister-a conviction hardly new to Christianity, it should be said (the sayings tradition of the desert Fathers was well aware of it) but one which, in its new mediaeval setting, McGinn terms, not altogether happily, the "democratization" and "secularization" of the (elite and sacrally withdrawn) monastic engagement. These words function, perhaps, as a *captatio benevolentiae* of a University of Chicago audience.

Secondly, while gender wars seem peculiarly out of place in mystical theology, McGinn has been provoked by feminist historians of religion to develop a nuanced account of the likely interweaving of male and female contributions, as men-in their capacities as confessors, scribes, biographers-assisted women mystics in making their voices heard in the wider public realm of ecdesial society. And thirdly, in an especially subtle conclusion to this lengthy Introduction, McGinn grapples with the peculiarly difficult problem of the experiential .presuppositions of a literature which is at all times revelation-dependent, and indebted to a definite culture of transmission of that

revelation, with its own conventions of discourse. One especially judicious sentence gives the flavor of his response:

> Without *some* kind of claim to an underlying experience these textual expressions would probably not have come into existence and certainly would not have won acceptance; but to say that every expression of such a claim was intended as a more or less literal account of a divinely given vision is neither provable nor required in order to demonstrate how the new modes of *presenting* visions argue for a new stage of Western mysticism. (29)

The meat of the book consists of six substantial chapters on: first, the origins of the "new mysticism" (a phrase Professor McGinnis trying, evidently, to launch into general currency); second, the early Franciscans, culminating in Bonaventure; third, the rest of the Franciscan tradition, *im Grossen und Ganzen*, till the waning of the Middle Ages; fourth, budding developments among women mystics; fifth-and here McGinn spreads himself more spaciously in a chapter twice the length of the others-the three "great" Beguine mystics Hadewijch (a Fleming), Mechthild (a German), and Marguerite Porete (a Frenchwoman); lastly, if we leave a short postscript out of the count, come the women mystics of the religious orders-where, despite the self-denying ordinance announced in the Preface, McGinn does look at Dominicanesses in the Preachers' "second" order, the houses of *moniales.*

The measuredness and freedom from ideological *parti pris* of McGinn's surveys of a huge number of pertinent texts inspire this reader at least with confidence. If the writing lacks the rhetorical excitement of one who has a case to make, it nonetheless suggests, by its tone of concentrated seriousness, that here is an historian who gives their due weight to the theological realities-Trinitarian and Christological, soteriological and eschatological; Mariological and sacramental-with which the mystics found the truth of their being, and their social relations, inseparably confounded.

I especially enjoyed the careful reconstruction of Francis's inspiration; the lucid account of Bonaventure's mystical theology; the exploration of the extraordinary imagery of the Hadewijch texts-only just orthodox, perhaps, in their account of the "pre-creational self's" exemplary existence in God. Some of the minor figures who-necessarily in a would-be exhaustive *chronique pieuse-occupy* much space in the book made me think back wistfully, however, to what Professor McGinn calls that "older Christian tradition in which depth of spiritual teaching was more important than personal charisms or accounts of one's own experience of God" (56).

The book contains many thought-provoking for instance, on the relation of poetry to the mystical impulse, a matter, at least in part, of "the ways in which poetry tests and subverts ordinary language-overcoming language within the realm of language being also one of the essential tasks of mystical discourse" (229); or again, on the apophatic force of a sufficiently

innovatory and varied imagistic cataphaticism: "perhaps just as apophatic in the long run as the great game of constructing structures of negative predications employed by other mystics" (230).

The notes and bibliographies are a mine of information, though it would have been preferable, in what will be for many years a standard work of reference, to have extracted the primary sources for listing in their own right.

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Faces of the Church: Meditations on a Mystery and Its Images. By GEOFFREY PRESTON, O.P. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997. Pp. x + 310. $35.00 (paper). ISBN 0-8028-4353-0.

After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity. By MIROSLAV VOLF. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998. Pp. 314. $28.00 (paper). ISBN 0-8028-4440-5.

These two recent works of ecclesiology, though both published by the same company, represent two quite different theological perspectives. Geoffrey Preston writes as an English Catholic and a Dominican Friar, a retreat master and a novice master. Miroslav Volf, though now a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, comes from Yugoslavia where he grew up in a parsonage as son of the pastor who represented what Volf calls the "free Church" tradition but what we in the United States might recognize more readily as the English Baptist tradition emanating from the sixteenth-century Reformer John Smyth. That a publishing house more traditionally identified with Calvinist thought would publish both of these authors demonstrates considerable ecumenism as well as a significant service to Christian scholarship.

Friar Preston's *Faces of the Church* is a collection of thirty-two essays organized into four thematic parts. Part 1 consists of ten essays, each treating a New Testament image of the Church. In Preston's terminology these are: *Ekklesia*, People of God, Brotherhood, Temple, Flock, Kingdom, Poor of the Lord, Bride of Christ, Body of Christ, New Creation. Part 2 comprises nine essays under the thematic heading, "Focusing the Church: The Sacraments," wherein after the question "What is a Sacrament?" all seven are treated. In part 3, entitled "Living the Church: Some Privileged Moments," Preston treats in nine chapters various manifestations of Church, individual and collective.

Included are: places and forms of assembly (Church as sacred space, councils, and synods), groups (pilgrims, saints, and martyrs) and individuals Gohn the Baptist, Joseph, and Mary). Part 4, entitled, "The Mystery of the Church," begins with an essay on *koinonia* and then presents us with three separate chapters on Trinitarian themes: the Church of the Spirit, the Church of the Father, the Church of the Son. The book concludes with three indexes: names, subjects, and references.

The first thing to be noted about *Faces of the Church* is that it is a posthumous publication assembled and edited by an admiring religious confrere, Aidan Nichols, a work perhaps never intended for publication. This fact makes for two difficulties. For one thing, there is at times a paucity of references which, no doubt, had Preston lived to see this work into print, he would have supplied. For example, when on page 158 he says, "Of the Hebrew functionary who stands behind the New Testament apostle it was said that 'a man's *shaliach* ['apostle'] is as the man himself,'" one would like to know precisely who said that and where, but unfortunately there is no footnote reference. Similarly, when on page 160 Preston quotes Saint Thomas Aquinas on the mission of the Church, one might assume (correctly) that it was St. Thomas's *Commentary on Ephesians* and not a reference in the *Summa Theologiae* or some other work, but one is not quite certain because there is no precise documentation for the quotation. The other problem created by this work's posthumous publication is the fact that at times Preston's comments appear rather dated. Preston died in 1977, and at times the concerns and issues that he treats here are more distinctive of the 1960s and 1970s than of today. For example, when on page 18 he says, "The existence of the Christian people as a unity does not depend on its having a common language," one cannot help but think Preston had in mind the plight of those English Catholics who in the decade after Vatican II rued the loss of a Latin liturgy. Also the language of "change" and "adaptation" is somewhat dated when it is accompanied by so potentially wistful an observation as, "The Catholic rule of fish on Fridays had an extraordinary power to shape a common solidarity" (20), an observance to which some in the late 1990s appear eager to return if only out of desperation.

On the other hand, despite these flaws there is much in Preston's book to recommend it: for one thing, its method. It is not apparent that Preston was a professional theologian. He was primarily a spiritual guide, a retreat master, and master of novices. Thus his essays here do not pretend to systematic exposition, but Preston is no less a theologian for all that. Moreover, he is one with a sure method. In fact, the subtitle, "meditations on a mystery ... " is a precise indication of his method. For, arguably, it embodies an intentional echo (on the editor's part?) of the title of an important ecclesiological work by the French Jesuit Henri de Lubac. De Lubac's *Meditation surl'eglise* (1953) was not only a significant contribution to Catholic ecclesiology but also a representative work of what came to be called the *nouvelle theologie,* with its emphasis on a

return to biblical and patristic sources. Here we can see one of the advantages of Preston's theological method, for his focus on biblical images of the Church in his lengthy first chapter is a welcome alternative to the recent rage for "models of the Church." While models are self-contained, mutually exclusive, and paradigmatic (and thus lend themselves to rigid stances), images are allusive, suggestive, and supplemental of each other (encouraging a more holistic vision of the Church). It is arguable-and Nichols in his introduction suggests as much-that Preston's method is the equivalent of "a 'post-critical' theology which would integrate the gains of modern biblical scholarship with a contemplative, ecclesial reading of the bible" (vii). But most importantly, Preston often treats ideas and issues in ecclesiology that are very much with us today. For example, his treatment of Church order (in chapter 16, "Ministry"), where he teaches that "hierarchy is basically the whole ordered body and not some group of people within the body" (152-53) and that all the members of that body are "each other's counterpart or *Gegenuber"* in a sort of "reciprocity of the Church and Christ" (154), is a welcome contribution to the contemporary argument over the ordering of ministries in the Church (see especially the joint statement from various Vatican dicasteries of September 1997).

Miroslav Volf's *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* is a considerably more complex work; indeed, it is the editing of an academic exercise, Volf's *Habilitationsschrift* written at the University of Tiibingen under Jiirgen Moltmann, now translated by the author and with an introduction for an American audience. As with Preston's book, here. too, historical circumstances account for certain stylistic and intellectual traits. Stylistically, though Volf for the most part exhibits an admirable command of English idiom, there linger problems of diction. For example, on pages 50 and 51, Volf refers to Ratzinger's "commentary *to* Dei Verbum," whereas standard British as well as American usage would say, Ratzinger's "commentary *on* Dei Verbum." But, more importantly, as Preston's work, in terms of title and method, is more or less a follow-up on De Lubac's work, so here in Volf's work there is evident at times a considerable debt in terms of thought and method to Moltmann's *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1975) and *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (1981). This is reflected not only in the title of the work but also in a certain methodological assumption Volf makes. Not only does he share with his mentor the systematic focus on ecclesiology supplied by a Trinitarian approach, but he chooses a Trinitarian approach with a decided bias, quite freely stated in his "Introduction to the American Edition" (4): "I have tried to develop a nonhierarchical but truly communal ecclesiology based on a nonhierarchical doctrine of the Trinity." This methodological presupposition means that Volf is able to give more prominence to the work of the Spirit within the individual, as a protection against the demands of nature and society (the work of the Father in creation) and even history (the Son, who in the role he gave to Peter and the Twelve gave precedent for a hierarchy in community). In other words,

Volf's methodological assumption allows him to emphasize the freedom of the Spirit over the ordered organic corporeality of the body of Christ. The power of such a methodological assumption to control the material treated is evident in the fact that even though no allusion is made to this in the title of the work, *After Our Likeness* is in fact a study of the concept of communion in two contemporary representative theologians of the Catholic and Orthodox traditions, Joseph Ratzinger and John Zizioulas. But, given the more incarnational, sacramental character of the theological traditions represented by Ratzinger and Zizioulas, Volf's methodological option will appear to some as effectively setting up Ratzinger and Zizioulas as straw men to be mowed down.

After Our Likeness is divided into an introduction and two parts. The introduction has three sections entitled, "A Cry of Protest and Its Fate," "Free Churches: The Churches of the Future?" and "An Ecumenical Study." In part 1, which consists of two chapters, Volf surveys the thought of Ratzinger and Zizioulas on communion. In chapter 1 he treats first of "Ratzinger: Communion and the Whole," and then in chapter 2 of "Zizioulas: Communion, One, and Many." Part 2, consisting of five chapters, is Volf's own treatment of communion according to principles of the Baptist tradition as set forth by John Smyth. Here the chapter headings are: "The Ecclesiality of the Church," "Faith, Person, and Church," "Trinity and Church," "Structures of the Church," and "The Catholicity of the Church."

In his introduction Volf makes it clear that he has a twofold aim: on the one hand he wants to dialogue with Ratzinger and Zizioulas, and on the other hand he intends to be rather apologetic regarding his own religious tradition. This is a complex but not unrealistic aim, and Volf often has many good points to make. However, all too often there is present in this work, lurking not far below the surface, a resentful and even polemical spirit that from time to time occasions remarks more contentious than probative. For example, Volf leaves himself open to the accusation of gross caricature and gratuitous assumption when he complains:

> Should, for example, a Catholic or Orthodox diocese whose members are inclined more to superstition than to faith and who identify with the church more for nationalistic reasons--should such a diocese be viewed as a church, while a Baptist congregation that has preserved its faith through the crucible of persecution *not* be considered such? (133-34).

Some will judge that the ecumenical character of this work is more than a little marred by the fact that the author is not only apologetically defensive of his own tradition and considerably critical of these other traditions but is at times quite triumphalistic in touting the claims of his own tradition over these others. For example, though the third essay in Volf's introduction is couched in the form of a question, "Free Churches: The Churches of the Future?," tile

text itself, while starting with a modest claim, grows increasingly sententious: "The various Free Churches are growing most rapidly among Protestants"; "Just as significant as the rapid growth of the Free Churches, however, are the incipient structural transformations within the traditional Protestant and Catholic churches"; "This 'process of congregationalization' is clearly evident even in the Catholic Church, which is (still?) committed to a hierarchical structure"; "Today's global developments seem to imply that Protestant Christendom of the future will exhibit largely a Free Christian form"; "It seems to me that we are standing in the middle of a clear and irreversible 'process of congregationalization' of all Christianity"; and "The Free Church model is without a doubt being borne by irreversible social changes of global proportions."

Most of Volf's claims here are over blown. Not only would many Catholics challenge his thesis as regards the Catholic Church but the recent Lambeth Conference seems to witness to the fact that the old hierarchical structures in Protestantism, vestigial though they may be, can serve even today as the most salient means for addressing a contemporary issue. At the recent Lambeth conference, a world synod of Anglican bishops, native African bishops representing the ancient biblical tradition were able, if I may use Preston's words, to stand *Gegenuber*, over and against, in a sort of "reciprocity of the Church and Christ," the proposals of those bishops from Europe and North America who represented an attitude of sexual liberalism popular in their congregations.

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Christology from Within: Spirituality and the Incarnation in Hans Urs von Balthasar. By MARK A MCINTOSH. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996. Pp. 224. $29.00 (doth). ISBN 0-268-00815-9.

Various attempts have been made to introduce the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar, from general treatments to methodological and thematic ones. In *Christology from Within,* Mark Mcintosh has taken a dogmatic locus and guides the reader through its constructive attunements by von Balthasar. In doing so he really manages two things: an excellent treatment of von Balthasar's Christology, but one that really gets to the core of his entire work. No surprise really for those already familiar with von Balthasar but enlightening to veteran and novice readers alike of this theological master.

Long recognized by those attracted to von Balthasar is the more innovative aspect of the book's thesis, namely, the integration of spirituality and theology. I say "long recognized" for avid readers of von Balthasar are often drawn to him because of this, and in Mcintosh they will now find an interpreter for whom such integration is of special interest, continued by the way in a more recent publication *(Mystical Theology: The Integrity of Spirituality and Theology* [Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998]). Often issues of Christian life, holiness, and perfection have been left to spiritual, ascetical, and mystical theologies (as Mcintosh is quick to point out), but this is not the case with von Balthasar. It is merit of this book to test and affirm the constructive and systematic implications for Christian dogma.

The hard questions are posed from the beginning and would be a litmus test for any contemporary Christology. To what extent does von Balthasar accede to a docetic Christology, one that in the overall flavor of his *oeuvre* ignores historical-critical method, does not give sufficient attention to the humanity of Christ, and prefers the inner life of God as the real spectrum by which to measure Christology? A further complication attends the whole project. Not all are enthusiastic over von Balthasar's spirituality, whether played out in the inner-Trinitarian life, the person of Jesus Christ, or the call of Christians to holiness and mission. Best come to expression programmatically in *Mysterium Paschale,* von Balthasar seems absorbed by Christ's transposition into kenosis, suffering, and death, such that the humanity that emerges is one totally dominated by an overbearing passiology. As stated before, one has almost to be drawn to this sort of thing really to appreciate it. Mcintosh is sensitive to this reaction and confronts these questions head on. His case for von Balthasar is thus perforce the stronger and must engage any serious Christian thinker.

Mcintosh's strategy is to set the methodological issues within the overall structure of Balthasarian spiritual theology and its sources. Two stand out consistently: the saints and the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola. Clearly (even for the casual reader) von Balthasar is thoroughly Ignatian both in his Christological focus and in his overall Trinitarian framework. The Christian life is Christomorphic because it is caught up in the mission of the Son sent by the Father. One is identified with Christ in his mission by baptism and by existentially responding to his call (Ignatian election). This is at the core of what it means to exist as a Christian, as a person in Christ. But von Balthasar is not limited to Ignatius. He draws on Therese and Berulie, not to mention Maximus (absolutely decisive for his Christology), and ranges over the entire Christian mystical tradition especially wherever intimations of darkness, suffering, or loss of self attend mystical experience or instruction (more of this later). Key to this type of employment of the saints is their theological role as "that essential 'spiritual medium' in which a theology alive to the divine springs of faith can flourish" (16). More formally, they represent Christian participation in the life of the risen Christ, a point not insignificant for Mcintosh's evaluation of Christological possibilities.

He begins by identifying four Christological states in von Balthasar's work, all part and parcel of the transition in thought from the categories of essence to those of existence, from the union of natures in Christ to "the union of divine and human *activity* in Christ" (5). The fourfold activity includes Jesus' availability for mission, his actual obedience in mission, the momentum of this mission into the depths of the paschal mystery, and the resurrection fulfillment of Jesus' existence, which is inclusive and participable. Each is the subject of a chapter and is correlated with a significant Ignatian theme. The latter-clearly an innovation in the history of spirituality-is nicely summarized as a reinterpretation of the traditional theme of *"the purifying ascent of the soul to its divine archetype ...* [into] *the obedient descent of the disciple into the 'ever greater' love of Christ's own mission"* (42).

Determinative for each of these states and for the project as a whole, namely a Balthasarian affirmation of the significance of Christ's humanity, is the utilization of the key Maximian Christological insight that "the *humanity of Christ reveals the divine precisely by being so human"* (41). Here von Balthasar is in sync with much of contemporary Christology, perhaps best expressed in Rahner's affirmation of the axiom that the human and divine in Christ exist in direct and not inverse proportion. Von Balthasar's contribution on this matter is to parse this strictly in terms of Jesus' mission, which explicitly correlates the Christological, Trinitarian, and discipleship aspects of the matter. Thus, for example, the state of self-surrender of Christ to the Father in mission reflects his active human love for God and humanity, the lgnatian principle of indifference which the disciple is invited to inculcate at the beginning of the *Spiritual Exercises,* and the Trinitarian orientation of the divine Son to the eternal Father. Christ's mission is nothing other than the enactment in Jesus' humanity of his "self-surrendered union with the Logos," hence the human living and activity of the person of the divine Son himself (74). The same pattern follows for each of the other Christological states.

The state of obedience bespeaks the intimacy with God that is the fruit of freedom and love, both divine gift and human response. Jesus' own consciousness is essentially missional, disposed toward the Father within the horizon of obedience. Hence it is a fully human consciousness, neither dissolving into a divine omniscience which negates the human nor thinking of itself in the dogmatic language of Nicea and Chalcedon. Hence the mystery of the Son's kenosis extends into the entirety of Jesus' human existence. Likewise, the disciple discovers his own self in Christ by participation in Christ's obedience, being ever at the disposal of the Son's mission in the world.

By the time then that Mcintosh deals with von Baltahsar's view of the passion and his emphasis on Holy Saturday, the logic of his position has already been made clear. Far from involving a tendency to prefer suffering for its own sake, it becomes dear that the paschal *transitus* involves fidelity to God and abandonment to mission within the reality scarred by the alienation that sin introduces into the human condition. Jesus' loving identification with the

sinner in obedience and self-surrender, the disciple's response to this same paschal love and the eternal Son's infinite openness to the Father in his very distinction from him are all of a piece. Here Mcintosh demonstrates how von Balthasar interprets those saints who still bear traces of Neoplatonic and Areopagitic "radiant darkness" in their abandonment of the soul to God. Indeed it is the Christomorphic nature of Christian mission that effects this identification with the cross not as a state of the soul but in the obedience that is faithful to Christ amid "the aimless, loveless chaos of sin" (113).

Mcintosh effectively correlates each of the four chapters on the Christological states with the four weeks of the *Spiritual Exercises:* from indifference to obedience to passion to soteriological culmination in resurrection where in effect Christology begins. Resurrection is really at the center of Christology and ought not to be interpreted as a mere vindication of Jesus and his cause. In the resurrection the contemporaneity of the believer with Christ, the continuity with the apocalyptic preaching of Jesus, and the eschatological impulse of the gospel as *"new act of self-bestowal"* all coalesce. Put soteriologically in the eloquent language of the author, it *"effects the ecstasy of those to whom he draws near"* (129). Ecstatic love and being as communion characterize (once again) Jesus, the disciple, and the Trinitarian life of God. If we turn back to the question of how theology and spirituality are integrated, Mcintosh locates the integration in this inclusive participability as the way the believer enters into the inner reality and dispositions of Christ; in other words, a Christology from within.

Mark Mcintosh has succeeded in offering the reader a synthetic and constructive reading of von Balthasar. This will be a contribution not only to Balthasarian studies but to Christology as well. With respect to the former Mcintosh has not left many stones unturned in von Balthasar's Christology. Perhaps a similar approach to the integration of theology and spirituality can be ventured with respect to pneumatology and its relation to Christology in his work. But that is another book. The fruits of this study await engagement with other contemporary Christologies and their methodological choices. Certainly this book will establish a retrieval of the humanity of Christ from the perspective of so-called high Christology, but it will also discover that humanity as one that plumbs the depths of our own humanity and calls it into a unitive imitation of the freedom and self-givingness of Christ.

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God, Reason, and Theistic Proofs. By STEPHEN T. DAVIS. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997. Pp. xiv +204. $26.00 (paper). ISBN 0-8028-4450-2.

Is There a God? By RICHARD SWINBURNE. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. Pp. 144. $10.95.(paper). ISBN 0-19-823545-3.

These two books share the conviction of John Paul II's latest encyclical, *Fides et Ratio,* that there can be no contradiction between faith and reason, theology and philosophy, science and religion. While Davis is concerned with "proofs" for the existence of God, Swinburne is interested in establishing the "probability" of God's existence.

Davis defines a theistic proof as an attempt to prove, by sound and valid argument, that God exists. The God he has in mind is the God of theism: "a unique, eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing, and personal spirit who created the heavens and the earth and who works for the salvation of human beings" (1). Theistic proof may have various purposes, but fundamentally they are meant "to demonstrate the existence of God and thus the rationality of belief in the existence of God" (6).

Before considering individual proofs, Davis effectively addresses certain objections to the whole notion of theistic proofs, including the contentions that they are unconvincing to skeptics and irrelevant to believers, that they do not attain the living God of the Bible, and that they tend to place God on the same level as finite beings.

The heart of Davis's project is a careful consideration of various kinds of theistic proofs. Using his considerable talents in logic, he presents each type of argument and reviews various objections that have been raised historically against it. He begins with Anselm's ontological argument, considering pros and cons from Gaunilo to Richard Swinburne. One of Gaunilo's objections, which Davis titles "the boy scout objection," is of particular interest since it is similar to Aquinas's objection *(STh* I, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2). The argument is that, while a boy scout may be able to rub two sticks together to make a fire, one cannot, as it were, rub two ideas together and produce an actually existent reality. The argument rests on the distinction between existence in idea and existence in reality, a distinction that Davis carefully employs earlier in his work, but seems to downplay in his response here (3, 27). This may account for his conclusion that "there are versions of the ontological argument that have not been refuted" (10).

In his presentation of cosmological arguments, Davis gives special attention to Aquinas's first three "ways." Recognizing that each of these ways presupposes the impossibility of an infinite regress (whether of movers or causes or contingent beings), Davis offers his own arguments in support of Aquinas's position that an infinite causal regress is not possible.

In dealing with arguments from design, Davis emphasizes their contemporary versions (chap. 6). Science now recognizes that any number of very slight variations in any number of factors at the moment of the "big bang" might have prevented the formation of the universe as we know it. How, then, can we account for the initial "fine tuning" that made our universe possible? Davis argues for the theistic solution that posits God as the initial designer. He refutes other explanations including the "weak" version of the anthropic principle and the hypothesis of many universes. He concludes that "we should not be surprised that we do not observe a universe that is incompatible with our existence. But we *should* be surprised that we *do* observe that we as living and intelligent creatures exist" (113).

In the final section of the chapter, Davis salutes Richard Swinburne as "one of the foremost contemporary proponents of theistic proofs" (116). He questions, however, whether Swinburne adequately establishes the premise of divine simplicity upon which his argument from design depends. Davis notes that our philosophical and theological understanding of God is far from simple and argues that divine simplicity as such is by no means obvious: "It is not easy to see how God can be simple. Since there exists in any omniscient mind a complete specification of the actual world (let alone other possible worlds), the nature of God is presumably going to be as logically complex as the universe God created" (119). This argument might well cause us to question the adequacy of Davis's own understanding of divine simplicity. Aquinas's distinction between the thing known (which may be complex, material, etc.) and the mode of one's knowing it (which may be simple, immaterial, etc.) might be useful to Davis on this point *(STh* I, q. 13, a. 12, ad 3).

In discussing proofs based on religious experience, Davis refers especially to Swinburne's argument in *The Existence of God.* He agrees with Swinburne that theistic religious experience does not "all by itself constitute evidence for the existence of God," but that it can "constitute a successful proof that anti-religious naturalism is false" (135, 137).

As alternative arguments for theism, Davis looks at Pascal's "wager argument" and WilliamJames's argument for the epistemological justification of religious belief (chap. 9). He also discusses the relation of theistic proofs to religious realism and foundationalism (chaps. 3 and 5). At issue in the discussion of religious realism is whether the practice of religion or spirituality is possible for one who denies the existence of God. Davis sees the existence of God as essential to theistic faith, but allows that those who deny the existence of God but still find some personal value in religion may consistently follow the way of religious nonrealism (58-59). His treatment of foundationalism is concerned with what constitutes valid evidence for the assertion that God exists. Here Davis adopts a balanced position, not requiring that such evidence be immediately known or self-evident, but avoiding the relativistic attitude that all evidence is equally valid (80, 93).

Davis concludes with a retrospective chapter which considers the importance of the question of the existence of God, the validity of identifying the God of theistic proofs with the God of revealed religion, and the value of the whole enterprise of formulating theistic proofs. He argues that, even though theistic proofs may not be able to convince nonbelievers that God exists, they are still valuable for showing that belief in God is not irrationaL He ends with a candid personal statement that, while he enjoys discussing theistic proofs, his own religious convictions have "almost nothing to do with theistic proofs." They are based rather on personal experiences "that I interpret in terms of the presence of God," and that explain "why I claim to know that God exists" (193). Reflecting this conviction, his book provides a judicious review of a wide spectrum of theistic proofs from the sympathetic but not uncritical vantage point of a believer.

In his book *Is There a God?* Richard Swinburne intends to address the widespread opinion that religious faith is not rational by presenting "for a wider public a short version of the positive case for the existence of God put forward in my earlier book *The Existence of God"* (1-2).

The God whose existence he wishes to establish is fundamentally the personal God of Western religion (3-4). He proposes certain "refinements" of that traditional notion of God, however, and claims to be following the methods of Aquinas in doing so (8). One might wonder, though, whether Aquinas would recognize the God that results from Swinburne's refinements. Swinburne's God, for instance, is not said to know "what someone will freely do tomorrow" since for Swinburne such knowledge is "logically impossible" (7). The notion of divine omnipotence must also be qualified to accommodate the reality of human free will (8).

Nor can Swinburne "make much sense" of Aquinas's notion of divine eternity (9). Since Swinburne's God cannot know "in the same act of knowledge" what happens in two "different years," it is hard to see how he might know himself and all that is in the one act that is his very being. Instead, Swinburne's God is said to "learn about" the world, though not through bodily organs as we do (10). He always chooses the good, but the motivations for his choice seem to be very much like our own (12-14). Swinburne sees God as "the source of moral obligation," but then claims the authority of Aquinas to assert that "there are moral truths independent of the will of God" which "God can only enforce" but "not alter" (15). Though he does not give any references to Aquinas here, he did provide them in his argument for the same assertion in his *The Coherence of Theism* (Oxford, 1977), 204. In the texts cited there, however, Aquinas seems to be asserting just the opposite of what Swinburne proposes. Aquinas's position is that "whatever is commanded by God is right" *(STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 5, ad 2; cf. *STh* I-II, q. 100, a. 8, ad 3). The only thing God cannot do-the only thing that would be self-contradictory-would be to direct a human being to an end other than God himself *(STh* I-II, q. 100, a. 8, ad 2).

All of this is not because God is arbitrary, but because moral obligation is founded in the order of nature. And since God is the author of nature, the Creator of all that is, whatever God does "is not against nature" (STh I, q. 105, a. 6, ad 1). Swinburne seems to be in accord with Aquinas's premise, since he also thinks that "God is the ultimate brute fact which explains everything else" (19). But he has not followed Aquinas in recognizing the consequences of that premise.

After describing the God whose existence he intends to establish as the best explanation of all that is, Swinburne then discusses the criteria that are generally used in science to determine whether a particular explanation should be considered true or at least probable (chap. 2). He lists four, but believes that, when one is seeking a theory of ultimate explanation, they may be reduced to one: "That theory of ultimate explanation is most likely to be the true one, which is the simplest theory which predicts the observable phenomena when we would not otherwise expect to find them" (41).

The rest of Swinburne's book is concerned with showing that theism best satisfies this criterion for a valid ultimate explanation. Since the existence of God provides the simplest way to explain the world and its order (chap. 4), the existence of human beings (chap. 5), and the incidence of miracles and religious experience (chap. 7), while also accounting for the reality of evil (chap. 6), Swinburne concludes that it is "significantly more probable than not that there is a God" (139).

At a time of increasing interest in the dialogue between science and religion, Swinburne's arguments are particularly intriguing since they establish the probability of God's existence by employing "the very same criteria which scientists use to explain their own theories" (2, 139). There is no contradiction between science and theism. God is not invoked as a replacement for scientific explanation; nor is God understood as a mere addendum to science, a way to explain the gaps that science has not yet explained. Rather, theistic explanations complement those of science: "I am postulating a God to explain what science explains; I do not deny that science explains, but I postulate God to explain why science explains. The very success of science in showing us how deeply orderly the natural world is provides strong grounds for believing that there is an even deeper cause of that order" (68). All who are interested in the dialogue between science and theism will find a refreshing and helpful perspective in Swinburne's arguments.

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Belief in God in Our Time: Foundational Theology I. By M. JOHN FARRELLY. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1992. Pp. 381. $19.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8146-5706-0.

Faith in God through Jesus Christ: Foundational Theology II. By M. JOHN FARRELLY. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1997. Pp. 350. $29.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8146-5859-8.

The author understands foundational theology as different from systematic theology in that the latter uses arguments that rely on faith whereas the former addresses an audience of inquirers who do not necessarily have faith. Foundational theology is nevertheless practiced by Christians who accept the norms of Christian faith. It aims at propounding the meaning, the relevance, and the grounds for believing. Among its tools are contemporary experience, reason, and modern critical study of Scripture.

As the respective titles indicate, volume 1 of *Foundational Theology* makes a case for belief in God in our time, while volume 2 presents the grounds for faith in God through Jesus Christ.

Farrelly foresees and discusses the objections likely to be leveled (not exclusively by Neo-Barthians) at his option in favor of tackling belief in God, in volume 1, without straightway tying it to Jesus Christ as mediator-which is done only in volume 2. His two-step approach is historically justified by the fact that, according to the divine dispensation, prior to the New Testament there existed genuine belief in God among the Israelites. As he rightly points out, "Jesus proclaimed his message to a people who had already undergone a divine pedagogy leading them to give primacy to God in their lives and to understand somewhat the relation that was appropriate for them to adopt with God" (1:8-9).

Farrelly construes Paul's discourse in Acts 17 not as a failed strategy which Paul would have subsequently abandoned, but as a valid apology which most of the patristic writers assumed and creatively expanded in their dialogue with the Graeco-Roman world. He also observes that such an incremental advance toward faith accords with the experience of at least some twentieth-century converts. Moreover he notes that Jews, Moslems, and many others believe in God as transcendent personal being without basing their faith on Jesus. Hence his ecumenical-minded and yet perfectly orthodox statement: "We cannot claim to accept God's revelation of himself through Jesus Christ if we reject God's lesser revelations of himself, nor is it Christian to use God's greater revelation of himself to deny his less ultimate revelations" (1:303).

Insofar as the relations between faith and reason are concerned, Farrelly prefers the dialogical model to the dialectical one. He finds plenty of historical evidence in favor of the former, all the way from the New Testament to Vatican II. Although his model makes room for dialectic, that is, for actual oppositions, it persistently exhibits and praises the incomplete meanings that are

found on lower levels (see the quotation above). For example, divine revelation in the human conscience and in the physical world can be taken up, corrected, and deepened thanks to the mediation of Jesus Christ.

As another interesting illustration of the legitimacy of this approach Farrelly gives the two-stage experience of Peter. In an early stage Peter acknowledged the messiahship of Jesus and yet resisted the suggestion that suffering and humiliation should be attached to it; only after the resurrection and Pentecost did he become fully enlightened and converted. And yet, we can see partial truth in his pre-Easter confession.

With respect to Scripture Farrelly adopts Vatican Il's position that the Gospels present to us *substantively* what Jesus did and said. However, he observes pluralism in the New Testament. He tries to show (successfully, in my opinion) that this pluralism did not unfold only according to personal vision or collective needs. While he unreservedly recognizes the important role of creative imagination, he maintains that it was put at the service of a tradition alive during New Testament times. He thus excludes the fashionable, indiscriminate pluralism that amounts to relativism. This review cannot do full justice to the details of his demonstration, which are complex and supported by solid acquaintance with exegetical works.

Furthermore, Farrelly underlines the transhistorical dimension of what took place in the Jesus event. One cannot drive a wedge between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. Time and again Farrelly emphasizes that a naturalistic view of reality is incompatible with the recognition of a transhistorical dimension. The acceptance of this transhistorical dimension requires a conversion that is both affective and intellectual. Like Peter, contemporary men and women cannot access Christian revelation without letting their basic assumptions be challenged.

Readers will find in these volumes sound hermeneutical reflections on language, with a stress on the importance of symbols. Farrelly's considerations on world religions fit in well with his other thoughts on revelation and inculturation. Well argued are his discussions of issues such as the objectivity and personhood of God, and the responsiveness and suffering of God, in dialogue with personalism, Buddhism, and the telling fact of the Holocaust. On the other hand, there seems to be an unresolved intellectual tension at times between the nature of God as totally actual being and the personal intentionality of God (see for instance 1:330-31). Moreover I wish chapter 5 of volume 1 had shown how the ground of ethics and the absolute ground are connected and why the former cannot stand without the latter.

Farrelly's fine historical consciousness punctuates his exposition with insightful remarks concerning varying perspectives and problematics. He is sensitive to inculturation, namely, to the numerous ways in which the gospel embodies itself in successivecultures. He highlights human historicity, people's shaping and being shaped by their environment and their decisions. He rightly

underscores the significance of the absolute future, understood as the return of Christ. However, when he advocates "an exercise of causal influence from the future of history," when he speaks of the apocalyptic kingdom of God as "an incursion of the age to come into this age," or when he states that the "age to come is already having an impact upon the present age" (2:229, 328, 329), not only those who know about Thomas Aquinas's understanding of time and eternity but also students of Einstein's concept of space-time may discern here a view of time that is more imaginative than theoretical.

A leitmotiv that recurs in Farrelly's books is the necessity to relate Christian experience to the historical consciousness displayed both in the Bible and in contemporary culture. He rightly complains that because of the Neoplatonic influence, Thomas Aquinas does not make this connection explicitly enough. However, I wonder if his criticism of Thomas's view of faith and revelation is perfectly consistent. He writes: "Thomas frequently speaks of the relation between God the revealer and human beings as that between teacher and students: revelation is passively received" (2:223). But the rest of the paragraph shows that the prophetic paradigm introduced by Thomas consists of many activities which situate the learning process (itself by no means purely passive) within a larger experiential context. Farrelly also mentions Thomas's theme of "the interior instinct impelling and moving one to believe" (2:223). In the treatise on grace, Thomas tells us that such impulsion or motion is both passive (operative grace) and active (cooperative grace).

On the following page, we read another ambiguous assertion: "In consequence of the context of Thomas's reflection on revelation and faith, he emphasizes its character as an intellectual act, though moved by the will, rather than dealing with it primarily as the path to conversion or as a basis for justification distinct from works" (2:224). I cannot see how this statement is compatible with Farrelly's own (more perceptive) remark elsewhere: "The kind of illumination of the mind Thomas means here is 'one that effects the affection of love' (I, 43, 5, ad 2) and so one that involves a certain experiential knowledge" (2:281 n. 21). Of course, faith is an "intellectual" act in the sense that it is intelligent and takes place in the mind; but faith is a member of a trio-faith, hope, and charity-three musicians who always play together and whose score consists in the tract on grace (see *STh* 1-11, qq. 106-14).

Finally, a suggestion about the cross-reference of 1:363 n. 28: could it be chapter 6, section 2?

Farrelly writes, "This study is an introductory one such as would be given-and I have frequently given it-to first-year students in theology" (2:11). Despite my few reservations, I believe that this study can also be of great help to graduate students and indeed to theologians themselves. This work may very well prove to be the standard text for Roman Catholic foundational theology for years to come. I eagerly await Farrelly's forthcoming

book, which will evaluate the Christian norm of faith and the nature of theology.

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