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THE ROLE OF DEMONSTRATION IN MORAL THEOLOGY

A Study of Methodology in St. Thomas Aquinas

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ABBREVIATIONS

SIGLA

AAS—*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, Roma: 1909 ss.
Ang—*Angelicum*, Roma: 1924 ss.
BT—*Bulletin thomiste*, Bellevue/Kain: 1924 ss.
CT—*La Ciencia Tomista*, Salamanca: 1910 ss.
DTC—*Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, Paris: 1903-1950.
DTF—*Divus Thomas (Friburgensis)*, Fribourg: 1923-1955.
ETL—*Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, Lovanii: 1924 ss.
FZTP—*Freiburger Zeitschrift für Theologie und Philosophie*, Freiburg: 1954 ss.
Greg—*Gregorianum*, Roma: 1920 ss.
IER—*Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, Dublin: 1912 ss.
ITQ—*The Irish Theological Quarterly*, Maynooth: 1934 ss.
LTP—*Laval théologique et philosophique*, Québec: 1945 ss.
MS—*The Modern Schoolman*, St. Louis: 1949 ss.
MTZ—*Münchener theologische Zeitschrift*, München: 1950 ss.
NS—*The New Scholasticism*, Baltimore: 1927 ss.
PJ—*Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, Fulda: 1888 ss.
RET—*Revista espanola de teologia*, Madrid: 1940 ss.
RSPT—*Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, Kain: 1907 ss.
RT—*Revue thomiste*, Paris: 1893 ss.
RUO—*Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa*, Ottawa: 1931 ss.
Sch—*Scholastik*, Freiburg-i-B.: 1926 ss.
Thom—*The Thomist*, Washington: 1939 ss.
Thou—*Thought*, New York: 1926 ss.
ZKT—*Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, Innsbruck/Leipzig: 1887 ss.

VARIA

Denzinger—*Enchiridion Symbolorum* Henrici Denzinger, 28th ed. (C. Rahner), Freiburg/Barcelona: 1952.
Ramirez—*De hominis beatitudine*. Vol. I Salmanticae: 1942; Vol. II, Matriti: 1943; Vol. III, Matriti: 1947.

Note: The works of St. Thomas Aquinas are indicated without the name of the author, and citations from the *Summa Theologiae* without the title of the work. For other works of St. Thomas, standard abbreviations are used.

INTRODUCTION

The science of sacred theology, traditionally stable, serene and unperturbed even by cataclysmic upheavals in secular thought, has in recent times become sensitive to its intellectual environment. Under the influence of the empiricist methodology perfected by modern science, for instance, there have been extensive developments in positive theology during the past several decades. These developments have de-emphasized the speculative aspect of theological science, and instead have accented the positive: thus the recent preoccupation with biblical and patristic source materials, which has had significant repercussions in the field of dogma. And now even more radical trends are beginning to appear in the field of moral, likewise traceable to methodological advances, which threaten to undermine the character of moral theology as a speculative science.

These new trends owe their origin in large part to the renewal of interest in phenomenology and existentialism following the two World Wars. The most startling innovation has been that of "situation ethics," a development so radical that it destroys all objective bases for morality, and as a consequence has quickly come under condemnation by the Church.[1] Most Catholic moralists have had no difficulty rejecting the extreme formulations of this *avant-garde* position, but still there have been recurrent demands for a moral theology that has more regard for the concrete situation in which man finds himself, that is more personal and perfective of the individual, that is more supple and modern in its approach to contemporary problems than traditional theology.[2] Rahner has attempted to satisfy the demands of German theologians along these lines by his proposal of an *Existentialethik* that would not go so far as the condemned doctrine, but would move in its general direction.[3] At Louvain, Gilleman would re-

[1] A critical evaluation of this new doctrine, together with the papal documents condemning it, is to be found in: D. von Hildebrand, *True Morality and its Counterfeits*, New York: 1955.

[2] See G. Thils, *Tendences actuelles en théologie morale*, (Gembloux: 1940), pp. ix-x.

[3] K. Rahner, "Ueber die Frage einer formalen Existentialethik," *Schriften zur Theologie*, Bd. II (3. Aufl.), Einsiedeln/Köln: 1958, pp. 227-246.

construct moral theology using the concept of charity as the unifying basis,[4] while Leclerq has launched a vigorous attack on the Thomistic notion of moral science as being inadequate to cope with modern problems.[5]

American theologians, generally more conservative than their European counterparts, have reported and studied these tendencies with interest. Because of their greater involvement with an independent Catholic educational system, understandably they have been more concerned with the practical problem of teaching theology in colleges and seminaries, but this too has led in some areas to dissatisfaction with traditional theology. Klubertanz has protested that it is impossible to teach speculative theology at the college level;[6] Weigel proposes a subjective integration of personal experience through a type of Christian humanism designed to replace the scholastic and speculative approach to theology;[7] McKenzie attacks the Thomistic synthesis, and speculative theology generally, on the grounds that it has been outmoded by the historico-critical approach of the twentieth century.[8]

These various movements, all proposed as new approaches to perennial problems, converge towards one focal point: they challenge, directly or indirectly, the relevance and utility of theology as a speculative science, and particularly as developed by St. Thomas Aquinas, for coping with crises arising in modern thought.

Yet Rome has expressed no such dissatisfaction with the thought or method of St. Thomas, nor with speculative theology in general. In fact, Pope Pius XII, when confronted with the menace posed by "situation ethics," immediately urged a return to the speculative moral of St. Thomas for solutions to pressing problems of contemporary interest. "Let it suffice," he said, "to cite the still pertinent explanations of St. Thomas on the cardinal virtue of prudence and the virtues connected with it. His treatise evidences a sense of personal activity which contains whatever true and positive elements there may be in 'ethics according to the situation' while avoiding its confusions and aberrations. Hence it will be sufficient for the

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[4] G. Gilleman, *Le primat de la charité en théologie morale: essai méthodologique*, 2e éd., Bruxelles/Bruges/Paris: 1954.

[5] J. Leclerq, *La philosophie morale de S. Thomas devant la pensée contemporaine*, Louvain: 1955.

[6] G. P. Klubertanz, "The Nature and Function of Courses in Philosophy and their Curricular Implications in Liberal Education," *College Newsletter* (National Catholic Educational Association), October, 1956; cited by J. L. McKenzie, "Theology in Jesuit Education," *Thou* 34 (1959), p. 348.

[7] G. Weigel, "The Meaning of Sacred Doctrine in the College," *Shaping the Christian Message*, ed. by G. S. Sloyan, New York: 1958, pp. 170-182.

[8] J. L. McKenzie, "Theology in Jesuit Education," *Thou* 34 (1959), pp. 347-357.

modern moralist to continue along the same lines, if he wishes to make a thorough study of the new problems."[9]

* * *

Our concern will not be with the recent emphasis on positive theology, nor, for the moment, with the problem of education in theology. Rather we would concentrate on current dissatisfaction with the moral theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. Here it could easily be rash to accuse of inattentiveness to the directives of the Holy Father those theologians who voice discontent and seek new approaches in moral theology. Perhaps the explanation for their apparent lack of docility can be sought more fruitfully in a *different* direction, namely, in the great difficulty inherent in treating moral theology as a speculative science, even according to the method of St. Thomas. Gillon has recently pointed out some of the ambiguities latent in the Thomistic concept of moral science,[10] and Roy has tried, in a serious study, to delineate the certitude attainable in moral doctrine through a rigid application of Thomistic methodology.[11] While not endorsing all of the latter's conclusions, we concur that he has touched on one of the key problems, and one that may well lie at the base of current rejections of the Thomistic approach to moral theology.

The fundamental difficulty may be made more precise by stating it in terms of the subject matter with which moral theology is mainly concerned, namely, the human act. The latter, proceeding freely as it does from the human will and being morally affected by almost an infinite number of possible circumstances, shows a degree of contingency and variability that is unique among all the subjects treated in sacred theology. The basic question which emerges from such a consideration is this: Is it possible to have a strict demonstrative science, in the Thomistic sense of the term, that treats of such a highly contingent and variable subject matter, and if so, what is the characteristic methodology by which demonstrative certitude is attained?

The difficulty involved in answering this question arises from the fact that science and demonstration are commonly regarded in the Thomistic tradition as being concerned exclusively with objects that are determined

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[9] *AAS* 44 (1952), p. 418; English transl. *IES* 78 (1952) p. 141.

[10] "Telle est l'ambiguité de la morale. Si elle reste sur le plan du singulier contingent, elle semble assurée de la fidélité à son objet. Si au contraire le *termo moralis* se détache des faits pour s'élever aux principes, il perd en efficacité, ce qu'il gagne en certitude et en universalité. Et si la certitude est la condition même de la science, ne devra-t-on pas en conclure que la qualification morale d'une assertion, d'une thèse, est en raison inverse de son caractère scientifique?" L.-B. Gillon, "Morale et science," *Ang* 35 (1958), pp. 249-250.

[11] L. Roy, *La certitude de la doctrine morale*, Québec: 1958.

and necessary, that could not be otherwise than they are. If this is so, does it not rule out the possibility of such a science being concerned with the human act as its object, on the very grounds of the latter's extreme contingency? Again, the human act can only exist as singular, as highly personal and individual, and how can the singular as such be the subject of demonstration? Or, if it be granted that there can be no science or demonstration concerning the human act as it is found in all its existential singularity, what precisely can the moral theologian demonstrate about human action? Is he limited exclusively to certain universal, "essentialist" aspects, which express generally the ideal to be attained in singular action? Or would it be better to say that he is investigating the rules which should govern the action of the individual, which themselves have a certain and demonstrable character, even though the individual act in itself be refractory to scientific analysis? If so, how can even such rules be attained by a demonstrative process? Do not rules pertain to the realm of practical knowledge, to the habits of art and prudence? But science and demonstration are both perfections of the speculative intellect, and how can speculative knowledge terminate in rules that are by their very nature practical? Or again, basically the same question, is moral theology a speculative science or is it a practical science, or is it at once speculative and practical? And if either of the two latter alternatives, what precisely is the role of demonstration in a practical science, and by what process is the transition made from the speculative to the practical orders?

If these difficulties are surmounted, and it be established that moral theology does actually employ a demonstrative process in studying its proper subject, further questions arise about the certitude of the conclusions which are thereby established. Is it possible to have a metaphysical certitude of such conclusions, or does not the variability of the subject matter again dictate that only physical certitude will be attainable? Or is even this saying too much: is not moral certitude the best that should be expected from scientific consideration of the human act? The statement is made frequently in the Thomistic tradition that one should not look for mathematical certitude in the sciences that deal with moral matters, and is this not what is meant? On the other hand, moral certitude is said to be associated with truths that are only verified *ut in pluribus*, and how can this be reconciled with the notion of scientific certitude, which is traditionally associated with truths that have an eternal and immutable character? Again we are back at the basic question: How it is possible to attain apodeictic, scientific certitude when treating of moral matters, which show such limitless variability as to seem completely refractory to treatment by strict demonstrative procedures?

When one searches, moreover, for answers to these questions in the classical sources dealing with demonstrative method in sacred theology, a peculiar situation is found. Practically all of the literature devoted to this subject is concerned with the problems of the evolution of dogma and the definability of theological conclusions, with no consideration whatsoever being given to moral theology precisely as such. And among the more reputable Thomistic authors who have written recently on the general subject of demonstration in theology, one finds the recurrent theme that all theological demonstration must be characterized by metaphysical certitude with no allowance made for a physical or moral certitude that could be the conclusion of a demonstrative process that is strictly theological.[12] Whence arises another difficulty: If moral theology is limited by its subject matter from attaining metaphysical certitude, how can it be homogeneous with the remainder of sacred theology so as to constitute only one science? Or, as is frequently maintained outside the Thomistic tradition, are dogmatic and moral theology so different in their method and the certitude of their conclusions, that they are actually two distinct sciences, and not integral parts of one and the same science?

* * *

Ramirez, one of the few contemporary moralists capable of dealing with difficulties of this type, has given brief though careful consideration to the question of the nature and method of Thomistic moral theology. In his monumental three-volume exposition of the first three questions of the *Prima Secundae*, he comes to the conclusion that moral theology is homogeneous with the remainder of sacred theology, and that its basic method, as we shall see later, is one of finding a middle term in a theological demonstrative syllogism.[13] As one might expect, his treatment is cogent and intellectually satisfying, but unfortunately its brevity is such that many problems concerning the speculative and practical aspects of moral theology as relating to its demonstrative method are left unsolved, and perforce there is no attempt to answer questions that have arisen in recent thought. Thus, while subscribing to Ramirez's basic methodological position, we propose in this study to delve further into its ramifications, and particularly those which are relevant to innovations that would undermine the traditional concept of Thomistic moral theology.

The title we have adopted for this study, "The Role of Demonstration in Moral Theology," thus shows the influence of Ramirez's resolution of the methodological problem. Fundamentally, our work gravitates around

[12] See, for example, F. Marin-Sola, *L'évolution homogène du dogme catholique*, 2 éd., Fribourg: 1924. Vol. I, pp. 33-38, 105, 148.

[13] J. M. Ramirez, *De hominis beatitudine*, Salmanticae: 1942, Vol. I, p. 75.

the central question of the scientific character of moral theology, and we have earlier entertained the notion of employing the term "scientific" in the title. Our decision against this alternative has been prompted by two considerations. The first has to do with the equivocation associated with the term "scientific" in contemporary usage, which might serve to mislead prospective readers by disguising the Thomistic sense in which we use the term. The second has to do with a more technical point regarding the use of demonstration, which will become clear in the subsequent exposition, and according to which it would be more correct to say that many of the uses of demonstration in moral theology are more properly "sapiential" uses than they are merely "scientific" ones. We have also considered the use of the term "speculative" in the title, and have rejected this alternative also, because--as will likewise become clear later--demonstration has a role to play in both the speculative and practical elaboration of moral theology. The particular title adopted, then, has the double advantage that it is technically correct from the point of view of strict Thomistic terminology, and at the same time is sufficiently intelligible to those outside the scholastic tradition to indicate generally the nature and intent of the work.

With regard to the sub-title: "A Study of Methodology in St. Thomas Aquinas," this likewise is not without a special significance. The solution of the problem to which we have addressed ourselves has accented the importance of returning to the *ipsa verba* of St. Thomas, in order to avoid the confusing terminology that has grown up with the manual tradition and neo-scholastic usage. This is particularly important when dealing with logical and methodological questions of the type discussed by St. Thomas in his commentaries on the *Posterior Analytics* and on Boethius' *De Trinitate,* where attempts to abbreviate doctrine for incorporation in a manual, on the one hand, can easily lead to over-simplification and misrepresentation, and where similar attempts to take cognizance of modern views of methodology and the division of the sciences, on the other hand, can give a distorted picture of St. Thomas' actual position and usage. For this reason we have preferred to build our analysis on as many direct citations from St. Thomas as possible, and have not hesitated to paraphrase important texts in our own exposition. We would caution the reader, on this account, to be especially alert with regard to our usage of such terms as "science" (and its derivatives), "demonstration," "certitude," "subject-object," "physical-metaphysical," and "speculative-practical," all of which have a special meaning for St. Thomas and the earlier commentators that is frequently obscured in contemporary scholastic usage.

Although we make reference to Aristotle, and employ the designation "Aristotelian-Thomistic" with some regularity, our interest in the Stagirite

extends only to the use made of the latter by St. Thomas. Thus we have resisted the temptation to explore the many problems that suggest themselves with regard to the validity of Thomas' interpretation of Aristotle and his method, and have been content to report that interpretation faithfully, and then to study its use in the Thomistic elaboration of sacred theology.

Our position with respect to modern literature, in similar fashion, is one that is mainly interested in the light that modern writers can shed on St. Thomas' original meaning and method. Although we have given copious citations from such sources in the footnotes, and particularly have pointed out the positions of authors whose views are at variance with our own, it should be noted that we have done so principally to show how our solution relates to modern interpretations of Thomistic doctrine, without going into extensive examination and criticism of other opinions. The basic reason for this is to be found in the fact that much modern writing is subjected to neo-scholastic influences, and that we would consider it improper to take issue with neo-scholastic doctrines without going into a detailed evaluation of their historical development and technical elaboration. While such an investigation would be of great academic interest, it would distract us from the main purpose of our study, which is one of ascertaining the role of demonstration in moral theology as it was actually conceived and used by St. Thomas Aquinas in the "Golden Age" of scholasticism.

* * *

It is often said that the great accomplishment of St. Thomas was that he succeeded in "baptizing Aristotle," and thus turned to the service of Christianity the vast store of secular knowledge suddenly become available to the intellectually awakened Europe of the thirteenth century. The extent to which this "baptism" of Aristotle was actually effected has become the subject of recent dispute among historians, with special difficulties being urged in the fields of metaphysics[14] and ethics[15] respectively, but to our

[14] Notably E. Gilson has proposed the thesis that Thomistic metaphysics, because of its accent on the existential aspect of being, is radically different from Aristotelian metaphysics; for a summary of this position, see his *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, London: 1955, pp. 361-383, also J. Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, Toronto: 1951. The more traditional view is given by L.—B. Geiger, "S. Thomas et la métaphysique d'Aristote," *Aristote et Thomas d'Aquin* (Chaire Cardinal Mercier 1955) Louvain: 1957, pp. 175-220.

[15] See H. V. Jaffa, *Thomism and Aristotelianism: A Study of the Commentary by Thomas Aquinas on the Nichomachean Ethics*, Chicago: 1952. The latter makes the statement: "We conclude then that Thomas' assumption as to the harmony of natural and revealed doctrine, at least as far as Aristotle is to be considered a representative of the former, is entirely unwarranted. Thomas' 'success' in creating the appearance of harmony is due, we believe, entirely to his imputation to Aristotle of . . . non-Aristotelian principles . . ." p. 187. For a more moderate view, see

knowledge no one has ever questioned the fact that St. Thomas subscribed completely to the logical system of the Stagirite.[16] The unorthodox elements of Aristotelian teaching on some subjects he did not hesitate to discard, but the method of Aristotle he made simply and whole-heartedly his own. In Thomas' skillful hands, the *Organon* became a methodological instrument powerful enough to construct, from the data of divine revelation, the beautifully ordered system of thought now known as speculative theology.[17]

Speculative theology, then, as conceived by St. Thomas and as expounded by the great Thomistic commentators, bears the stamp of a method which is characteristically Aristotelian. It takes as its model the wisdom of Aristotle's metaphysics, a wisdom which embraces both an understanding of principles and a science of conclusions, and goes on to elaborate the ramifications of such a concept for ordering the whole of revealed truth.[18] It finds one of its most perfect exemplifications in the breath-taking sweep of Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*, where the entire scope of sacred doctrine is articulated into an organic unity. Problems about God and His creatures, about human conduct, about Christ and His Church, problems which before St. Thomas had been discussed in isolated tracts and in divers ways, all find here their proper place. All are subjected to the same underlying meth-

A. Thiry, "Saint Thomas et la morale d'Aristote," *Aristote et Thomas d'Aquin*, Louvain: 1957, pp. 229-258.

[16] Thus Gilson makes the admission: "The traditional syncretism upon which (or within which) Thomas had to do his critical work was made up of many different elements. The logic that it used was entirely Aristotelian." *Elements of Christian Philosophy*, New York: 1960, p. 16.

[17] M. D. Chenu, for instance, in remarking how St. Thomas' genius transformed Aristotle "comme la grâce rénove la nature sans en violenter la structure originelle," concludes with the simple statement: "Rarement fut-il plus beau cas d'une concurrence de l'inspiration créatrice et de plus sincère imitation." *La théologie comme science au xiii^e siècle*, 3 éd., Paris: 1957, p. 103. Thomas' original use of the Aristotelian methodological legacy is also acknowledged by Ramírez: "S. Thomas . . . primus theologiae applicuit conceptum aristotelicum scientiae presse dictae," *De hominis beatitudine*, Vol. I, p. 4. Similarly: "Saint Thomas a voulu que par sa structure générale comme par sa technique, la théologie devint une discipline scientifique comparable en rigueur aux sciences dont Aristote avait fourni le modèle."—E. Gilson, *Théologie et histoire de la spiritualité*, Paris: 1943, p. 15. And again: "L'invasion de la logique et de la métaphysique aristotéliciennes apporta l'instrument de pensée et les données rationnelles aptes à transformer la théologie en une science authentique de la Révélation. Ce fut l'oeuvre par excellence de saint Thomas d'Aquin. Le Docteur Angélique fit de la doctrine chrétienne la systématisation rationnelle la plus poussée qu'ait connue le monde chrétien."—P. Germain, "La théologie de saint Thomas d'Aquin, science de la foi," *RUO* 28 (1958), 157*-158*. For a scholarly study of the basic Aristotelian structure of the Thomistic synthesis, together with heterodox interpretations of Aristotle against which Thomas fought, see G. Manser, *Das Wesen des Thomismus*, 3. Aufl., Freiburg/Schweiz: 1949.

[18] *In I Sent.*, q. 1 prol., art. 3, sol. 1, c.

odology, all are synthesized into the unity of a single sapiential treatment.[19]

This being the case, a study such as our own which proposes to examine Thomas' method of demonstrating in moral theology, would be ill-advised if it attempted to disengage itself completely either from the organic whole in which that method is found, or from the roots in Aristotelian thought from which it originated and through which it continues to flourish. The methodology of demonstration in moral science poses some very special problems, it is true, and these demand special solutions in terms of principles appropriate to moral matters. But such solutions, if they are to respect the unity of procedure found in Aristotle and St. Thomas, must also be worked out in the context of their common logical methodology. Not only this, but a general understanding of the Aristotelian-Thomistic approach to the problem of demonstration should have something positive to contribute to the solution of more particular difficulties. A case in point is the complex question of the certitude of moral demonstrations. Here a clarification of the certitudes appropriate to metaphysical and physical demonstations, and their respective uses by the philosopher and the theologian, will supply useful materials for the study of moral demonstration, and should thus throw light on the problem of moral certitude and its methodological implications.

Thus, before broaching the special problems associated with demonstration in moral theology, we have felt it advisable to devote a preliminary Chapter to an extensive prenote dealing with demonstration in general and its different uses in sacred theology. This Chapter may be passed over quickly by those who already have a technical knowledge of the Thomistic concept of demonstration as explained in the commentary on the *Posterior Analytics* of Aristotle. It discusses the nature and kinds of demonstration, the manner of demonstrating in different sciences, and the peculiar characteristics of demonstration in sacred theology, together with the various functions for which it is employed by the theologian. We would call the reader's attention, however, to the fact that thus far there has been no definitive treatment of this subject in the literature, and that in some matters we diverge from opinions of Marin-Sola which are commonly received, but which have great limitations when applied to methodological problems in moral theology.

Chapter One accents the rational character of the demonstrative process, while explaining how that process comes under the positive direction of faith. Sacred theology is an intermediate science, standing midway between

[19] Cf. M. D. Chenu, "L'originalité de la morale de saint Thomas," *Initiation théologique*, Paris: 1952, Vol. III, p. 9.

the purely human sciences and the completely divine science of God and the blessed. As a consequence it must dominate and use all the human disciplines, but it must be subservient to, and be used in the explanation of, divinely revealed truth. To quote Ramirez, "the theologian must be a disciple in matters of faith and a master in matters of human reason."[20] The source from which the theologian learns is the deposit of revelation; he must study that as a child, and ever be docile to its inspiration. But the very nature of his science demands that at the same time he be a master of the philosophical disciplines. His success as a theologian will be directly proportional to his ability to understand and reason about the matters which are illumined by the *light* of faith, which gives the distinctive character to his science.

The practical import of this conclusion, as we proceed in Chapter Two to the domain of moral science and the role of demonstration in its development, is that the moral theologian must be expert in moral philosophy and the methods which are dictated by its special subject matter. This does not mean that theological demonstrations in moral matters are exactly the same as demonstrations in moral philosophy: there are differences, as we shall see, but at the same time there is a common procedure that is dictated by the common subject of investigation. In his sapiential function, particularly, the moral theologian must be capable of demonstrating and judging everything which comes under the consideration of the moral philosopher, which again underlines the importance of a thorough knowledge of moral methodology.

Thus in Chapter Two we begin an introductory treatment of the role of demonstration in moral science, considered from the viewpoint of reason alone, without the complicating influence of divine faith. Because moral science is a practical science, the burden of this Chapter is devoted to an explanation of the difference between practical and speculative science, in order to come to an understanding of how a demonstrative process can be used in a practical science, and the way in which such use differs from that to be found in a science that is purely speculative. This necessitates a full treatment of the methodologies of resolution and composition, together with the details of their employment in moral science, to supply the logical framework in which the demonstrative process is eventually located.

Once the general position of demonstration in moral science has been clarified, there are further problems which arise from the fact that moral science, while a practical science, is concerned with a much more complex subject matter than other practical sciences. Chapter Three is therefore de-

[20] *De hominis beatitudine*, Vol. I, p. 76.

voted to the peculiar difficulties associated with demonstrating in moral matters, particularly the contingency of human action and its effect on moral certitude, and the order of investigation dictated by the subject matter. St. Thomas' commentary on the *Nichomachean Ethics* is our major source for the solution of these problems. In the detailed analysis, consideration is given to the interplay between prudence and moral science in the direction of human action, as well as to the notion of practical truth and its special relation to the compositive process proper to a science of morals.

The background in moral methodology thus completed, we turn in Chapter Four to the proper consideration of moral theology. The demonstrative process in this part of sacred theology, which has a practical orientation from the very fact that it deals with man's *reditus* to God through his own operation, does not play exactly the same role as it does in the speculative method outlined in Chapter One. Rather demonstration is seen to occupy an intermediate position in the method of the moral theologian: on the one hand it terminates his speculative resolution, and on the other it serves as the starting point for his compositive process in the practical mode. Its position is somewhat similar to that of demonstration in moral philosophy, with differences dictated by the fact that it is also theological demonstration, and on that account is not to be identified with the purely rational process found in a natural ethics. The principle source used for this analysis, paralleling the use of the *Nichomachean Ethics* in Chapter Three, is the *Secunda Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*, generally regarded as Thomas' most original and brilliant contribution to the development of sacred theology, as well as the place where his adaptation of Aristotelian science is most fruitful for the advancement of Christian thought.[21]

Chapter Four thus begins with a detailed examination of the subject of demonstration in moral theology, and how this is related to the subject of demonstration in sacred theology, in general. The delineation of this subject enables us to contrast moral theology with moral philosophy at the sapiential level, and to propose, as a corollary, our solution to the currently discussed problem of "Christian moral philosophy."

In Chapter Five, a synthesis is then made of all the preceding materials, and full consideration given to the way in which demonstration is used to render intelligible the proximate subject of investigation in moral theology. The role of the demonstrative process is treated under the threefold aspect of speculative method, practical method, and the certitude attained through

[21] (La IIa *Pars* est) la contribution la plus originale de saint Thomas à la science théologique. *Il est certain qu'en cette création son génie brille du plus vif éclat.*"—T. Deman, *Aux origines de la théologie morale*, Montréal/Paris: 1951, p. 100.

the combined use of both. The discussion of speculative method permits a general indication of the manner and order of demonstrating in moral theology, which is seen to explain the structure of the *Secunda Pars* as a straightforward application of the methodological procedures of the *Posterior Analytics*. The treatment of practical method then details the compositive process implicit in, and necessary for the completion of, the treatment in the *Summa*. In so doing, it relates the habit of sacred theology to other habits of the supernatural order, and explains the precise way in which theology itself, as a habit of the speculative intellect, influences the production of the supernatural human act. An examination of casuistry and existential ethics, together with other applications in the practical mode such as the direction of souls and the teaching of moral theology, becomes possible at this point, and throws light on the motivation behind criticisms of Thomistic moral when it is viewed as a purely speculative science. Finally there is a discussion of the speculative and practical certitudes proper to moral theology, first as related to those of moral philosophy and the purely speculative parts of dogma, and then to the supernatural certitudes with which it is more closely associated, those namely of supernatural synderesis (faith as practical) and infused prudence.

The General Conclusion terminates the study and summarizes its results. The difficulties presented earlier are resolved in light of the principles developed, and some observations made on the superficial character of recent innovations in moral theology when compared with the profound insights of the Common Doctor.

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For the sake of uniformity, and out of consideration for American readers who are not versed in Latin or the continental languages, we have given all citations which occur in the body of the text in English. Translations are taken from approved sources, where available, and acknowledged in a note. When no reference is made to an English edition, the translation offered is our own; in those cases where the source cited might be inaccessible in this country, the original version is given completely in a footnote. Because of the technical nature of our study, we would advise those who are competent in Latin to have recourse to the original texts of St. Thomas and his commentators, for these alone are completely trustworthy when there is question of precision in meaning or interpretation.

Needless to say, this work is not offered as a definitive treatment of the role of demonstration in moral theology, even as it is employed in the *Secunda Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*. Such a study would entail a compendious analysis of all the arguments peculiar to the various tracts, and would exceed by far the bounds we have set for ourselves in this under-

taking. Our aim has rather been one of providing a preliminary study, very much needed at the moment, which can suggest answers to the simple but baffling questions proposed at the outset. In so doing, we have applied Thomistic methodological doctrine to general moral problems, only entering into the matter in sufficient detail to furnish some examples, and to show how such matter dictates the particular method that is employed. Throughout this study our intention has been merely one of clarifying some basic notions presupposed by St. Thomas to his development of the *Secunda Pars*, yet very much overlooked by our contemporaries, and whose re-discovery on that account may aid considerably in furnishing solutions to current methodological problems in moral theology. If we have succeeded in such an aim, while awaiting a more exhaustive treatment that could well be the fruit of years of further study, we shall be more than satisfied with the result of our contribution.

CHAPTER ONE

PROLEGOMENA ON DEMONSTRATION IN SACRED THEOLOGY

Sacred theology, as supreme wisdom and queen of the sciences, has demonstrative functions that are peculiarly its own and at the same time employs techniques of proof worked out in all the philosophical disciplines. Such manifold probative functions obviously put extreme demands on the theologian's knowledge of demonstration. The integral theologian must first of all be master of the philosophical sciences: he must know the intricacies of their distinctive methods of proof, and, most important, he must know the limitations inherent in each. Then, when he moves into his proper domain which is concerned with the truths of faith, he must employ the same skills which he has acquired in dealing with matters more proportioned to his intellect, in order to reason about the things of God. Revealed truth he can accept through the supernatural light of faith, but reasoning and demonstrating he can only do with the natural light of his intellect. His demonstrative skill as a theologian is measured directly by the demonstrative skill he can exercise in the matters of the lower sciences.

I. DEMONSTRATION IN THE SPECULATIVE SCIENCES

Since this limitation is inherent in the demonstrative process itself, we devote this first section to a summary of the Aristotelian-Thomistic doctrine on demonstration and its use in the philosophical sciences, preparatory to taking up, in the following sections, special problems which arise when dealing with the subject matter of sacred theology, and the various demonstrative techniques used as a consequence by the theologian. Reserving our study of practical science for the following Chapter, we speak here only of the speculative sciences, and this insofar as it will be of use in our later investigations.

A. THE NATURE AND KINDS OF DEMONSTRATION

Demonstration, precisely as a methodological instrument, lends itself easily to different modes of treatment. Naturally it pertains to the specialist in any particular subject matter to know how to demonstrate in that matter; in a more general way, it pertains to the metaphysician, in his sapien-

tial function, to delineate the various manners of attaining truth in the various sciences, and the certitude to be expected in each; and finally it pertains to the logician, in his teaching function, to indicate those aspects of demonstration which are common to all the sciences, and this because it is practically impossible for man to acquire a particular science and at the same time to reflect on the method he is using to acquire it.[1]

Proceeding then according to the order of learning, we shall first expose a few elements of logical doctrine on demonstration, taken mainly from St. Thomas' commentary on the *Posterior Analytics*, then treat briefly of the different manners of demonstrating in the various sciences, and lastly take up peculiarities of demonstration in sacred theology which are dictated by its special subject matter.

1. THE NOTION OF DEMONSTRATION

There are two classical definitions of demonstration, both given by Aristotle: one, taken from its final cause, throws considerable light on the other, which explains its material cause or the elements out of which it is formed.[2]

In terms of its end, or final cause, demonstration is a syllogism productive of science: *"demonstratio est syllogismus scientialis, idest faciens scire."*[3] Its purpose thus is to produce a perfect kind of knowledge, known as science or *"scire simpliciter."* Such knowledge is attained of any object when we know its cause, when we know that that cause is what makes the object to be what it is, and when we know therefore that the object could not be otherwise than it is.[4] It is produced by a syllogism: that is, by an artificial construct of the human mind, consisting of an arrangement of two propositions, or premises, which logically entail a third proposition, known as the conclusion.[5] These propositions, in turn, are composed of three terms, two of which are the subject and predicate of the conclusion, and the third of which is known as the middle term, which in some way expresses the cause or reason why the predicate is joined to the subject in the conclusion.[6] The syllogism itself is said to produce, or effect, science--*"faciens scire"*--in several ways: it functions as an efficient cause, insofar as the premises are instruments by which the agent intellect reduces the

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[1] *In II Meta.*, lect. 5, n. 335.
[2] *In I Anal.*, lect. 4, n. 2.
[3] *Ibid.*, n. 9.
[4] *Ibid.*, n. 4.
[5] *I-II*, 90, 1, ad 2. Cf. Aristotle, *Analytica Priora*, Bk. I, c. 25, 42a32.
[6] *In I Anal.*, lect. 31, n. 3. Cf. *ibid.*, lect. 15, n. 6; lect. 26, n. 2. Also: Aristotle, *Analytica Priora*, Bk. I, c. 25, 41b36, 42a30. For the causal content of the middle term, see *In II Anal.*, lect. 1, n. 8; lect. 7, n. 2; lect. 9, n. 2; lect. 19, nn. 2-3.

possible intellect from potency to act;[7] it gives the material cause, or matter contained in the conclusion;[8] and, in a certain way, it formally produces the science, insofar as the premises serve to specify the judgment reached in the conclusion.[9]

The material definition of demonstration follows logically from the end which it is designed to attain. Because it is to be the adequate and sufficient cause why the intellect assents to a truth not immediately known, it must be composed of premises that are true, primary, and immediate, better known than and prior to the conclusion, which is further related to them as effect to cause: "*ex propositionibus veris, primis et immediatis . . . notioribus, et prioribus, et causis conclusionis.*"[10] Since the cause must be proportioned to the effect, the premises must contain proper principles.[11] They must be prior and more known to us (*quoad nos*), and in the intellectual order as opposed to the order of sense; thus they must be universal propositions, not singular.[12] And insofar as they produce a conclusion that "could not be otherwise," or a necessary proposition, they must themselves be necessary.[13]

The demonstrative syllogism, by reason of its certitude and compelling evidence, is the most powerful reasoning instrument available to the human mind; in one act, it is capable of producing scientific knowledge.[14]

2. DIFFERENCES IN THE MIDDLE TERM

Further precisions about the nature and kinds of demonstration can be made by considering individually the components of which it is ultimately formed, the subject, predicate and middle term. Of these, the first two require only brief mention. The subject of a demonstrative syllogism will obviously have to be either the subject of the science or one of its parts, and can be either in the order of substance or of accident.[15] It will be either universal or particular, depending on whether or not it contains within itself the cause of a property (*passio*) and is convertible with it, but in no case can it be a singular which comes under the senses.[16] The predicate of the conclusion, similarly, will be said either in the order of

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[7] *In I Anal.*, lect. 3, n. 1. Cf. *In II Phys.*, lect. 5, n. 10; also *Quaes. Disp. de Anima*, a. 4, ad 6.

[8] *In II Phys.*, lect. 5, n. 9.

[9] John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus*, (ed. Reiser), Vol. I, p. 774.

[10] *In I Anal.*, lect. 4, n. 10.

[11] *Ibid.*, n. 11.

[12] *Ibid.*, n. 16. Cf. *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 4.

[13] *In I Anal.*, lect. 4, n. 7.

[14] *De Vir. in Com.*, a. 9, ad 11. Cf. *In I Anal.*, proem, n. 6.

[15] *In I Anal.*, lect. 15, n. 4; lect. 2, n. 5.

[16] *De demonstratione*, ed. Marietti, p. 221, n. 628; *In I Anal.*, lect. 44, n. 2.

quod quid est, which is that of substance, or will be in one of the nine genera of predicamental accidents; in more perfect demonstrations, it will express a strict property (*propria passio*) of the subject.[17]

The middle term itself contains the entire force of the demonstrative argument, and can undergo considerable variation.[18] In itself, however, it must be necessary and universal, and cannot be infinite in the sense that there must be a finite number of middle terms between any subject and predicate.[19] Related to the extremes, it must be of the same genus but prior and more known, may be convertible with them or not, and may be univocally or analogously common with them.[20] It must also be proportioned to them, in the sense that it must be something which happens regularly and always if they do, or something which happens only frequently if they themselves are of frequent occurrence.[21] But in any event, the connection between them must be always and universally true, and care must be taken in ordering the terms to remove the possibility of defect either through temporal sequence or through the failure of a cause which is prior in the order of generation.[22]

The diversity of middle terms allowable in a demonstrative syllogism is best approached by considering the types of questions that can be asked in a scientific inquiry. With respect to any subject of scientific knowledge basically only four questions are possible: 1) whether there *is* such a thing (*si est*); 2) *that* it is such and so (*quia*); 3) *what* it is (*quid est*); and 4) *why* it is such and so (*propter quid*).[23] The first two really ask if there is a middle term, while the last two ask what that middle term is, since they presuppose affirmative responses to the others.[24]

A demonstrative answer to the first question can only be given in terms of an effect that is more known to us, and which leads to a knowledge of the unknown subject, which in turn is the cause of the effect. Thus, it involves a middle term which is actually an effect in the order of

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[17] *In I Anal.*, lect. 33, n. 6; lect. 2, n. 2.

[18] *I-II*, 54, 2, ad 2; *In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 2, a. 1, ad 4. Cf. also: *De Ver.*, q. 14, a. 2, ad 9; *Q. D. de Caritate*, a. 13, ad 6; *II-II*, 1, 1.

[19] *In I Anal.*, lect. 13, n. 11; lect. 16, n. 7; lect. 35, n. 10.

[20] Oportet tale medium esse quod sit prius et notius: et hoc est vel genus vel definitio, quae non est sine genere. — *Ibid.*, lect. 26, n. 8; lect. 36, n. 6; lect. 22, n. 11; *In II Anal.*, lect. 19, n. 3.

[21] *In II Anal.*, lect. 12, n. 4.

[22] *In I Anal.*, lect. 16, n. 8.

[23] *In II Anal.*, lect. 1, n. 2. It should be noted that the expression "*quia*" is sometimes rendered in the tradition as "*an sit talis.*" Cf. *In II Anal.*, lect. 2, nn. 3, 6 and 7.

[24] *Ibid.*, lect. 1, n. 6.

being, although it functions as a cause to us in the order of knowing.[25]

The second question presupposes the existence of a subject and inquires whether it is of such and such a kind. In the case of things not obvious to the senses, a demonstrative answer to this can be given either in terms of an effect, or in terms of a remote cause—either in its own or in a subalternating genus—which is sufficient to establish the fact, without itself giving the reason why the fact is as it is. If the middle term is an effect, it may be convertible with the cause or not: in the former case, the demonstration may be converted from *quia* to *propter quid* merely by interchanging the predicate and the middle term.[26]

The third question leads to methodological complications. It inquires for the *quod quid est* of a subject, a thing which in itself can neither be demonstrated, nor shown by a definition.[27] It is possible, however, to take the *quod quid est* from a demonstration that demonstrates *propter quid*, but this is only true in the case of things that have a cause, and where one of the four causes can be demonstrated through a prior cause.[28] The possibility arises from the fact that, in things having four causes, one cause is in a certain way the cause of another; the order of demonstration is then from final cause, to efficient, to formal, to material, the *ratio* of each being taken from the one that precedes it.[29] With regard to the causes which are the same as the essence of the subject, i.e., the intrinsic causes—formal and material, this presents no special problem. With extrinsic causes, however, there can be a difficulty, as in the case of an efficient cause which can be impeded in its operation.[30] Such contingency can be circumvented methodologically by demonstrating *ex suppositione finis*, i.e., by supposing that the end or final cause is to be attained, and then showing what is necessarily entailed on the part of the agent and the other causes, *if* the end is to be attained.[31] In this way it is possible to arrange successive middle terms consisting of the final cause, the efficient cause and the formal cause of the subject, finally concluding to the material cause in the predicate.

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[25] *In I Anal.*, lect. 4, n. 16. Cf. also *I*, 2, 2, c., ad 2 and ad 3; *I*, 1, 7, ad 1; *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 4, ad 2; *In II Anal.*, lect. 8, n. 1.

[26] *In I Anal.*, lect. 23, nn. 3-7.

[27] *In II Anal.*, lect. 6, n. 10.

[28] *Ibid.*, lect. 7, n. 9; lect. 8, n. 11.

[29] "Manifestum est enim in rebus habentibus quatuor causas, quod una causa est quodammodo causa alterius."—*In II Anal.*, lect. 8, n. 3; Cf. *In I Anal.*, lect. 16, n. 5.

[30] *In II Anal.*, lect. 7, n. 2. Cf. *In II Phys.*, lect. 15, n. 2.

[31] "Ex suppositione autem finis sequitur quod sit id quod est ad finem, ut probatur in II Physicorum."—*In II Anal.*, lect. 7, n. 2. Cf. also n. 3; *In II Phys.*, lect. 15, nn. 2, 5 and 6.

From these elements, the *quod quid est* of the subject can be constructed, and this will be found to be the definition, differing only modally from a *propter quid* demonstration.[32]

The fourth question presupposes knowledge of the fact, and it searches for the reasoned fact, or *why* the fact is as it is. It terminates in the most perfect type of demonstration, in which the middle term expresses the *quid* or definition of the subject, and explains why or *propter quid* a particular property, stated in the predicate, inheres in the subject.[33]

Collecting then the various middle terms which are possible in answering the four types of scientific questions, we find that the middle term can be either an effect or a cause. If it is an effect, it will be either convertible or non-convertible with either extreme. If it is a cause, it may be any one of the four causes, and will be either proper or remote. If it is remote, it may be remote in the same genus as the subject, or in a subalternating genus. If it is proper, it may be such that it always operates absolutely and indefectibly, or that its operation can in fact be actually impeded; but, in the latter case, the operation must be necessary at least when considered *ex suppositione finis*.

3. THE COMPARISON OF DEMONSTRATIONS

The foregoing possibilities obviously make for a wide variety of demonstrations, some of which are more perfect than others in their ability to generate scientific knowledge. We shall mention here only two hierarchical arrangements of the resulting types, one based on their general order of preference, and the second based on the certitudes which they engender in the various sciences.

In general, a demonstration whose middle term is a cause, known as a demonstration *a priori*, is better (*potior*) than one whose middle term is an effect, known as a demonstration *a posteriori*.[34] Among *a priori* demonstrations, those which answer the fourth type of scientific question and whose middle term is a *quid*, and known as demonstrations *propter quid*, are better than those which answer the second type of question, which are known as demonstrations *quia*.[35] And among *propter quid* demonstrations, those which have a universal subject, known as universal demonstrations, are preferable to those which have a particular subject, known as particular demonstrations. Similarly, in general those which have an affirmative

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[32] *In II Anal.*, lect. 9, n. 2; *In I Anal.*, lect. 36, n. 5.

[33] *In I Anal.*, lect. 10, n. 8. Cf. also lect. 2, n. 2; lect. 13, n. 3; lect. n. 23.

[34] *De demonstratione*, ed. Marietti, p. 221, n. 627.

[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 221-222, nn. 627-633.

predicate are better than the corresponding types which have a negative predicate. And finally, a demonstration which manifests its conclusion directly, known as a demonstration *ostensiva*, is better than one which manifests it indirectly, known as a demonstration *ducens ad impossibile*.[36]

As to the sciences which are the effect of demonstrations, one can be said to be more certain than another in three ways. First, a science which has knowledge that is both *quia* and *propter quid* is prior and more certain (*prior et certior*) than one which has knowledge only *quia*. Secondly, a science which does not deal with sensible matter as its subject is more certain than one which does deal with such matter: thus the *scientiae mediae*,[37] which apply mathematical principles to sensible matter, are less certain than the purely mathematical sciences, which abstract completely from sensible matter. And lastly, a science which has fewer factors to take into account, a science *ex paucioribus*, is more certain than one which takes account of many factors, a science *ex additione*; thus—and the example is important—arithmetic is more certain than geometry.[38]

With regard to these hierarchical arrangements, one point is especially worthy of emphasis. *All* demonstrations and *all* sciences, if they are properly so-called and fulfill the conditions already enumerated, result in a perfect type of knowing that is completely certain: *"quod non possit aliter se habere."* The fact that some demonstrations are said to be *more* perfect than others, or some sciences *more* certain, should not therefore be interpreted to mean that the inferior sciences lack complete certitude.[39] Rather, as Cajetan has stressed, demonstration is merely an instrument of our intellect by which we proceed from premises which are more certain *quoad nos* to conclusions which are certain *quoad se*.[40] The certitude *quoad nos* permits of varying degrees depending on the simplicity of the matter which we are considering, but the certitude *quoad se* of the conclusion

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[36] *In I Anal.*, lect. 37, n. 2; Cf. lects. 37-40.

[37] This is obviously not the *"scientia media"* invoked by Molina to explain God's knowledge of *futurabilia*. For the Aristotelian-Thomistic use of the term, see *In I Anal.*, lect. 41, n. 3; *In II Phys.*, lect. 3, n. 8; *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 3, ad 6.

[38] *In I Anal.*, lect. 41, nn. 2-4. The importance of the latter example derives from the fact that the highest certitude is attributed by St. Thomas to the mathematical sciences (*"omnimoda certitudo"—In I Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 36), and yet here he countenances a diversity even within mathematical certitudes.

[39] Esse minus certa vel minus firma non est idem ac esse non-certa vel infirma. Sunt res toto coelo differentes. Ex hoc, quod homo est minus intelligens quam angelus vel Deus, non licet concludere: ergo homo non est intelligens. . . ."—J. M. Ramírez, "De certitudine spei christianae," *CT* 57 (1938) p. 364.

[40] Thomas de Vio Cajetanus, *Commentaria in Posteriora Analytica Aristotelis*, Liber I, cap. 3, ed. Babin et Baumgaertner, pp. 49-63.

manifests a uniform type of necessity. Thus there need be no enigma involved in such comparisons of demonstrations, so long as the subjective and objective orders are properly distinguished.

Another consideration that may throw light on the Thomistic interpretation of "more perfect" and "more certain" is the following. All demonstrations are perfect in the sense that they put the mind at rest with regard to a particular question being asked, but some are preferable to others in the sense that they not only answer the particular question, but put the mind at rest even with respect to asking *further* questions. Similarly, all sciences are certain in the sense that they yield certain answers to the questions they legitimately ask about their subject matters, but some are more certain than others in the sense that they attain their certitude more universally and are certain about *more* things.

By way of example, a demonstration *quia* which establishes an *an sit* through a non-convertible effect, such as the demonstration of the existence of God, is absolutely certain and leaves no room for doubt about the *an sit;* yet it leaves other questions unanswered, such as the *quomodo sit,* the *quid sit,* and the *propter quid*. A universal affirmative and direct demonstration *propter quid,* on the other hand, while likewise establishing its conclusion with absolute certitude, implicitly answers at one and the same time the *an sit,* the *quia,* the *quid* and the *propter quid*, and thus yields the most preferable (*potissima*) kind of demonstrative knowledge possible. Likewise a science which knows the causes as well as the effects, and among the causes knows those which are more formal and confer a greater unity to its knowledge, is more certain than a science limited only to *quia* demonstrations about special aspects of a given matter.[41] The latter attains complete certitude about what it does demonstrate, nonetheless; the former is *more* certain only in the sense that it adds to certitude of the fact, another certitude as to why that fact is as it is, which makes it in a sense *doubly* certain of its conclusion.

Thus the various perfections associated with demonstrations and the various certitudes attributed to the speculative sciences in no way affect the intrinsic value of the conclusions reached. One demonstration is more perfect than another in the sense that it either is a more perfect instrument for our intellects, or demonstrates more in the conclusion that it proves, just as one science is more certain than another in the sense that it makes *us* either more certain, or certain about more things. This conclusion has important ramifications for resolving difficulties about the difference between physical and metaphysical demonstration, as we are now about to see.

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[41] Cf. *In I Anal.*, lect. 41, n. 5.

B. THE MANNER OF DEMONSTRATING IN THE SPECULATIVE SCIENCES

From the foregoing it should be apparent that the qualifications "physical" and "metaphysical" as applied to demonstration are not *per se* differences of demonstration as such. The *per se* varieties of demonstration follow directly from the nature of demonstration, as we have already shown; these, together with the common properties of demonstration, which can be verified in any science whatsoever, are themselves demonstrated in the rational science of *logica demonstrativa docens*. The question of physical *vs.* metaphysical demonstration is really a question about the use of demonstration in physics and metaphysics, and pertains to *logica demonstrativa utens*, which itself is identified with the methodology of the various real sciences.[42] Preparatory to explaining this distinction in terms of the details of that use, we give here a few preliminaries about the specification of the speculative sciences, restricting our remarks to the human sciences, since we reserve the treatment of theological or divine science for a following section.

1. OBJECT AND SUBJECT AS RELATED TO SCIENCE

St. Thomas and the older Thomistic commentators, when speaking of sciences and their specification, tend to favor the logical terminology of Aristotle in the *Posterior Analytics*, and thus distinguish sciences on the basis of their subjects, rather than on the basis of their objects, as is now the more common practice in scholastic manuals. The connection between the two ways of proceeding will be delineated here in summary fashion in order to supply a technical background for the understanding of Thomistic texts, as well as to eliminate confusions that might arise from differences in terminological usage.

Science itself is a type of knowledge, a *"cognitio rei per propriam causam"*:[43] it is located in the category of intellectual knowledge, as opposed to sense knowledge, and within this category it is characterized as mediate intellectual knowledge, as opposed to the immediate knowledge of concepts and first principles, insofar as it is acquired through the prior knowledge of principles or causes. As a type of intellectual knowledge it can be further considered as the act itself by which knowledge is acquired, or as the habit of mind resulting from one or more such acts.[44] And apart from the act and the habit, the body of knowledge which is known by one possessing the habit—the body of truths and conclusions attained—is also

[42] *In IV Meta.*, lect. 4, n. 577.
[43] *C. Gent.*, I, 94.
[44] *Ibid.*, II, 60.

said to constitute the science.[45] It should be noted, perhaps, that the latter way of speaking about science is based on a more logical view, since it envisages science as an ensemble of rational entities in the mind of the one knowing, whereas the designations of science as an act or a habit is based on a more psychological view, since it explains how science is generated as a real entity in the mind, without direct emphasis on the *entia rationis* associated with the act or the habit.

When a psychological analysis of any act of knowing is made, the act itself is said to be specified by its object, because this is what confronts the mind, or is "thrown against" (= *ob-iectum*) the mind when something is actually known. In this object, St. Thomas makes the distinction between what is formal and what is material: the former is the aspect under which the object is related to the knowing faculty, while the latter is that which underlies this aspect.[46] In the classical example of the faculty of sight, the formal object is thus said to be color or the colored, while the material object is said to be the body in which the color is seen. And the formal object is further distinguished into two aspects: that which is attained by the knowing faculty, or the *objectum formale quod*, and that by which it is attained, or the *objectum formale quo*.[47] Again in the example of sight, the formal object *quod* is said to be color, as that which is seen as such, while the formal object *quo* is said to be light, as that by which color is made visible, and therefore able to be attained by the sense of sight.[48]

Applying this terminology to the act of knowing which is characteristic of science, the object of a science will be seen to be that at which the act of scientific knowing terminates, which, in turn, as we have already seen, is the result of the demonstration which is proper to the science. This terminating object will ultimately be some singular thing which exists in extramental reality, but since the knowing act itself is a judgment, even though a mediate one, the knowledge attained will be expressed by the mind as a complex entity composed of subject and predicate.[49] The latter complex entity is the matter which is known, and can be spoken of as the material object of the science; the formal aspect under which it is known is the middle term of the demonstration which produces the assent to the conclusion.[50] This formal aspect of the science, also known as the *ratio formalis*, corresponds to a *ratio scibilis* in the extramental object itself, but

[45] *Ibid.*, I, 48; I, 56.
[46] *Q. D. de Caritate*, q. un., a. 4.
[47] Capreolus, *Defensiones*, Prol. Sent., q. 4, a. 1, 3ª concl.
[48] Cf. *De Ver.*, q. 14, a. 8, ad 4.
[49] Capreolus, Prol. Sent., q. 4, a. 1, 1ª concl.
[50] *Q. D. de Caritate*, q. un., a. 13, ad 6; *II-II*, 1, 1.

it indicates more precisely the aspect under which the object of the science is viewed insofar as it is an object of the knowing act.[51] The formal object *quod* of the science is then that which is attained by this knowing act, while the formal object *quo* is the particular intellectual light by which it is attained, after the analogy of visual knowledge already mentioned.

Because of the complexity of this terminology, it will be well to illustrate its use in a concrete case by means of an example. Thus, in the science of natural philosophy, the object of any scientific act of knowing, which is an act of demonstrating, is the conclusion demonstrated; the conclusion itself, however, is merely the material object of the science, and refers further to another material object: the extramental natural being which is endowed with the attribute predicated in the conclusion. The *ratio scibilis* of the latter extramental entity, in natural philosophy, consists in the fact that it is *ens mobile*, or changeable being. The *ratio formalis* of the scientific act of knowing, on the other hand, is the middle term of the demonstration, which will be a middle taken from sensible matter and change; through this *ratio formalis*, the formal object *quod* attained is knowledge of *ens mobile* precisely as it is *mobile*, while the formal object *quo* through which it is attained is the abstractive light of the intellect, by which it leaves aside individual matter and considers only sensible matter and motion, otherwise known as that of the first degree of abstraction.[52]

The expression, "object of a science," is thus proper whenever one is talking about the knowledge act involved in scientific knowing, and consequently, about the intellectual habit which is produced by one or more such acts. When, by way of contrast, attention is focussed on the knowledge which is the result of such acts, or what is known in the science which results when such objects are attained, then it is more proper to speak of the "subject" of the science. This view, as we have already observed, is more logical than psychological: it considers the object confronting the mind as the *subject* of various operations in the order of demonstration. Thus the expression, "subject of a science," means that about which the scientist seeks to learn, or that to which predicates are applied in the science through mediate judgments, or that about which there is demonstration which is proper to the science.[53]

St. Thomas himself compares the subject of a science to the object of a habit: *"sic se habet subiectum ad scientiam, sicut obiectum ad potentiam*

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[51] Capreolus, Prol. Sent., q. 4, a. 1, 3ª concl.

[52] Cf. Capreolus, Prol. Sent., q. 4, aa. 1-2, *passim*. Also: *In I Phys.*, lect. 1, nn. 2-3; *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1.

[53] Capreolus, Prol. Sent., q. 4, a. 1, 4ª concl.

vel habitum."[54] And, in another text, he explains this relationship more fully as follows:

> The subject has at least three comparisons to a science. The first is that whatever is in the science must be contained under the subject. . . . The second comparison is that knowledge of the subject is principally intended in the science. . . . The third comparison is that through the subject the science is distinguished from all others. . . .[55]

The first aspect here mentioned is that under which the subject is sometimes called the *genus subiectum:* as such, it is simply the genus of things which the scientist comes to know in a more and more perfect manner through the development of the science.[56] The second comparison points out the fact that within this genus, there will be one subject which will be principally studied in the science. This is sometimes called the *subiectum attributionis,* insofar as it refers to the subject to which all else that is studied will be ultimately referred. In natural philosophy, for example, this will be the natural composite, or *corpus mobile,* which is the first and proper subject of change; many other subjects will be studied, such as the finite and the infinite, change itself, time, place, etc., but all will ultimately be referred to the primary natural entity which is principal within the genus, and to the knowledge of which all else is ordained.[57] And finally, the third comparison of St. Thomas has reference to the subject as constituting a *genus scibile:* it is nothing more than the subject, or *genus subiectum,* considered under the *ratio formalis* characteristic of demonstration in the science.[58] It is this which specifies the science, in a way similar to that in which the formal object, and its corresponding *ratio scibilis,* specify the act and the habit of knowing by which the science is produced.[59] It is this latter aspect of the subject which will now concern us, as we proceed to the discussion of the specification of the sciences.

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[54] *I,* 1, 7.

[55] *In I Sent.,* prol. q. 1, a. 4.

[56] For other references to the *genus subiectum,* see: *In Boeth. de Trin.,* q. 5, a. 4; *In V Meta.,* lect. 22, nn. 1123-1124; *In I Anal.,* lect. 15, nn. 3-6; lect. 17, n. 3; lect. 18, nn. 6, 9; lect. 41, n. 7; lect. 42, n. 1. Cf. also: *Proem. in Meta.,* ed. Marietti, p. 1.

[57] Cf. Capreolus, Prol. Sent., q. 3, a. 1, 2ª concl.; q. 4, a. 2, ad arg. contra 5am et 6am concl. Also St. Thomas: *In I Sent.,* prol. q. 1, a. 4, ad 1. Ramirez has a brief mention of *subiectum inhaesionis, subiectum praedicationis* and *subiectum attributionis* in his: *De hominis beatitudine,* I, 45; cf. also p. 43.

[58] Cf. *In I Anal.,* lect. 41, nn. 12-13.

[59] *In III Sent.,* d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, qla. 1.

Because of the logical orientation of this study, we shall henceforth speak more of the subjects of sciences than of their objects, and unless otherwise qualified, the *genus subiectum*, or subject considered in a general way, will be what is meant when the term "subject" is used.[60]

2. THE DISTINCTION OF THE SCIENCES

The subject of a human science, then, according to the Thomistic commentary on the *Posterior Analytics*, must fulfill two conditions: it must be something which has prior principles, known as the principles of the subject; and it must have parts and passions which belong to it *per se*. Yet the distinction of the sciences, as we have already intimated, does not arise precisely from a diversity of subjects, but rather from a diversity of principles or of formal considerations which can be found in a subject. Thus, for the unity of a science, it is necessary to have one *genus subiectum* which is viewed under one formal light or way of considering, whereas for the distinction of sciences, it suffices to have a diversity of principles.[61]

All human sciences have their origin in sense knowledge, and all therefore commence with the same material objects. The differentiation of the sciences comes about from the different ways of demonstrating properties of these objects, and this in turn is traceable to the different middle terms or definitions which are employed.[62] Natural philosophy, in line with what we have already indicated, takes as its subject those things whose being depends on sensible matter and which cannot be defined without sensible matter. Thus it is said to be concerned with changeable being, since change is associated with sensible matter, and its formal consideration is of changeable being precisely as changeable, which is its *genus scibile*. Mathematics, on the other hand, takes as its subject those things whose being depends on sensible matter, but which can be defined without sensible matter. It is said to be concerned with quantified being, since quantity can be understood without the qualities which are associated with sensible matter, and its formal consideration is that of being precisely as quantified, in turn its *genus scibile*.[63]

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[60] We make this observation in order to clarify the formal aspect of our usage. In many contexts, the terms "subject" and "object" can be used interchangeably. Cf. Capreolus: "Verumtamen quandoque unum ponitur pro alio, quia etiam subiectum est obiectum scientiae ultimatum, scilicet ad quod terminatur actus studenti. . . ." Prol. Sent., q. a. 1, 2ª concl.

[61] *In I Anal.*, lect. 41, n. 10.

[62] Cf. *I-II*, 54, 2, ad 2.

[63] *In I Phys.*, lect. 1, nn. 2-3. Cf. also *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1; *In I Anal.*, lect. 41, n. 12.

This would seem to exhaust the possibilities of sciences arising from sensible matter. Yet there can be a third science also. In the elaboration of natural philosophy it is demonstrated that, apart from entities involving sensible matter, there exist other entities which are incorporeal, and which are known as separated substances insofar as they are separated from sensible matter completely.[64] Given this knowledge, it is possible to take another *genus subiectum*, this time of things whose being and definition are both independent of sensible matter.[65] This is the subject of metaphysics, which is called such because we come to its knowledge through physics. It is concerned with the common notion of being, prescinding from differences found in material and immaterial beings, and its formal consideration is that of being precisely as being, which is its *genus scibile*.[66] But it is impossible, on the other hand, for a human science to take separated substance as its *genus subiectum*, because in this case neither of the requirements for a subject are fulfilled: separated substance has no prior principles which are known to us, nor does it have parts, being apprehended by us as simple.[67]

These then are the three speculative sciences—physics, mathematics, and metaphysics—each with its own subject and its own proper principles. There yet remains one more possibility, this arising not from another *genus subiectum* apart from the above, but from a diversity of proper principles. Thus mathematical physics can be a *scientia media* between physics and mathematics, insofar as it takes sensible matter as its subject, but considers it under the light of mathematical principles, and thereby attains a *genus scibile* intermediate between that of physics and mathematics. This situation gives rise to a subalternation of speculative sciences, where mathematical physics is subalternated to mathematics, and physics is subalternated to mathematical physics. In such subalternation, it is noteworthy that the subalternating science demonstrates *propter quid* the principles which

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[64] Natural philosophy demonstrates the existence of a first unmoved Mover, and the immortality of the human soul, which becomes a separated substance at the death of the composite; it does not, however, demonstrate the existence of angels. Cf. *In VII Phys.*, lect. 2; *In III de Anima*, lect. 10. For the utility of the treatment of the soul to the study of metaphysics, see *In I de Anima*, lect. 1, n. 7.

[65] *In VI Meta.*, lect. 1, n. 1170.

[66] "Dicitur metaphysica, id est trans physicam, quia post physicam discenda occurrit nobis, quibus ex sensibilibus oportet in insensibilia devenire."—*In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1; cf. also a. 4; q. 6, a. 1, sol. 3; *Proem. in Meta.*, ed. Marietti, p. 2. For a clear statement of Thomistic doctrine, see W. H. Kane, "The Subject of Metaphysics," *Thom.* 18 (1955), 503-521.

[67] *In I Anal.*, lect. 41, n. 8. But note that separated substance is studied in metaphysics as the principle of its subject; cf. *Proem. in Meta.*; *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 4.

the subalternated science applies, *in turn*, in order to get *quia* knowledge of its subject.[68]

3. PROCEDURES OF THE VARIOUS SCIENCES

Simplest of all the pure sciences from a methodological point of view, and disposable in a few words on that account, is the science of mathematics. This has for its subject an accidental being, quantity, whose terminations are apprehended directly in sense knowledge, and which are likewise imaginable. For this reason, the quiddities of numbers and figures, the proper subjects respectively of arithmetic and geometry, are quickly grasped, and their properties can be demonstrated with great rigor and simplicity of proof. Arithmetic, which abstracts from both time and place, is even simpler than geometry, which abstracts only from time and considers objects *in* place, and thus is more certain than geometry and more easily learned, even by the very young.[69]

Physics, or natural philosophy, does not permit of such brief treatment. Like all sciences, it must treat of the principles, causes and elements of its proper subject, which we have already indicated to be changeable being. These are not given at the outset, and thus they must be reasoned to *a posteriori* from an effect which is more known to us, viz., motion or change. This does not mean, however, that the physicist always demonstrates *a posteriori*: when he has established his principles and determined the appropriate causes of various changes, he can demonstrate *a priori* and even *propter quid*. Thus when he has ascertained the formal cause of motion itself, he can demonstrate its material cause or proper subject, as when he shows *propter quid* that motion is in the moved, and not in the mover as such.[70] Likewise, from appropriate definitions he can ascertain the proper subjects of the various species of motion, and of time and place. But since in the world of nature we come to know effects more readily than their causes, he frequently employs *a posteriori* demonstration to uncover hidden causes, which then serve for the more perfect elaboration of his science.[71]

A more striking characteristic is that the natural philosopher normally

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[68] *In I Anal.*, lect. 25, n. 2 sqq.; lect. 41, n. 3.

[69] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1, sol. 2; cf. *In I Anal.*, lect. 41, n. 4.

[70] *In III Phys.*, lect. 4, n. 1.

[71] *In II de Anima*, lect. 3, n. 245. We have treated the subject of demonstrative methodology in natural philosophy at greater length in an article entitled: "Some Demonstrations in the Science of Nature," *The Thomist Reader*, 1 (1957), pp. 90-118; the reader will find there many examples, and complete references. Cf. M. A. Glutz, C. P., *The Manner of Demonstrating in Natural Philosophy*, River Forest, Illinois: 1956.

proceeds in his reasoning from one thing to another that is really distinct from it.[72] Sometimes the second thing is completely extrinsic to the first, as when he reasons from the moved to the mover, in demonstrating *propter quid* that whatever is moved is moved by another.[73] This need not always be the case, however, for he frequently reasons from one thing to another which is within the same composite, but is really distinct from the first. For instance, he thus reasons from substantial form to prime matter, and from motion to its proper subject, the thing moved, both of which are really distinct from each other, but found within the same composite. And even in this case, he is not always limited to this type of process: he can treat of things that are only rationally distinct, as for instance, when he reasons from motion to action or to passion, both of which, while really distinct from each other, are distinguished from motion by a mere distinction of reason.[74]

But the most distinctive trait of the natural philosopher's procedure, and the one which serves to distinguish it most clearly from that of the mathematician and the metaphysician, is that it is concerned with *natural* things, all of which act for an *end* determined by nature, and that it therefore demonstrates most properly through the final cause. St. Thomas, commenting on the role of the material and the final cause in natural philosophy, thus observes:

> The philosopher of nature should give each cause, namely the material and the final, but more the final because the end is the cause of the matter but the opposite is not true. It is not true that the end is such because the matter is such, rather the matter is such because the end is such, as was said.[75]

Going on to explain how the necessity which is found in the generation of natural things is to be accommodated to the necessity of a demonstrative syllogism in natural philosophy, and even to the definition which can be taken from such a demonstration, he says:

> It is clear that the principle of demonstration in the demonstrative sciences is the definition; likewise the end which is the principle and reason of necessity in those things which come to be according to nature is a principle taken from the reason and

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[72] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1, sol. 1, ad 3.
[73] *In VII Phys.*, lect. 1, n. 6.
[74] *In III Phys.*, lect. 5, n. 10.
[75] *In II Phys.*, lect. 15, n. 5. (trans. R. A. Kocourek, p. 159)

> the definition because the end of generation is the form of the species which the definition signifies. . . .
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> Therefore because in those things which come to be for an end the end is like the principle in the demonstrative sciences and those things which are for the end are like the conclusion, so also we find in the definition of natural things that which is necessary because of the end. . . . Therefore just as the definition which brings together in itself the principle and conclusion of demonstration is the whole demonstration, so also the definition bringing together the end, the form and the matter comprehends the whole process of natural generation.[76]

The characteristic procedure of the natural philosopher is to observe the operations of nature to see what ends are attained regularly and for the most part, and then using these ends as final causes, to reason to the efficient, formal and material causes which are necessarily entailed in their realization. In so doing, he must be wary of the efficient cause, which can be impeded in the operations of nature, and therefore he can never reason from an efficient cause to an effect produced, although he can always reason from the effect back to the efficient cause.[77] Precisely because of this limitation inherent in his subject matter, he most frequently uses the methodological device of demonstrating *ex suppositione finis,* which we have already mentioned.

The metaphysician's procedure differs quite markedly from that of the natural philosopher. Actually he does not demonstrate as much as the physicist, but gives himself over to the sapiential functions appropriate to his science, explicating and defending the concepts with which he deals as well as the principles on which the lower sciences are based. But he does demonstrate nevertheless. At the very beginning of his science, for instance, he must do in an eminent way what the natural philosopher has already done in preliminary fashion, namely, elaborate the *a posteriori* demonstrations which enable him to define his subject and separate it from the confused notion of being which is the first concept known to reason. He must also demonstrate *a posteriori,* from effects in sensible matter, in order to establish the principles of his subject, and to delineate all that is involved in the notion of separated substance. In these demonstrations, it should be noted, he proceeds from one thing to another that

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[76] *Ibid.,* n. 6 (trans., pp. 160-161).

[77] We refer here to effects that are not *simul* with their cause. Cf. *In II Anal.,* lect. 10, nn. 3, 7 and 9.

is really distinct and substantially separated from it, as for example when he demonstrates from effects in matter the existence of separated substance.[78]

The more distinctive feature of the metaphysician's procedure, however, comes when he demonstrates the attributes of his proper subject and of its first principle. Here, because of the very eminence of these entities, he proceeds in his demonstrations from one concept to another concept which is only rationally distinct from it. Thus, when he deduces the transcendentals from the notion of being, or when he is explicating the properties of *unum* and *multum,* he is discoursing about one reality in terms of concepts differing only by a distinction of reason. And when he discourses about the attributes of God, the First Principle of his science, even though he uses concepts which correspond to things which are really distinct in the created order, he knows that this is only because of the weakness of his intellect, and that actually all the divine attributes differ from the divine essence by a mere distinction of reason. Thus, even when he here demonstrates *a priori* and *propter quid,* he is not using a cause in the formal and proper sense of the term, there being no causality in the Uncaused, but is employing a middle term that has, for us, the virtuality of a cause, insofar as it gives us a proper reason which we can understand.[79]

4. PHYSICAL AND METAPHYSICAL DEMONSTRATION

From this brief description of the use of demonstration in physics and metaphysics, it will be apparent that it is no simple matter to characterize the sense in which physical demonstration is opposed to metaphysical demonstration. The most proper distinction between the two is probably that taken from the point of view of use in a general way: thus a physical demonstration is a demonstration in physics, while a metaphysical demonstration is a demonstration in metaphysics. And, in view of the different subjects of these sciences, this can be made more precise by saying that a physical demonstration is one concerning natural or changeable being as its subject, while a metaphysical demonstration is one concerning being in common (or its principle) as its subject.[80]

Any attempt to go farther in this precision in terms of a difference which is *per se* with respect to demonstration itself meets with difficulties.

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[78] *In Boeth de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1, sol. 3; also aa. 2-4 and a. 4 ad 2.

[79] Cajetan, *Comm. in Post. Anal.*, Liber I, cap. 2, ed. Babin et Baumgaertner, p. 36; John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Phil.*, Logica, p. II, q. 25, a. 1.

[80] St. Thomas uses the expression "physical demonstration" in this sense: "Firmiter tenendum est mundum non semper fuisse, sicut fides catholica docet. Nec hoc potest aliqua *physica demonstratione* efficaciter impugnari."—*De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 17.

To say, for instance, that physical demonstration is *a posteriori* while metaphysical demonstration is *a priori* neglects the fact that many physical demonstrations are *a priori* and some metaphysical demonstrations are *a posteriori*. Likewise, to hold that physical demonstration is *quia* while metaphysical is *propter quid* neglects the fact that many physical demonstrations are *propter quid* and some metaphysical are *quia*. Better than either of these is to maintain that physical demonstration discourses to predicates that are really distinct from the middle term, while metaphysical demonstration discourses to predicates that are only rationally distinct from the middle. This has the advantage that it is true in most cases, although there are exceptions: some physical demonstrations reason to predicates only rationally distinct, while some metaphysical reason to predicates really distinct. Best of all, perhaps, because based on a difference intrinsic in the subject matter, is to hold that physical demonstration frequently discourses *ex suppositione finis*, while metaphysical always discourses absolutely and never *ex suppositione finis*. But note even here that not all physical demonstrations are *ex suppositione finis;* some are absolute, as for example in the demonstration that every material being is corruptible.[81]

Relevant to this problem, Boethius wrote in his *De Trinitate* the following cryptic evaluation of methodology in the speculative sciences:

> We ought therefore to proceed according to the mode of reason in natural science, according to the mode of learning in mathematics, and according to the mode of intellect in divine science.[82]

St. Thomas, in his commentary on this text, explains the sense in which it is true, and is careful to point out in each case that Boethius' designation is said of a science "not because it is true of it alone, but because it is especially characteristic of it."[83] He does, however, in answer to an objection, make the following statement:

> The method of reason is maintained in all the sciences in so far as they proceed from one concept to that which is other according to reason, but not in the sense that they go from one thing to another thing. That is proper to natural science, as has been said.[84]

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[81] *In II Anal.*, lect. 9, n. 12; cf. also n. 4.

[82] Boethius' Latin text is given in the Marietti edition of *In Boeth. de Trin.*, p. 378. Cf. Maurer's translation, p. 46.

[83] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1 (trans. Maurer, p. 53).

[84] *Ibid.*, sol. 1, ad 3 (p. 53).

Some theologians, primarily interested in the problem of the definability of theological conclusions, have understood this text to mean that physical demonstration *exclusively* discourses from one subject to another. This, perhaps, would not be so serious if they did not deduce a further consequence: since, in the order of nature there is a possibility of error in going from one subject to another, because nature is contingent and its laws are not inviolable, the certitude of a physical demonstration is only *conditional* or *relative*.[85] Thus they effectively eliminate physical demonstration from strict theological science on the grounds that it does not generate the type of absolute certitude they would like to have for definability.[86]

This interpretation of Thomistic doctrine, it should be observed, has more than academic interest here, for, as the same theologians insist, what is said of physical demonstration is no less true of demonstrations in moral matters.[87] Therefore, if conceded, it places moral theology in a very sub-

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[85] E.g., P. Marin-Sola: "La certitude des sciences métaphysiques et mathématiques est une certitude absolue, inconditionelle, objectivement infaillible. . . . Essentiellement distincte est la certitude des sciences ou des conclusions physiques. Ici la certitude n'est pas absolue, mais conditionnelle ou relative, elle ne se fonde pas sur l'essence des choses, mais sur la régularité des lois qui régissent l'univers." —*L'évolution homogène du dogme catholique*, 2 ed., Fribourg: 1924, Vol. I, 33-34.

"Saint Thomas a condensé en quelques mots toute cette doctrine. A l'objection qu'il se fait à lui-même qu'en toute vraie science il doit y avoir un raisonnement proprement dit ou passage d'une chose à une autre (de uno in aliud), il répond: 'In omnibus *scientiis* servatur quantum ad hoc modus *rationis* quod procedatur *de uno in aliud secundum rationem*, non autem quod procedatur *de una re in aliam*: sed hoc est *proprium naturalis scientiae*.'" (Italics Marin-Sola's)—*Ibid.*, p. 38.

[86] "Nous allons essayer, dans cette section, de montrer que ce raisonnement physico-connexe n'est pas, en toute rigueur, un raisonnement théologique, qu'il ne conclut pas en théologie; qu'il ne constitue pas un virtuel théologique ou révélé; qu'il n'est pas nécessairement connexe avec la majeure révélée dont on le déduit. Et si ce n'est pas un virtuel révélé ou théologique, s'il n'est pas nécessairement connexe avec la dépôt de la révélation, il sera encore moins objet d'infaillibilité, et, à plus forte raison, ne saurait être défini comme objet de foi divine."—*Ibid.*, p. 105.

"Dieu peut suppléer par lui-même toute action ou tout effet des causes secondes efficientes, comme il le fait dans tout miracle, donnant ainsi un démenti à la soi-disant *démonstration physique*, qui n'est jamais une démonstration rigoureuse, n'étant pas une démonstration par essence ou par le *quod quid est* de la cause ou de l'effet." (Italics Marin-Sola's)—*Ibid.*, p. 148.

[87] "Dans les sciences métaphysiques et mathématiques, les mineures sont toujours des mineures essentielles ou conceptuelles, dont le prédicat est implicitement contenu dans l'essence ou l'analyse du sujet. . . . Par contre, dans les sciences physiques *ou morales*, les mineures ne sont pas essentielles, mais accidentelles: le prédicat ne se trouve jamais essentiellement inclus dans le sujet: il est toujours extérieur à l'essence du sujet." (Italics mine)—*Ibid.* p. 35.

"Dans les sciences métaphysiques ou mathématiques, le progrès est homogène, c'est un progrès d'évolution analytique. Dans les sciences physiques *ou morales*, le progrès est hétérogène, c'est un progrès par addition extrinsèque." (Italics mine)—*Ibid.* p. 36.

ordinate position indeed, severely restricting as it does the certitude which accompanies the moralist's demonstrations.

For the moment, because of the properly theological character of some of the problems involved, we shall not attempt a complete refutation of this position, but shall merely insist upon two points. First, it is not true that physical demonstration exclusively discourses from one subject to another. It is true that St. Thomas says that this "is proper to natural science," but he adds, as these writers overlook, "as has been said,"[88] and in the body of the article clearly states:

> Consequently we say that natural science proceeds rationally, not because this is true of it alone, but because it is especially characteristic of it.[89]

Secondly, even if it were true that physical demonstration exclusively discourses from one subject to another, this in no way affects the certitude of its conclusion, provided it concludes properly. A demonstration which concludes to something "*quod aliter potest se habere*,"[90] or, in other words, does not give absolute certitude of its conclusion, is not really a demonstration. Degrees of certitude in science and in demonstration, as we have already pointed out,[91] in no way affect the intrinsic value of what is established in each. To maintain that they do is to deny that they are really science or demonstration. It is true that there is contingency in nature, but this does not make it impossible to have either physical demonstration which allows of no exception, or a strict science of nature. It requires only that the physicist know how he must proceed in attaining such demonstration, and therefore in elaborating a proper science of his subject matter.

That the foregoing interpretation neglects the importance of proper physical methodology, and therefore misconstrues the certitude of physical demonstration, will become apparent from an analysis of some examples cited in its support, to be given in the following section.

"Aussi, disons-le en passant, saint Thomas et son école exigent en Dieu un acte de volonté, un libre décret surajouté à son intelligence, pour être en mesure de voir les futurs contingents, c'est-à-dire, tout ce qui n'est pas de l'essence des choses. Par connaissance de simple intelligence et sans besoin d'aucun décret de sa volonté, Dieu voit avec une certitude absolue tout ce qui est essentiel, toutes les conclusions métaphysiques et mathématiques. S'il n'avait pas d'autre science que celle de simple intelligence, il ne pourrait *jamais* connaître, d'une certitude *absolue*, une *seule* conclusion d'ordre physique *ou moral*." (Italics mine)—*Ibid.*, p. 37.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 38; text given in full in fn. 85.

[89] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1, sol. 1 (trans. Maurer, p. 53).

[90] *In I Anal.* lect. 4, nn. 4 and 7.

[91] Cf. *supra*, p. 40.

II. THEOLOGICAL DEMONSTRATION

Our consideration of the technical details of the demonstrative process as used in sacred theology now takes us to the type of demonstration that is distinctively and properly theological, that namely in which at least one premise of the demonstrative syllogism is formally revealed. In such a premise, the middle term is illumined by the light of faith, while in the other premise it is illumined by the light of reason; in this case, the illation can only be made under the light which is distinctively that of sacred theology.[92] The resulting demonstration has its own special characteristics, which we are now about to elaborate.

A. THE NATURE OF THEOLOGICAL REASONING

The most perfect expression of such theological reasoning is found in the theological syllogism, which we propose to analyze in detail both with regard to its proximate matter: the premises and the conclusion; and with regard to its remote matter: the subject, predicate, and middle term.[93] Preparatory to this, however, it will be worthwhile to consider two topics which are of importance when discussing sacred theology as a science, namely, the subject of theological science, and the subalternation which is found in it, insofar as most of the peculiarities of theological demonstration can be explained in terms of these two concepts.

1. THE SUBJECT OF THEOLOGICAL SCIENCE

In investigating the principles of its subject, metaphysics comes to a knowledge of separated substance, and on this account is referred to as divine science or natural theology.[94] But despite the similarity of name between natural theology and sacred theology, and the fact that both consider separated substance, the two do not have the same subject, in the strict sense of the term. Separated substance itself, for instance, is not the

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[92] This is also true in syllogisms where both premises are of faith. See John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.*, In I, 1, disp. 2, a. 7.

[93] It may be inquired here why, if the theological syllogism is the most perfect expression of theological reasoning, St. Thomas himself does not employ it in the *Summa*. The reason lies mainly in the fact that he presupposed a considerable knowledge of logic among the students for whom he wrote, and therefore left the task of reducing arguments to strict logical form to them, while he supplied the essential principles. Thus, in commenting on the Pauline definition of faith, he remarks: "Si quis recte consideret, omnia ex quibus fides potest definiri in praedicta descriptione tanguntur, licet verba non ordinentur sub forma definitionis; sicut etiam apud philosophos praetermissa syllogistica forma syllogismorum principia tanguntur."—*II-II*, 4, 1. Also, in a similar context: "Quandoque enim ipsis philosophis sufficit tangere principia syllogismorum et definitionum, quibus habitis, non est difficile in formas reducere secundum artis doctrinam."—*De Ver.*, q. 14, a. 2.

[94] *Prooem. in Meta.*, ed. Marietti, p. 2.

subject of metaphysics, this being simply *ens commune*; nor is it possible, as we have already pointed out, to have a human science which takes separated substance as its *genus subiectum*, because there are no principles of such a subject that are humanly knowable. This impossibility does not arise, however, because separated substance in itself lacks intelligibility, but rather for just the opposite reason: separated substance is so intelligible in itself that the human intellect is incapable of comprehending it. Thus St. Thomas explains:

> Even though such first principles are most knowable in themselves, our intellect stands to them as the eye of an owl to the light of the sun, as the *Metaphysics* says; and so we can come to them by the light of natural reason only in so far as we are led to them by their effects. And this is the way the philosophers arrived at them, as is clear from the *Epistle to the Romans*: "The invisible things of God . . . are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." So, too, the philosophers study divine things of this sort only in so far as they are the principles of all things; and therefore they are dealt with in that science which studies what is common to all beings, which has as its subject being as being. And the philosophers call this science divine science.[95]

But should it happen that the human intellect be augmented by another light which would enable it to understand something of such principles as they are in themselves, then another science becomes possible. By the very terms of such a possibility, this requires that there be a revelation, a manifestation, of truths which exceed the natural capabilities of the human mind. Through such a new mode of knowing there then can be a new and special science which takes divine things, as they are in themselves, as its proper subject. So St. Thomas continues:

> There is, however, another way of knowing beings of this sort, not as their effects reveal them but as they reveal themselves. The Apostle mentions this way in his *First Epistle to the Corinthians*: "So the things also that are of God no man knoweth, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God, that we may understand." And again: "But to us God hath revealed them by His Spirit."

[95] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 4 (trans. Maurer, pp. 40-41).

> In this way we know divine things as they subsist in themselves and not only in so far as they are principles of things.
>
> Thus theology or divine science is of two kinds. There is one theology in which we treat of divine things, not as the subject of the science but as the principles of the subject, and this is the sort of theology pursued by the philosophers and which is also called metaphysics. There is another theology, however, which studies divine things for their own sakes as the subject of the science; and this is the theology taught in Sacred Scripture.[96]

Sacred theology thus differs from metaphysics in that it takes divine things, as they subsist in themselves and not merely as they are principles of being, for its adequate subject of consideration. Therefore its proper concern is neither *ens commune* nor *ens mobile*, but rather *ens divinum*, and this insofar as it is knowable through divine revelation.[97] Furthermore, since all divine being is said to be such with reference to the prime analogate, which is God or subsistent divinity, it follows that the principal subject of sacred theology is God Himself. All else comes under the science insofar as it is viewed in one way or another *"sub ratione Dei,"* i.e., as having an order to God either as principle or as end. Such a subject then corresponds to the principle which makes sacred theology possible as a science. It is only because reason is illumined by faith, which itself is of God, that sacred theology can have such an extensive scope: all of being, created and uncreated, comes under its consideration.[98]

It will be noted that St. Thomas himself, in technically delineating this subject of sacred theology, employs the Aristotelian terminology we have already explained with reference to the object and subject of a science. In the commentary on the *Sentences*, for instance, he identifies the *genus subiectum* as *"ens divinum,"* the principal subject (or *subiectum attributionis*) as *"Deus,"* and the *genus scibile* as the *"credibile"* or that which is known *"per inspirationem fidei."*[99] In the *Summa* (q. 1 of the *Prima Pars*), he gives further indications. He does not refer to the matter of theological science, for this is merely the body of conclusions arrived at in the science, and as such is common to all sciences.[100] But he does begin

[96] *Ibid.*; cf. *I*, 1, 1, ad 2.

[97] "Si autem volumus invenire subiectum quod haec omnia comprehendet, possumus dicere quod ens divinum cognoscibile per inspirationem est subiectum huius scientiae."—*In I Sent.*, prol. q. a. 4.

[98] *I*, 1, 7.

[99] *In I Sent.*, prol. q. 1, a. 4.

[100] Cf. *II-II*, 1, 1 and *I*, 1, 3.

in a. 2 by indicating the *"ratio formalis"* in a general way, by saying that the science proceeds *"ex principiis notis lumine scientiae Dei et beatorum,"* and then, in a. 4, explicitly identifies it as considering things that are *"divino lumine cognoscibilia."* This formal *ratio* can be viewed from the part of the light under which it is known, which is the *"lumen divinum"* of a. 4, or in terms of the objects illuminated by this light (the *"ratio formalis obiecti"*), again explicitly identified as *"divinitus revelabilia"* in a. 3. Finally, the *ratio scibilis* corresponding to this *ratio formalis* is not spoken of in these terms by St. Thomas, but it is pointed out explicitly by Peter Paludanus and Capreolus as being the *ratio Dei* of a. 7—an interpretation which is consonant with the usage of the *Posterior Analytics*.[101]

2. THE QUASI-SUBALTERNATION OF SACRED THEOLOGY

But sacred theology, even with the assistance of the *lumen divinum*, is still a human science in the sense that it is limited to a human manner of knowing.[102] This means at the lower limit that it is knowledge gained from sensible things, and that revelation itself does not remove this limitation:

> Even though revelation elevates us to know something of which we should otherwise be ignorant, it does not elevate us to know in any other way than through sensible things.[103]

At the upper limit, it is knowledge of a created intellect, which in the state of glory can know the divine essence, even though it cannot completely comprehend it.[104] Yet in this life, the same human intellect cannot in any way know the essence of an immaterial thing, being limited to a knowledge of its *an sit* and a certain confused knowledge of its attributes, technically equivalent to a *quomodo non sit* or *quia* type of knowing, and ultimately taken from material things.[105]

To designate the logical character of such a limited science, St.

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[101] For a full discussion, see Capreolus, *Defensiones*, Prol. Sent., q. 4, a. 1, 6ª concl.; a. 2, ad arg. contra 5am et 6am concl. Capreolus cites the analyses of Peter Paludanus, O.P., (d. 1342), who was one of the first defenders of Thomistic doctrine against the teaching of Durandus. For details, see B. Geyer, *Die patristische und scholastische Philosophie*, (Band II of F. Ueberweg's *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*), 11. Aufl., Stuttgart. p. 537, pp. 519 ff.

[102] "Theologia est scientia naturalis acquisita formaliter, originative tamen et virtualiter est ex principiis supernaturalibus in quibus fundatur."—John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.*, In I, 1, disp. 2, a. 6.

[103] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 3 (trans. Maurer, p. 69).

[104] *I*, 12, 1 and 7; cf. *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1, sol. 3, ad 2.

[105] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 3; cf. *I*, 2, prol.

Thomas likens it to a similar situation in human knowledge where a superior science can give a *propter quid* explanation, not exceeding the limits of a created intellect, for something which—otherwise unknown in an inferior science—can be known *quia* fashion in that science, provided it accept on faith principles proved in the superior science. Using this special relationship, on the model of optical science with reference to geometry, he subalternates sacred theology to a superior science which he designates as "*scientia Dei et beatorum*," and thus places it within the genus of subalternated science.[106]

This is a striking analogy, and contains all the essential elements necessary to characterize the scientific status of sacred theology. Yet the subalternation found in the human model is not exactly the same as the subalternation of sacred theology; compared to the former, the latter is more properly designated as a "quasi-subalternation," as Thomas himself points out:

> One science can be superior to another in two ways: either by reason of subject, as geometry which is concerned with magnitude is superior to optics which is concerned with visual magnitude; or by reason of the manner of knowing, and so theology is inferior to the science which is in God. For we know imperfectly what He knows most perfectly, and just as a subalternated science supposes some things from a superior one, and proceeds from those things as from principles, so theology supposes articles of faith which are infallibly proved in God's science, and believes these, and thus proceeds further to proving those things which follow from the articles. Thus theology is a science *quasi-subalternated* to divine science, from which it accepts its principles.[107]

The difference between these two types of subalternation, "by reason of subject" and "by reason of the manner of knowing," is of considerable importance, and can be elaborated most simply by means of an example.

Optical science, knowing that the rainbow is caused by the reflection and refractions of rays of sunlight through spherical droplets of falling

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[106] *I*, 1, 2.

[107] *In I Sent.*, q. 1 prol., a. 3, sol. 2. Hervaeus Natalis is also explicit on this "quasi-subalternation": "Theologia non est scientia simpliciter et proprie dicta, nec etiam proprie loquendo scientia subalterna, licet habeat aliquam similitudinem cum ea."—*Defensa doctrinae fratris Thomae*, ed. E. Krebs, *Theologie und Wissenschaft nach der Lehre der Hochscholastik*, Münster i. W.: 1912, p. 36 ff.

rain, can demonstrate various properties of the bow: for example, that it is always some portion of a circle, that its center is always in a direct line with the sun and the eye of the observer, etc.[108] In these demonstrations, conclusions are taken from the science of geometry: for example, properties of spheres, circles, and lines in various modes of intersection. These are accepted as principles in optical science without question, and are used directly in its proofs. Optical science, however, does not have geometrical lines for its *genus subiectum*, these pertaining to the subject of geometry; rather it considers geometrical lines to which are added an accidental difference—that they are similar to the paths of light rays. Thus its subject is one through addition: it is concerned with the mathematical line *plus* the visibility of a light ray. And because of this composition in its subject, it can use two types of premise in its demonstration: one which is formally mathematical, which applies to the geometrical line, and the other which is formally sensible, which applies to the natural entity—the visible ray and ultimately the rainbow. Therefore, in the subalternation of optical science to geometry there is subalternation by reason of subject, mathematical form being applied to sensible matter, as well as a corresponding subalternation of speculative principle, insofar as two distinct degrees of abstraction are involved in the judgments of the premises.[109]

Neither of these conditions are found verified in the subalternation of sacred theology to the science of the blessed. The subject of sacred theology is not one through addition, but is exactly the same as that of the science of the blessed: God under the aspect of His divinity. Consequently there is no subalternation of speculative principle: just as the science of the blessed ranges through all of being, without respect to the abstractive differences found in the human speculative sciences, so sacred theology considers all of being, and employs indifferently all types of speculative principles.

The quasi-subalternation of sacred theology, then, is more properly described as a subalternation by reason of the *manner* of knowing, *"ratione modi cognoscendi."* Principles which are known to the blessed with the clarity and evidence of vision, *sub lumine gloriae,* are accepted as principles, under the light of faith, in sacred theology. This acceptance and credence of otherwise unknown principles is all that the subalternation of sacred theology has in common with the subalternation of the speculative sciences. So St. Thomas states simply:

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[108] For an exhaustive study of these demonstrations covering the rainbow, see my *The Scientific Methodology of Theodoric of Freiberg,* (Studia Friburgensia, No. 26), Fribourg: 1959, pp. 174-227.

[109] Cf. *In I Anal.*, lect. 25, nn. 2-5.

> In subalternate sciences certain things are assumed from superior sciences and believed to be true, and truths of this kind are not *per se nota* except in the superior sciences. And in this way, articles of faith which are principles of (theological) science are related to divine knowledge, since those truths which are *per se nota* in the knowledge which God has of Himself, are presupposed in our science. . . .[110]

From this type of subalternation, it should be noted, it does not follow that sacred theology is restricted completely to *quia* knowledge of divine things, and that the blessed alone have *propter quid* science, as would be the case if a subalternation of subject were involved.[111] Sacred theology accepts on faith what is contained in the deposit of revelation, but this does not automatically limit its speculative comprehension of what is revealed. With respect to separated substance, for instance, the human intellect is incapable of grasping its quiddity in this life, although it can know the essence of God in the beatific vision. This means that with respect to the principal subject of sacred theology, God in Himself, and even with respect to the angels, there can be no *propter quid* demonstration in sacred theology. But there are other divine things, not in the order of separated substance, whose quiddities can be sufficiently manifested *per sensibilia*, and of which *propter quid* science is possible even in this life. Hence St. Thomas summarizes:

> God is beyond the comprehension of every created intellect, but He is not beyond the uncreated intellect, since in knowing Himself He comprehends Himself. However, He is above the intellect of everyone here on earth as regards knowing what He is (*quid est*), but not as regards knowing that He is (*an est*). The blessed in heaven, however, also know what He is (*quid est*), because they see His essence. Nevertheless divine science is not only about God. It is concerned with other things as well, which are not beyond the human intellect even in its present state as regards knowing about them what they are (*quid est*).[112]

Thus the content of divine revelation does not exceed the comprehension of the human intellect in such a way that no *propter quid* demonstration

[110] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 2, a. 2, ad 5; also *In III Sent.*, d. 24, a. sol. 2, ad 3.

[111] Cf. *In I Anal.*, lect. 25, n. 4. Cajetan is explicit on this point: "Caeterae autem conditiones sunt consequentes, aut sunt talis subalternae, non subalternae ut sic: puta quod una dicitur *quia*, altera *propter quid*. . . ."—*In I*, 1, 2, n. 3.

[112] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1, sol. 3, ad 2 (trans. Maurer).

is possible in sacred theology, although there are some subjects of which it treats, including its *subiectum attributionis*, where this is the case.

3. THE THEOLOGICAL SYLLOGISM

The theological syllogism therefore must have at least one premise of faith, through which it assures itself contact with the science of God and of the saints. Through this premise it attains to objects otherwise unattainable by the human intellect, "*mysteria in Deo abscondita*," and at the same time has a certitude of principle which excels that of any human science.[113] The premise of faith, however, is not so ineffable as to be completely unintelligible; otherwise it could neither be believed nor function as a premise for a human reasoning process.[114] Both of its terms must be understood, although it suffices that the one which is to function as the middle term be grasped through an analogy based on the order of nature.[115]

The premise of reason, if there be one, subserves this premise of faith, and sharing the same middle term, is elevated by it to carry the force of the theological argument. To be worthy of this dignity, it need fulfill only one condition: it must be simply and absolutely true in itself. Thus it can be either a *per se nota* proposition or one strictly demonstrated in any one of the human sciences.[116] In place of such a premise, it sometimes happens that another premise of faith can be subsumed under the first one. This, it would appear, is not significantly different from subsuming a rational premise, because reason must function not only to identify the middle term common to both premises, but also to effect the composition of the syllogism and ultimately discourse to the conclusion.[117]

The illation or reasoning process by which the theological conclusion is deduced is itself a human one, and thus it is formally natural, although it is radically or originatively supernatural under the influx of the premise of faith.[118] And despite the fact that reason and faith concur in the understanding of the premises, there is only one light under which the conclu-

[113] Conc. Vaticanum, Sess. 3, cap. 4, Denz. 1795.

[114] *II-II*, 8, 8, ad 2. Cf. P. Wyser, *Theologie als Wissenschaft*, Salzburg/Leipzig: 1938, pp. 179-181.

[115] Cf. Cajetan, *De nominum analogia*, c. 10. For a complete treatment of the uses of analogy in sacred theology, see: M. Penido, *Le rôle de l'analogie en théologie dogmatique*, Paris: 1931 (Bibliothèque thomiste, No. 15).

[116] Ramírez, *De hominis beatitudine*, I, p. 77.

[117] John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.*, In I, 1, disp. 2, a. 7.

[118] *Ibid.*, a. 6 and a. 9.

sion is seen: the participated *lumen divinum* characteristic of sacred theology.[119] Just as in the human subalternated sciences diverse habits of principles do not produce a double light under which the conclusion is reached, but only that proper to the subalternated science itself, so in sacred theology the diverse lights of faith and reason result in only one intermediate light, which is properly that of the science of sacred theology.[120]

The relative causality of the premise of faith and the premise of reason in effecting this illation is a subject of dispute among theologians, for some hold that the premise of faith alone is the *per se* cause of the conclusion.[121] The latter would seem to be an extreme opinion, at least when evaluated in terms of what we have already said about the causality of the premises in producing demonstrative knowledge. From the point of view of material causality, for instance, the two premises are equally *per se*, since both supply the matter for the conclusion. From the point of view of efficient causality, both are instrumental causes of the agent intellect. Here there is no doubt that the premise of faith is more principal than the premise of reason, because it elevates and applies the latter to reach a conclusion which is beyond its normal virtuality, and yet both are *per se* instruments—in defect of either one the conclusion would not result. Even from the viewpoint of formal causality, the light furnished by both premises is essential to constitute that which is proper to sacred theology as a science, although again there is no denying that faith is *more* formal than reason, and does confer a distinctive character on the certitude of the theological conclusion.

In connection with this subject, a final observation suggests itself regarding a matter of terminology. Some theologians, in speaking of the theological syllogism, always speak of the premise of faith as the major

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[119] For the ways in which the *lumen divinum* is variously participated in faith, the gifts, prophecy and sacred theology, see: Ramirez, *De hominis beatitudine*, I, 74-75.

[120] John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.*, In I, 1 disp. 2, a. 6; cf. also Sylvius, *In I*, 1, 3, ad 1.

[121] E.g., J. B. Gonet: "Huic instantiae responderi posset primo, illud commune dictum (conclusio in syllogismo sequitur debiliorem partem) tunc solum habere locum, quando praemissae sunt eiusdem ordinis, et ex aequo influunt in conclusionem: in demonstratione autem theologica, sola praemissa de fide, est per se causa conclusionis, et in eam solam conclusio ultimo resolvitur, premissa vero naturalis, est solum conditio applicativa et explicativa principii supernaturalis, propter defectum nostri intellectus requisita."—*Clypeus theol. thomist.*, disp. procm., a. 5, n. 58. Cf. John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.*, In I, 1, disp. 2, a. 6, for the two principal thomistic opinions. P. Wyser adopts elements of both in his explanation: cf. *Theologie als Wissenschaft*, 200-201.

premise and the premise of reason as the minor premise.[122] The reason for this is probably to safeguard the primacy of faith, and not leave it subalternated in any way to human reason or to the philosophical disciplines. The terminology also has some logical justification in the fact that in the normal syllogism the major premise is usually more universal, and therefore more certain than the minor premise; thus, to show that the premise of faith is more certain than that of reason, it is called the major premise.

Notwithstanding these considerations, however, we prefer the strict logical terminology which denominates the major premise as that which contains the predicate of the conclusion, and the minor premise as that which contains the subject of the conclusion.[123] This has the advantage, first of all, that it avoids confusion in a work of this kind, where logical aspects of theological demonstration are frequently being discussed. Secondly, it recognizes the fact that the theologian's reasoning process is a natural one, and as such comes under the same general rules as govern syllogisms in the other sciences. And finally, this can be done without implying that the premise of faith is inferior in any way because of its status as a minor premise. If both premises were of faith, for example, they could not *both* be "major" premises; one would have to be "minor," and yet this would not derogate from its dignity or certainty.

B. THE TERMS OF THE THEOLOGICAL SYLLOGISM

Using this terminology, then, we are now in a position to make more precise some implications of the foregoing doctrine, by considering in detail the subject, predicate and middle term of the demonstrative theological syllogism. Here the general characteristics of the corresponding terms in the common demonstrative syllogism will be preserved, but there will be some differences dictated by the special character of sacred theology as a science.

1. THE SUBJECT

The subject, for instance—and here we speak of the *subiectum praedicationis* in general and not merely the *subiectum attributionis*[124]—is not limited to any one of the subjects of the speculative sciences, but extends to all of being, created and uncreated. Things material and immaterial, substances and accidents in their almost infinite variety; virtues, habits and powers: vegetative and sensitive, as well as intellective; even *ens rationis* are included within the subject of this science.[125] Some subjects will be in

[122] E.g., Marin-Sola; *L'évolution homogène du dogme catholique*, I, *passim*; Ramirez, *De hominis beatitudine*, I, 75-83.

[123] *In I Anal.*, lect. 15, n. 6.

[124] *In I Sent.*, q. 1 prol., a. 4, ad 1.

[125] Ramirez, I, 52.

the order of divine substance, others will be natural substances of which a predication will be made to show their order to the divine. And each subject, considered in itself, may be knowable either naturally *or* supernaturally, although in the former case it must be joined to a predicate which comes under the illumination of faith.

Likewise the universal, the particular, and even the singular as such may be the subject of a conclusion in this science, the latter never being the case in the human sciences. This new possibility arises from the fact that theological knowledge is a certain participation of divine knowledge, *"quaedam impressio divinae scientiae,"*[126] in which even the singular and contingent are known in a necessary and infallible way.[127] Other things, as John of St. Thomas points out, can be considered *quidditative* in this science, which on account of their very excellence are only realized in one individual, and therefore are predicated of a singular subject.[128]

2. THE PREDICATE

The predicate, considered in itself, like the subject can pertain *per se* either to the natural *or* the supernatural order, although if the subject is naturally knowable, it must conclude to some aspect which is divine, as in the predication: "Man is capable of the beatific vision." If the subject itself is only supernaturally knowable, on the other hand, the predicate may be in the order of reason, as in the example: "Grace is a quality."

Similarly, the predicate may pertain to the order of substance, if it gives the *quod quid est,* or to one of the nine genera of predicamental accidents. It may also be a proper passion, but only of a subject of which the *quid est* can be known. Thus certain subjects treated in theological science impose limitations as to what can be predicated in the order of *quod quid est.* In the order of separated substance, for instance, there is no possibility of strict knowledge of the *quid;* and yet this does not mean that no predication at all is possible. As St. Thomas himself points out, knowledge of the *an sit* of such entities requires at least some knowledge of their natures *"sub quadam confusione."*[129] Generally the human intellect investigates unknown quiddities by trying to locate them in a genus or by studying their accidents; but God is not in a genus, nor has He accidents; and al-

[126] *I,* 1, 3, ad 2.

[127] Cajetan, *In I,* 1, 3, n. 12. John of S. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.,* In I, 1, disp. 2, a. 3.

[128] *Curs. Theol.,* In I, 1, disp. 2, a. 3. Cf. *I,* 1, 2, ad 2; *In I Sent.,* q. 1 prol., a. 3.

[129] "De Deo et aliis substantiis immaterialibus non possemus scire 'an est,' nisi sciremus quoquo modo de eis 'quid est' sub quadam confusione."—*In Boeth. de Trin.,* q. 6, a. 3.

though angels are in a genus and have accidents, we know the genus only logically and not really, and we do not know what the accidents are.[130] So in place of a genus, we employ negations to supply for our intellectual deficiencies; the more negations we know, the less confused our knowledge of separated substance becomes. In place of accidents, on the other hand, we use relations to sensible substances, and this either in the order of causality, or by showing that some perfection of sensible substance is predicable in an eminent way of separated substance.[131] Thus we have a three-fold way to predication for such entities: the *via negationis*, the *via causalitatis* and the *via excessus*, each supplying some basis for scientific knowledge of them as subjects.[132]

3. THE MIDDLE TERM

As in all demonstration, so in theological demonstration the middle term plays the key role. Unlike the subject or the predicate, it must be both naturally *and* supernaturally knowable, insofar as it occurs in both the premises. To perform this double function, in Chenu's expression, it must be "interiorly transposed" from the natural to the supernatural order;[133] or as Ramirez—following the line of thought of John of St. Thomas—puts it, it must be *"quid formaliter naturale, sed radicaliter supernaturale."*[134] Its distinctive features thus include that it be not merely a middle term *per modum abstractionis*, as is found in the speculative sciences, but it must be a middle *per modum illuminationis*, being itself contained at least implicitly in the deposit of divine revelation.[135]

Otherwise, as in speculative science, it must be necessary, universal,

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[130] "Deus in nullo *genere* est. . . . Similiter etiam Deus non habet aliquod accidens. . . . Aliae autem substantiae immateriales creatae sunt quidem in genere. . . ; si habent aliqua accidentia, non sunt nobis nota. . . ."—*Ibid.*

[131] "Loco *cognitionis generis* habemus in istis substantiis cognitionem per negationes. . . . Loco autem accidentium habemus in substantiis praedictis habitudines earum ad substantias sensibiles vel secundum comparationem causae ad effectum vel secundum comparationem excessus."—*Ibid.*

[132] "Partes subiecti in scientia non solum sunt intelligendae partes subiectivae vel integrales; sed partes subiecti sunt omnia illa quorum cognitio requiritur ad cognitionem subiecti, cum omnia huiusmodi non tractentur in scientia, nisi in quantum habent ad subiectum ordinari. Passiones etiam dicuntur quaecumque de aliquo probari possunt, sive negationes, sive habitudines ad alias res. Et talia multa de Deo probari possunt et ex principiis naturaliter notis, et ex principiis fidei."—*Ibid.*, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3.

[133] *La théologie comme science*, p. 87.

[134] *De hominis beatitudine*, I, 75.

[135] "Medium ergo theologicum non est medium scientiae per modum abstractionis, ut medium philosophicum, sed per modum illuminationis seu revelationis ex ipso Deo, non tamen immediatae, ut in lumine prophetico vel mystico, sed mediatae."—*Ibid.*, p. 74.

prior and more known, finite, and proportioned to both extremes. It may be analogously used in both premises, but if so, the analogy must be that of proper proportionality in order to carry the force of demonstrative argument.[136]

The diversity of middles employed by theological science can be indicated by once again going through the four types of scientific questions. If the question is *si est,* the middle will be an effect, "either of nature or of grace."[137] If the question is *quia,* then the middle term may be a remote or non-convertible cause—and this characterizes our knowledge of divine substance, where the cause is a *ratio* analogously conceived and only rationally distinct from the predicate; or it may be an effect, commensurate or not with the cause, again of nature or of grace. If the question is *quid,* the procedure already outlined for finding the *quod quid est* through a demonstrative process may be applicable. This will usually be the case of "invisible quiddities,"[138] such as grace, the infused virtues and the sacraments, where a true order of causality obtains and commensurate effects are knowable through divine revelation. And finally, if the question is *propter quid,* properties may be demonstrated in any case where the *quid* is known. Here, unlike metaphysical demonstration, any one of the four causes may be used as middle term, including the material cause, as when properties of baptism are demonstrated through the use of water, its proper matter.[139]

C. THE CERTITUDE OF THEOLOGICAL CONCLUSIONS

This mention of sacramental causality brings us back to the question of physical demonstration and the certitude which is characteristic of the theological conclusion. It pertains to the essence of a sacrament, for example, to have a sensible thing for its material cause, which in turn causes grace as an instrumental efficient cause.[140] Pertaining then to the order of physical cause, it can be defective on the part of the matter, or it can be impeded in its operation on the part of the efficient agent. Thus it would appear that a premise of reason respecting either of these causes could

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136 Cajetan, *De nominum analogia,* c. 10, n. 110 (ed. Zammit, Hering).

137 "Licet de Deo non possimus scire quid est, utimur tamen eius effectu, in hac doctrina, vel naturae vel gratiae, loco definitionis, ad ea quae de Deo in hac doctrina considerantur. . . ."—*I,* 1, 7, ad 1.

138 "Quaedam invisibilia sunt, quorum quidditas et natura perfecte exprimitur ex quidditatibus rerum sensibilium notis, et de his etiam intelligibilibus possumus scire 'quid est,' sed mediate. . . ."—*In Boeth de Trin.,* q. 6, a. 3.

139 "Ex institutione divina aqua est propria materia baptismi."—*III,* 66, 3.

140 *III,* 60, 7; 62, 1, c. and ad 2.

only enjoy physical certitude, and the resulting demonstration would be strictly physical.

Some theologians, as we have already indicated, hold that physical demonstrations are not adequate for strict theological certitude, and thus implicitly eliminate this phase of sacramental theology from the realm of strict science. Their concern is basically with the contingency of nature: the fact that its causes are sometimes impeded, and that its laws can be miraculously suspended by divine intervention.[141] Therefore they regard physical premises as unsafe, and caution against their use in theological demonstration. To reinforce their point, they even give some examples to show how the use of such premises leads to conclusions which, far from merely lacking theological certitude, are *de facto* erroneous. For example: 1) The body of Christ in the Eucharist is a true body; but every body occupies, in fact, a certain place; therefore the body of Christ in the Eucharist occupies, in fact, a certain place; 2) the fire of the furnace of Babylon was a true fire and applied under the requisite conditions; but every true fire properly applied burns in fact; therefore the fire of the furnace of Babylon burned in fact; 3) Elias was truly a man; but every man dies in fact; therefore Elias is in fact dead; 4) Jesus Christ is a true man; but every man is conceived by a man's intervention; therefore Jesus Christ was conceived by a man's intervention; etc., etc.[142]

Laudable as is this concern to safeguard certitude and truth in sacred theology, we believe, as we have already intimated, that it is based on a

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[141] "Aussi toute conclusion d'orde physique renferme-t-elle de façon implicite ou sous-entendue la condition suivante: pourvu que les lois de la nature ne soient pas mises en échec; et comme ces lois peuvent être suspendues, ce qui arrive chaque fois que Dieu le veut, elles supposent implicitement la condition: pourvu que Dieu n'intervienne pas miraculeusement."—Marin-Sola, *L'évolution homogène*, I, 34. Cf. text cited in fn. 86, p. 34.

[142] "Examinons donc un ou plusieurs raisonnements de vrai virtuel physico-connexe c'est-à-dire où, connaissant par révélation l'essence pure d'un être, on en déduira une propriété physico-actuelle, au moyen d'une mineure de nécessité physique. Par révélation nous savons que le corps de Jésus-Christ dans l'Eucharistie est un vrai corps. . . . etc. . . .

Qu'on examine bien tous ces raisonnements. Ce sont de vrais raisonnements de virtualité physico-connexe. . . . Et cependant la conclusion, bien loin d'être une vraie conclusion théologique, bien loin d'avoir une certitude théologique, bien loin d'être le résultat d'une nécessité ou d'une connexion théologique, constitue une erreur théologique. . . .

Quiconque étudiera attentivement ces différents raisonnements, sans se laisser influencer par des préjugés ou des préoccupations personnelles ou par des considérations étrangères à la valeur intrinsèque de ces raisonnements, comprenda bien vite, nous en sommes surs, qu'il y a une différence radicale entre la physique et la théologie, et que le raisonnement physico-connexe n'a aucune valeur démonstrative en théologie."—*Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

misconception of the nature of physical demonstration. Our position would therefore be that anything that is properly demonstrated in natural philosophy is usable by the theologian with the same guarantee of freedom from error as that which is demonstrated in metaphysics. We agree, however, that the examples given above should be rejected, but not because they are *physical* demonstrations—rather because they are fallacious arguments that do not demonstrate in any way whatsoever.

1. MIRACLES AND PHYSICAL DEMONSTRATION

Since the major theological problem here is that associated with the miraculous suspension of the laws of nature, a few words are necessary here about miracles, in order to supplement what has already been said about the manner of demonstrating in natural philosophy.

A miracle, by its very nature, is something used by God to awaken wonder in men. For this reason its cause is hidden from men, it produces an effect which is outside the order of nature, and it is of very rare occurrence.[143] Each one of these points is an indication to the natural philosopher that it is something of which he cannot possibly have demonstrative knowledge within his science. He considers hidden causes himself from a methodological point of view, namely, chance and fortune, only to exclude them from the demonstrative process; what he excludes at the natural level, he would *a fortiori* exclude at the divine.[144] In demonstrating *ex suppositione finis,* he is only interested in ends intended by nature, and manifested to him by the fact that they occur regularly or for the most part. Anything which occurs rarely he suspects immediately as having a *per accidens* cause, and not amenable to treatment by the methods of his science.[145] And far from having any illusions that he knows everything there is to know about nature, he knows that there are many events which he cannot explain, and which fall outside the scope of his demonstrative knowledge.[146]

Moreover, for those miracles which are divinely revealed, the truth of the event is of faith, and as St. Thomas says: "it is clear that proofs brought against faith cannot be demonstrations, but are difficulties that can be answered."[147] Thus the arguments proposed above, all of which are

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[143] *I*, 105, 7, c. and ad 2; 110, 4.

[144] *In II Phys.*, lect. 7, n. 1; lect. 9, nn. 4 and 9; *In I Anal.*, lect. 42, n. 2.

[145] "Est autem considerandum quod de his quidem quae sunt sicut frequenter, contingit esse demonstrationem, in quantum in eis est aliquid necessitatis."—*In I Anal.*, lect., 42, n. 3.

[146] "Et tunc fere erit finis scientiae naturalis, quam a principio elegimus tradere. Dicit autem *fere*, quia non omnia naturalia ab homine cognosci possunt."—*In I Meteor.*, lect. 1, n. 9.

[147] *I*, 1, 8.

contrary to what is known by faith, are not strict demonstrations. Rather they are specious arguments, and it is the task of the theologian to show in what way they are so. We shall attempt therefore a brief resolution of the difficulties they present, but first would recall, from our previous treatment of demonstration in the speculative sciences, the following points: 1) there can be no demonstration concerning singular subjects which fall under the senses; 2) there can be no demonstration from cause to effect in the case of causes that can be impeded; and 3) demonstrations *ex suppositione finis* are based on finality in nature, which is evidenced only in those things which happen regularly or for the most part.

In the first argument, respecting Christ's body in the Eucharist, the major premise is not universally true. Not every body does, in fact, occupy a certain place; the celebrated exception is the whole universe, which is a body, and which is not *per se* in place. The natural philosopher can demonstrate something about place, however; from its formal cause, that it is the first immobile surface of the surrounding physical environment, he can demonstrate its material cause or proper subject: that it is proper to each body externally contained by other bodies according to extensive quantity.[148] And St. Thomas, by a remarkable coincidence, uses precisely this correct conclusion as a physical premise to demonstrate, by *physical* demonstration, that Christ's body is not *in place* in the Eucharist.[149]

The second argument, concerning the fire in the furnace of Babylon, has a singular subject. Moreover, the major argues invalidly from cause to effect in an order of causality that can be impeded. And St. Thomas, by an equally remarkable coincidence, uses the very example of fire to illustrate the general methodological principle: "and this likewise is false, that even having posited a sufficient cause, it is necessary that the effect follow."[150]

The third argument, concerning Elias, likewise has a singular subject. Its major premise is a dialectical principle, and not demonstrable in natural philosophy. The natural philosopher can demonstrate that man is mortal, and that the human soul is immortal, both demonstrations being based on

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[148] *In IV Phys.*, lect. 7, n. 2.

[149] "Corpus Christi non est *in* hoc sacramento secundum proprium modum quantitatis dimensivae, sed magis secundum modum substantiae. *Omne autem corpus locatum est in loco* secundum modum quantitatis dimensivae, inquantum scilicet commensuratur loco secundum suam quantitatem dimensivam. Unde relinquitur quod *corpus Christi non est in hoc sacramento sicut in loco*, sed per modum substantiae. . . ."—*III*, 76, 5 (Italics mine).

[150] "Similiter etiam haec est falsa, quod posita causa etiam sufficienti, necesse est effectum poni: non enim omnis causa est talis (etiamsi sufficiens sit) quod eius effectus impediri non possit; sicut ignis est sufficiens causa combustionis lignorum, sed tamen per effusionem aquae impeditur combustio."—*In I Periherm.*, lect. 14, n. 11.

intrinsic principles. But he cannot demonstrate when and if any one man will die, any more than he can demonstrate when and if any one soul is created or annihilated.[151]

As to the final argument, concerning the manner of Christ's conception, the major premise is universally true of men generated according to the order of nature. Yet there is nothing intrinsic in man's nature which dictates that "true man" must be so generated; Adam, for instance, was formed from the slime of the earth, as we know from sacred Scripture. And similarly, we know that Christ was excepted from the normal mode of human generation: "*Ecce Virgo concipiet,*" and "*non ex voluntate carnis, neque ex voluntate viri, sed ex Deo.*"[152] The argument thus has four terms, there being two middles: one, "true man generated according to nature," the other, "true man excepted from the natural order of generation"; therefore it violates the law of the syllogism, and cannot possibly be demonstrative.

2. PHYSICAL AND METAPHYSICAL CERTITUDE

What the resolution of these difficulties shows, in point of fact, is that physical demonstration can easily be misunderstood from a methodological point of view. A theologian cannot demonstrate physically, for instance, by naively adding any physical proposition whatsoever to a premise of faith. He must rather have the *habit* of physical science, which means that he know how to deal with changeable being and the methodological difficulties it presents, that he be adept at handling contingency and the event of rare occurrence such as the miracle, if he is not to make egregious errors in reasoning about sensible matter. But granted this competence on the part of the integral theologian, there is no reason to suppose that he cannot have strict demonstrative certitude in physical matters. He can therefore demonstrate properties of the sacraments, even in terms of their material and efficient causality, and if he proceeds properly his certitude in sacramental theology will be no less than that which he achieves when dealing with separated substance. In fact, his science in this area may be even more satisfying, because he is dealing with a matter more proportioned to his intellect.

Thus we conclude that physical certitude, understood as the strict demonstrative certitude characteristic of physics as a science in the Aristotelian-Thomistic sense of the term, is as "certain" as metaphysical certitude, and is equally at the disposal of the theologian for demonstrating a theological conclusion.

There is another understanding of physical certitude, however, which

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151 Cf. *In III de Anima*, lect. 10, (ed. Marietti) nn. 742-743.
152 Isaias 7, 14; Joann. 1, 13. Cf. *III*, 28, 1, c. and ad 4.

is quite different from the foregoing, and which is probably at the base of some of the difficulties we have discussed. St. Thomas points out this difference of terminology when he says:

> Names that pertain to the order of knowledge are transferred to natural operations, as when it is said that nature operates wisely, and infallibly; and thus there is said to be certitude in nature's tending to an end.[153]

In this transferred sense, it is true that there is a certitude of order or tendency in nature. Yet the certitude of nature's *operation* is not absolute, because despite the tendency, nature can be impeded in its operation. Thus one should not re-transfer such a concept of certitude back to the order of knowledge, and say, for example, that *we* are "physically certain" that the sun will rise tomorrow. Of such a conclusion there can be no demonstative certitude, and the word "certain" in such a usage is subjected to sheer equivocation. An event such as the future rising of the sun can be predicted with great *probability*, but it cannot be demonstrated, for the simple reason that it involves arguing from cause to effect when the two are not *simul* and the cause can be impeded. In the order of knowledge, "probable" and "certain" are specifically distinct, and no matter how high the degree of probability, it is not certitude. We, on the other hand, have been using the term "certitude" in its proper meaning in the order of speculative knowledge: "certitude is properly said to be firmness of adherence of a knowing power to what it knows,"[154] and not in a transferred sense which is analogously true, nor in the re-transferred sense, which is hopelessly equivocal.

It is possible, moreover, that some writers, aware of the danger of this equivocation, and wishing to safeguard at all costs the certitude of sacred theology from any error or misunderstanding, have preferred to say that the premise of reason in a theological syllogism, and the reasoning process itself, are characterized by "metaphysical" certitude.[155] The designation "metaphysical" in such a usage, however, means nothing more than the absolute, apodeictic, strict, demonstrative certitude characteristic of Aristotelian-Thomistic science in general, which is realized in metaphysics, of course, but is not restricted to that science. Because such terminology is not the most proper, for one, and secondly because it is very confusing when used in a context where logical, physical and moral science are also being discussed,

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[153] *In III Sent.*, d. 26, q. 2, a. 4.

[154] *Ibid.*

[155] E.g., P. Wyser, *Theologie als Wissenschaft*, particularly the section entitled: "Der metaphysische Charakter des theologischen Beweises," pp. 177-200.

we shall refrain from its use. We would hold therefore that the rational premise of a theological argument must simply be *certain,* in the proper and formal sense of the term.[156] If so, it is a worthy instrument to subserve the premise of faith, regardless of the human science to which it might otherwise pertain.

3. THEOLOGICAL CERTITUDE

Granted such a premise of reason, known with the certitude of evidence, and joined to a revealed premise, known with the certitude of faith, and supposing also a correct demonstrative process on the part of the theologian, a theological conclusion results. The certitude of this conclusion, neither purely that of faith nor purely that of reason, is not easily characterized; one of the more accurate descriptions is that of John of St. Thomas:

> The certitude of theology formally pertains to the natural order, but originatively and on the part of its principles it is supernatural. And for this reason it exceeds every natural certitude, because it resolves back to supernatural principles.[157]

Being of the natural order, it is not the certitude of faith, and yet originating in the supernatural order, it has more than mere certitude of reason. A few words may well be given to the explanation of each.

The certitude of a theological conclusion is not the immediate certitude which accompanies the acceptance of formally revealed truth. Rather it is the certitude of science, which is based on the ability of the human intellect to see an illation between two truths, which is in turn productive of a new truth. The new truth is not necessarily certified directly by divine witness, although it depends on at least one premise which is so certified. As such it participates somewhat in the certitude of faith, without itself possessing the plenitude of that certitude. It is formally a human or natural certitude because it depends on the discourse of human reason, which means that ultimately it is dependent on the theologian's knowledge of demonstrative logic, at least *in actu exercito,* and therefore is directly certified by the light of reason, and not by the light of faith.[158]

Yet faith does have an influx into the theological conclusion, as can be seen by examining the resolution implicit in the demonstrative process. De-

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[156] "Certitudo formalis ex parte actus intellectus dupliciter consideratur, quia et tangit obiectum, et determinat subiectum. Et prout est medium tangens obiectum, certitudo actus importat infallibilitatem, et excludit contingentiam quae desumitur ab obiecto; prout vero tangit subiectum et illud determinat, excludit dubitationem et hesitationem."—John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.,* In I, 1, disp. 2, a. 9.

[157] *Ibid.*

[158] *Ibid.,* a. 4.

spite the fact that there are two premises, there is only one middle term: a middle *per modum illuminationis*, which means that *it*—as entering integrally into the judgment of the premise of faith - is directly certified by divine witness. Through this middle term the entire reasoning process is subordinated, directed and regulated by faith, and judged to be consonant with, and in no way opposed to, what God has divinely revealed. Insofar as the entire force of the theological argument is carried by a middle that is thus approved and, so to speak, elevated to the supernatural order, the conclusion, even though immediately certified by reason, is mediately certified by divine authority. It has all the natural certitude of a demonstrated conclusion in any speculative science, and it has something more besides: it participates in the most certain of all certitudes—that coming from the Author of Truth itself, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.[159]

The question may well arise here, as it arose in our discussion of demonstration in the speculative sciences, whether some theological demonstrations are preferable to others, or whether some theological conclusions possess a higher degree of certitude than others. Is a *propter quid* demonstration, for instance, preferable to a *quia* demonstration, or does it yield a conclusion of which we can be more certain?

The answer we would give is basically the same as that for the speculative sciences, but it has an additional dimension, attributable to the influx of divine faith in the conclusion, which may serve to differentiate more clearly theological certitude from that of the human sciences. For one, sacred theology is concerned with all of being as known under a divine light. It therefore cuts across all the speculative sciences and uses a middle term that is not so much characterized by a special degree of abstraction, as it is by a special manner of knowing. With such a middle term, granted that it assures the intrinsic natural certitude proper to demonstration, there is not so much accent on distinctions of cause and effect, more universal causes, etc. What gives the theological conclusion its "more certain" character is not the particular type of cause in the middle term, but rather the way in which it participates in the certitude of faith, which itself is more certain than any human science.[160] And again everything that comes under the consideration of sacred theology is viewed precisely as related to God, as He is in Himself, the highest cause of all causes. Under this aspect, everything known in the science is more certain than corresponding conclusions in the human sciences.

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159 "Quia theologia resolvit suas conclusiones per consequentiam certam et evidentem in principia certiora omnibus principiis naturalibus, ergo est certior illis." —*Ibid.*, a. 9.

160 Cf. *1*, 1, 5.

It is true nonetheless that sacred theology, even under its special light, demonstrates conclusions of a wide variety of particular subjects, some of which are more proportioned to the human intellect and permit *propter quid* demonstrations, others less proportioned and permit only *quia*. The former put the mind at rest with respect to more questions, as we have earlier pointed out, and seem to exhaust the rational intelligibility of what is being demonstrated. Yet even here we have to be careful: a theological conclusion, precisely as deriving from a premise of faith, is never seen with the full clarity of evidence.[161] The very thing which guarantees its special certitude, also prohibits the *quoad nos* certitude of evidence, because the special light which illuminates the middle term is the obscure light of faith. This obscurity limits the penetration and comprehension of the intellect as it struggles with the divine mysteries; it makes reason captive, as it were, and dependent for its assent on the motion of the will.[162] The closer one approaches the Godhead in his study of particular subjects, the more this dependence on faith is sensed.[163] And still there is no loss of theological certitude, because what is lost in the certitude of evidence, is made up by the certitude of faith.[164] If there is any preference, then, among theological demonstrations, it does not come about through our comprehension of the middle term, as in the purely human sciences. Rather it should be judged according to the dignity of the *subject* of the demonstration, and this by its proximity to the mystery of the most holy Trinity.[165]

So we conclude that there is only one theological certitude, just as

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[161] Cf. M. D. Chenu: "Dans la théologie, suspendu toute à la foi, la 'resolutio' ne peut jamais se faire qu'en des principes obscurs. C'est dire que la *doctrina sacra* ne peut être science qu'imparfaitement."—*La théologie comme science*, p. 84.

[162] "Intellectus credentis determinatur ad unum non per rationem, sed per voluntatem. Et ideo assensus hic accipitur pro actu intellectus secundum quod a voluntate determinatur ad unum."—*II-II*, 2, 1, ad 3.

[163] "Quaedam vero divinorum sunt, ad quae plene cognoscenda nullatenus ratio humana sufficit; sed eorum plena cognitio expectatur in futura vita, ubi erit plena beatitudo, sicut Trinitas et Unitas unius Dei; et ad hanc cognitionem homo perducitur non ex debito suae naturae, sed ex sola divina gratia. Unde oportet quod ad huiusmodi etiam scientiae perfectionem quaedam suppositiones ei primo credendae proponantur. . . . Et huiusmodi suppositiones sunt illa quae sunt credita quantum ad omnes, et a nullo in hac vita sunt scita vel intellecta."—*In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 3, a. 1.

[164] "Certitudo duo potest importare: scilicet firmitatem adhaesionis; et quantum ad hoc fides est certior omni intellectu et scientia, quia prima veritas, quae causat fidei assensum, est fortior causa quam lumen rationis quod causat assensum intellectus vel scientiae. Importat etiam evidentiam eius cuius assentitur; et sic fides non habet certitudinem, sed scientia et intellectus. . . ."—*De Ver.*, q. 14, a. 1, ad 7.

[165] "Quanto aliquid magis accedit ad veram rationem divinitatis, principalius consideratur in hac scientia."—*In I Sent.*, prol. q. 1, a. 4.

there is only one intrinsic certitude in a conclusion demonstrated by the light of reason. The former is superior to the latter: it owes this to the additional determination it receives from the obscure light of faith.

III. THE DEMONSTRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF SACRED THEOLOGY

As has already been intimated, the reason why sacred theology employs demonstration, and in fact makes use of a variety of demonstrative functions, is ultimately traceable to the weakness of the human intellect. If man could immediately grasp the natures of things present to his senses and understand all their properties in a single intuitive glance, he would have no need for demonstration. Because of the limitations of his rational nature, he must proceed in stepwise fashion if he would reach the perfection of that nature. He must compose and divide, define and argue, and, if he would attain perfect knowledge and certitude even about objects which are proportioned to his intellect, he must finally demonstrate.[166] It stands to reason, then, that if he would attain any certainty about an object completely transcending the world of nature—something in no way proportioned to his mind, and yet of which he has a natural desire to know—he must depend even more upon demonstration.[167] Whence the basic reason for all the demonstrative functions of sacred theology: an intellect, limited by its nature to being rational, is seeking scientific knowledge of an object which it is powerless by nature to understand. It can attain such knowledge, but to do so, it must be illumined by the light of faith, and it must have its natural powers brought to their fullest possible perfection.

The way in which theological demonstration contributes to this perfecting of man's natural powers is best seen when sacred theology is viewed under the formal *ratio* of a wisdom.[168] Because it "considers the highest cause of the whole universe, which is God," and does this in a "most perfect way," St. Thomas holds that it must be wisdom in the highest degree: "*sacra doctrina maxime dicitur sapientia.*"[169] And as a wisdom, highest of the intellectual virtues, it appropriates to itself both the judgments of understanding and those of science, "judging not only the conclusions of

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[166] *I*, 58, 4. Also: *I*, 14, 7; 58, 3; 85, 5; *De Ver.*, q. 15, a. 1.

[167] *I*, 85, 1. For the natural desire for such knowledge, cf. *I*, 12, 1; *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 4, ad 5.

[168] A thorough-going explanation of the sapiential character of sacred theology, together with the diversity of function which this entails, is given by F. P. Muñiz, "De diversis muneribus sacrae theologiae secundum doctrinam divi Thomae," *Ang* 24 (1947), pp. 93-123. This essay has been translated from the Latin by J. P. Reid and published by the Thomist Press under the title: *The Work of Theology*, Washington, D. C.: 1953.

[169] *I*, 1, 6; cf. *De spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 11, ad 2.

the sciences, but also the principles," and thereby eminently performs the explicative and deductive functions associated with these two intellectual virtues.[170]

In view of this diversity of judgment found in sacred theology, the functions in which it employs demonstration can conveniently be divided into two general categories, according as a discourse is involved that is concerned either with the explication of theological principles or with the deduction of conclusions that flow from such principles as premises. The first we shall refer to as sapiential or *explicative* functions, as discoursing *about* truths of faith that are formally revealed or truths of reason that are necessary for understanding the latter, while the second we shall designate as *scientific* functions, as discoursing *from* such truths to new conclusions that are only virtually contained in the deposit of revelation. Separate consideration will now be given to each of these types of discourse, to detail more fully the various uses of demonstration within each category.

1. EXPLICATIVE FUNCTIONS

The term "explication" (or less properly, "explicitation") enjoys a variety of uses in the literature on theological method. Sometimes it is used to indicate a type of discourse that is opposed to demonstrative discourse, while at other times it is used to designate a reasoning process that itself employs demonstration in its detailed elaboration. The first usage does not concern us here insofar as it designates an improper or merely nominal discourse which can be useful for clarifying concepts in all the sciences, but does not itself employ a demonstrative mode of argumentation.[171] As such it has something in common with dialectical discourse, which is sometimes preparatory to demonstration and sometimes complementary to it, but otherwise is not to be identified with the strictly illative reasoning that characterizes demonstrative proof.[172]

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[170] *I-II*, 57, 2, ad 2. Cf. *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 5, n. 1182: "Quia sapientia est certissima, principia autem demonstrationum sunt certiora conclusionibus, oportet quod sapiens non solum sciat ea quae ex principiis demonstrationum concluduntur circa ea de quibus considerat, sed etiam quod verum dicat *circa* ipsa principia prima. . . ." See also Muñiz, "De diversis muneribus," p. 115 (trans. Reid, p. 31).

[171] Salmanticenses, *Cursus Theologicus*, De fide, disp. I, dub. 4, n. 122. See also Marin-Sola, *L'évolution homogène*, Vol. I, p. 31, but note the valid criticisms of Marin-Sola's exposition given by R. McArthur, "A Note on Demonstration," *NS* 34 (1960), pp. 43-61.

[172] Dialectics, apart from its historical connections with twelfth-century theology, has a definite role to play in Aristotelian methodology, and as a consequence has a parallel role in Thomistic theology. For our purposes it suffices to note three senses in which the term "dialectics" may be used with reference to demonstration, in order to signalize the importance of each for our study. The first is when dialectics is taken as a reasoning process which is opposed to a demonstrative process,

The explication to which we have reference is peculiar to sacred theology, and is best seen in the sapiential type of discourse where truths implicitly and confusedly contained in a symbol of faith are explicated through an analogy or through their connection with other revealed truths. As supreme wisdom, sacred theology can use such discourse to perfect its knowledge of the proper principles from which it proceeds. Alternatively, seen from the viewpoint of the one acquiring the habit of theology, sacred theology can use a sapiential discourse to supply for defects of the human intellect, to enable the latter better to understand the truths of faith and the truths of reason from which it argues as principles in this science. Here again the dual character of theological principles permits of a twofold consideration of this properly theological explication, the one more concerned with revealed truths themselves, the other with the natural knowledge necessary for understanding the latter. The first view thus conceives the explicative function as assisting the human intellect directly to penetrate into the darkness of faith, the second as strengthening weaknesses arising from man's nature as rational, by making up for deficiencies in the philosophical disciplines, utilizing them under the positive direction of faith to bring the human intellect to its full perfection when searching for knowledge of the divine.

The theologian, in his sapiential discourse, can therefore use demon-

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and which on that account does not achieve certitude of a conclusion, but only probability (*Proem. in Anal.*, n. 6). Such a process argues from probable premises, such as commonly received opinions, reasonable similitudes (*argumenta convenientiae*), or purely logical considerations, and concludes on that account to a probable conclusion. This usage does not interest us insofar as it is taken disjunctively with respect to demonstration, and therefore as such has no direct influence on the latter. A second usage is essentially a preparatory one, where a dialectical process such as just described leads to a demonstration, and as such can be used in any one of the real sciences (*In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1, sol. 1). Such a discursive process is often helpful for finding dialectical or nominal definitions, which can then lead to real definitions, which in turn, as we have already seen, can function as middle terms in strict demonstration (cf. *In I de Anima*, lect. 1, n. 15). Different again is the third usage, which is more complementary than preparatory, and which envisages dialectics as a type of discourse continuing on where strict science leaves off, supplying tentative conclusions where complete certitude cannot be attained, but where a probable conclusion, based on a prior scientific development, is better than no conclusion at all (cf. *In IV Meta.*, lect. 4, n. 576). Of the latter two uses, the second concerns us primarily as it relates to the explicative functions we are now discussing, while the third will be of secondary interest later, when we are concerned with the limits of the speculative analysis of moral theology for supplying conclusions that are workable in the practical order. For a complete treatment of the dialectical argument, see L.-M. Regis, *L'opinion selon Aristote*, Paris/Ottawa: 1935; some of the uses of dialectics of interest to the theologian are sketched by D. Hayden, "Notes on Aristotelian Dialectic in Theological Method," *Thom.* 20 (1957), pp. 383-418.

stration to discourse directly about the truths of faith, to render them more intelligible in a human way. He can do this by exploring analogies and similitudes in the world of nature, for, as St. Thomas observes,

> since in imperfect things there is found some imitation of the perfect, though the image is deficient in those things known by natural reason there are certain similitudes of the truths revealed by faith.[173]

The classic example of this type of usage is St. Augustine's exposition of the mystery of the most holy Trinity,[174] which, taken with St. Thomas' demonstrations of the properties of relations in order to explicate the Processions, gives a remarkable insight into this most impenetrable of all sacred mysteries.[175]

Yet demonstrative discourse about the truths of faith need not be limited to similitudes in the world of nature. It is also possible to reason from other revealed truths, to manifest in a demonstrative way the connection which obtains between the mysteries of faith themselves.[176] For instance, it is formally revealed that in Jesus Christ there are two wills, one human and the other divine;[177] but this truth, as will be explained below, can also be seen as following as a theological conclusion from the revealed truths of the Trinity and the Incarnation. With the aid of this sapiential discourse, a much more precise understanding is given to the formally revealed truth of the two wills in Christ. In the words of the Vatican Council, we obtain from it an *"intelligentiam fructuosissimam"* which perfects our understanding of the mystery, even though we know we shall never be able to comprehend it.[178]

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[173] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 2, a. 3 (trans. Brennan, p. 59).

[174] *Ibid.*

[175] Such demonstrations, obviously, do not attain the mystery itself; they merely "persuade" our intellects to assent to the revealed truth: "Rationes quae inducuntur a Sanctis ad probandum ea quae sunt fidei non sunt demonstrativae, sed persuasiones quaedam manifestantes non esse impossibile quod in fide proponitur."—*II-II*, 1, 5, ad 2.

[176] "Rationes quae inducuntur a Sanctis ad probandum ea quae sunt fidei . . . (quandoque) procedunt ex principiis fidei. . . . Ex his autem principiis ita probatur aliquid apud fideles sicut etiam ex principiis naturaliter notis probatur aliquid apud omnes. Unde etiam theologia scientia est, ut in principio operis dictum est."—*II-II*, 1, 5, ad 2. Also: *In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 2, a. 1, ad 4. Cf. *Conc. Vat.*, Denzinger 1796.

[177] *Conc. Constantinopolitanum III*, Denzinger 291.

[178] Cf. Denz. 1796. This is one of the reasons why not only the principles, but also the conclusions of theological demonstrations must be in accord with revealed truth: "Non enim sufficit in rebus divinis humano ingenio veritatem discutere et aperire, nisi veritas, quae post discussionem invenitur, sacrae Scripturae concordet et per eam confirmetur."—*De Div. Nom.*, c. 2, lect. 4, n. 173.

The second aspect of the theologian's sapiential discourse, which we have characterized as using demonstration to explicate premises of reason under the positive direction of faith, is related to the foregoing but is slightly more complex because of the methodological problems it presents. St. Thomas teaches that the theologian must philosophically demonstrate "those things which are necessary in a science of faith," while at the same time use his philosophical doctrine to explicate, by way of analogy, the data of divine revelation.[179] This would seem to present little difficulty in light of what has already been said, if it were not for the fact that it immediately raises the question of the relationship between sacred theology and philosophy. Our problem is one of enumerating the demonstrative functions of sacred theology, and such functions obviously should not include those that are purely philosophical. Can the explication of truths knowable to reason alone be properly theological, without encroaching on the domain of philosophy? This question is not answered affirmatively by all theologians, and thus we shall outline the solution to which we subscribe, preparatory to identifying the explicative functions of theology that are concerned with premises of reason.

2. THEOLOGY AS RELATED TO PHILOSOPHY

Even a superficial examination will reveal that a theological treatise such as the *Summa Theologiae* is replete with demonstrations that are obviously taken from natural philosophy, psychology, ethics, metaphysics, etc.[180] The difficulty then is this: Are such demonstrations formally theological when used under the influence of divine faith, or are they to be regarded as formally philosophical, since the premises can be understood under the light of reason alone, even though they occur in the context of a theological argument?

The basic issue involved here is not without its subtlety, and can be made more precise through the analysis of a concrete case. In the *Tertia Pars*, St. Thomas sketches the main lines of the theological demonstration to the effect that there are two wills in Christ, employing the revealed premise that there are two natures in Christ, one human and the other divine. The argument goes as follows:

> It is manifest that the Son of God assumed a perfect human nature, as was shown above. Now the will pertains to the perfection of human nature, being one of its natural powers, even

[179] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 2, a. 3. Even stronger: "Ad conferendum de his quae sunt fidei, possumus uti quacumque veritate cuiuscumque scientiae."—*In Epist. ad Gal.*, c. 3, lect. 6, (ed. Marietti, n. 154).

[180] Cf. *I*, 1, 5, ad 2.

> as the intellect, as was stated in the First Part. Hence we must say that the Son of God assumed a human will, together with human nature. Now by the assumption of human nature the Son of God suffered no diminution of what pertains to His Divine Nature, to which it belongs to have a will, as was said in the First Part. Hence it must be said that there are two wills in Christ, i.e. one human, the other Divine.[181]

In this text, St. Thomas implicitly takes as his premise of faith, and in this instance it is the minor premise, the truth that in Jesus Christ there are two natures: one divine, in view of His being the Son of God, and the other human, because this is the nature He has assumed. The theological conclusion follows when this minor is subsumed under a double major, which states the more universal truths knowable to reason: that to a human nature it pertains to have a human will, while to a divine nature it pertains to have a divine will. St. Thomas does not elaborate the proof of the major, but—and this is the significant point—merely refers the reader to the *Prima Pars,* where he has already given the proofs in the respective tracts, *De homine* and *De Deo Uno.* When these lines of thought are pursued, however, it is seen that the first utilizes demonstrations taken from the part of natural philosophy known as psychology, which can be known by the light of reason alone,[182] while the second utilizes demonstrations taken from the part of metaphysics known as natural theology—the demonstrations of the existence of God and all that these imply for determining the *quomodo non sit,* or the divine nature, and its attributes—which can likewise be known by the unaided light of reason.[183]

Whence emerges a special difficulty. The original demonstration—which can be abbreviated to: "*Jesus Christ* (subject) is *endowed with two natures* (middle) is *endowed with two wills* (predicate)"—apparently concludes theologically with only one middle term, but when complete proof is demanded, it is necessary to "densify" middle terms between the original middle and the predicate in order to resolve the conclusion properly to *per se nota* propositions.[184] Without these additional middles it can

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[181] *III,* 18, 1 (trans. English Dominicans).

[182] *I,* 75, prol.; cf. *In II Phys.,* lect. 4, n. 10.

[183] *II-II,* 2, 4, SC; cf. *In Boeth. de Trin.,* q. 6, aa. 3-4.

[184] The expression "densando media" occurs in the *Posterior Analytics:* "Oportet ad perfectam scientiam habendam, quod propositiones mediatae, quae sumuntur in demonstrationibus, ad immediata reducantur. Quod quidem fit dupliciter, scilicet densando media et augmentando. Densando quidem, quando medium acceptum mediate coniungitur utrique extremorum, vel alteri. Unde, quando accipiuntur media alia inter medium primum et extrema, fit quasi quaedam condensatio mediorum."—*In I Anal.,* lect. 26, n. 4.

be questioned whether complete demonstrative resolution is attained, and thus whether there really is a theological demonstration. And yet when the additional middles are taken apart from this particular context, they themselves can be understood as composing purely philosophical demonstrations. Has their insertion then into a multiple theological syllogism changed the nature of the argumentation from formally philosophical to formally theological, or does it remain philosophical even though at the service of sacred theology?

Vasquez, against the common opinion of theologians, takes the view that the argumentation remains philosophical, and would go so far as to hold that sacred theology is subalternated in a certain way to philosophy even when it deduces a conclusion using a single premise of reason.[185] Cajetan, on the other hand, argues that it is properly theological, although *ministerialiter*, since in itself it is extraneous to theological science.[186] Muñiz develops Cajetan's position further, and shows that although it is extraneous to theology in a material sense, it becomes formally a part of theology when incorporated into its demonstrations. His solution is the following:

> For the various functions enumerated above to be truly theological, nothing is required other than that they be exercised under the light of divine revelation or under the positive direction of faith. In the order of nature living bodies are nourished by taking in from the outside elements which are extrinsic to themselves. Once these elements have been incorporated and assimilated to the living organism, they are vivified and informed by the same soul and with the same life which the living supposit itself enjoys. In a similar manner, theology—on account of the deficiency of the subject in which it is exercised—receives from philosophy many elements which are, absolutely speaking, extraneous to itself, but which it incorporates and assimilates to itself by informing, animating, and vivifying them with its own proper life and its own peculiar spirit. Wherefore, these elements, when examined materially, are philosophical and extraneous; but, considered formally, they are truly and properly theological.[187]

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185 "Neque enim principia philosophiae fiunt propria theologiae, nisi quando cum articulis fidei miscentur ad inferendam aliquam conclusionem; tunc autem ea ex philosophia accipit, quia theologia philosophiae quodammodo subalternatur. . . ."—Vasquez, *In I*, 1, 8, disp. 11, cap. 3, n. 6. Cited more completely by Muñiz, "De diversis muneribus . . ," p. 105, fn. 1. Cf. *I*, 1, 5, ad 2.

186 *In I*, 1, 8, n. 8.

187 "De diversis muneribus," p. 113 (trans. Reid, pp. 27-28).

Here the analogy of theology as a potential whole, analogous to the human soul in its vivifying effect on the body, gives Muñiz's basic answer to the difficulty. Just as chemical elements are materially absorbed into the living body, and without losing any of their properties are put at its service in an eminent way through the unifying effect of one substantial form, so philosophical demonstrations are assimilated into theology and participate in turn of its formal unity.[188]

Two expressions in Muñiz's explanation are worthy of special consideration. The first is his designation of the light under which such demonstrative functions must be seen in order to make them truly theological: "under the light of divine revelation or under the positive direction of faith." Note that he does not use the expression, "under the light of *virtual* revelation," which he would maintain to be the formal light of sacred theology if it were merely a science,[189] but rather refers to the less differentiated light of theology as a wisdom, which need not be that of virtual revelation. Thus he does not claim that philosophical demonstration be enumerated among the scientific functions of sacred theology, but he does maintain, on the other hand, that it should be included among its functions as a wisdom.

The second expression is the reference to the reason why this is so: "on account of the deficiency of the subject in which it is exercised." St. Thomas himself assigns this reason in the *Summa,* as we have already noted,[190] and gives even another explanation of it in his commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate:*

> Sciences which are ordered to one another are so related that one can use the principles of another, just as posterior sciences can use the principles of prior sciences, whether they are superior or inferior. Wherefore metaphysics, which is superior in dignity to all, uses truths that have been proved in other sciences. And in like manner theology—since all other sciences are related to it in the order of generation, as serving it and as preambles to

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[188] Thus can Ramirez, in speaking of St. Thomas' use of Aristotle's arguments about the nature of beatitude, make the following observation: "Haec tamen argumenta, secundum quod assumuntur a S. Thoma in servitium theologiae, non sunt mere philosophica et naturalia prout iacent in textu Aristotelis, sed sunt vera theologica non solum imperative, sed etiam elicitive, utpote ex alto divinae revelationis depurata, elevata, illuminata et anima theologica informata; latet enim analogia beatitudinis formalis naturalis et supernaturalis, qua theologus valide transferre potest modo suo ad suum ordinem ea quae Philosophus suo modo de suo ordine dixerat."—*De hominis beatitudine,* III, 200-201.

[189] "De diversis muneribus," p. 101 (trans. Reid, p. 15).

[190] *I, 1, 5, ad 2.* This reason is also cited by Cajetan, *In I,* 1, 8, n. 8.

it, although they are posterior to it in dignity– can make use of the principles of all the others.[191]

Here again the comparison with metaphysics accents the sapiential character of sacred theology, but this is not all. More subtle is the point on which St. Thomas insists: that all the philosophical disciplines are only a preparation for the work of sacred theology, "serving it and as preambles to it." This would seem to imply that when the human intellect attains its highest perfection, such preparation becomes no longer necessary, and, in the ideal order, can ultimately be dispensed with. By way of example, in the theological demonstration we have discussed, the premise of reason: "whatever is endowed with two natures (i.e., human and divine) is endowed with two wills," is certainly not *per se nota* to everyone, and does require proof. But for the theologian who possesses all the philosophical disciplines *per modum habitus*, it could well be that the same premise of reason no longer needs proof, that it has become *per se nota* to him– the distinction between *per se nota omnibus* and *per se nota sapientibus*—[192] by reason of the perfection of his intellect. Thus such a theologian "sees" the conclusion without actual dependence on the lower sciences. But for less perfected intellects, and St. Thomas wrote the *Summa* for beginners,[193] this is not the case, and sacred theology must supply for the intellectual deficiency through its sapiential office, by performing in an eminent way the demonstrative functions which otherwise can be left to the philosophical sciences.

Such functions, by their very ordination to an understanding of the truths of faith, cannot be other than theological. We conclude therefore that "philosophical" demonstrations, when subsumed into sacred theology to nourish its intellectual life, become formally and properly theological, just as simply and directly as food becomes living substance when assimilated to nourish the corporeal life of the human body.[194]

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[191] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 2, a. 3, ad 7.

[192] *I-II*, 94, 2. Cf. *In I Anal.*, lect. 5, nn. 6-7; Cajetan, *Comm. in Post. Anal.*, Liber I, cap. 3.

[193] "Quia catholicae veritatis doctor non solum provectos debet instruere, sed ad eum pertinet etiam incipientes erudire, propositum nostrae intentionis in hoc opere est, ea quae ad Christianam religionem pertinent, eo modo tradere, secundum quod congruit ad eruditionem incipientium."—*I*, prol.

[194] If this seem too strong an analogy, recall the simile used by St. Thomas against those who deplored the use of "physica documenta" in sacred theology: "Quando alterum duorum transit in naturam alterius, non reputatur mixtum; sed quando utrumque a sua natura alteratur. Unde illi qui utuntur philosophicis documentis in sacra Scriptura redigendo in obsequium fidei, non miscent aquam vino, sed convertunt aquam in vinum."—*In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 2, a. 3, ad 5.

3. SCIENTIFIC FUNCTIONS

The sapiential office of sacred theology, as we have just seen, is one of explaining and defending the mysteries of faith, of utilizing analogies seen in the order of nature to illustrate their counterparts in the order of supernature, of examining the relations and connections of mysteries among themselves, throwing light on one through what is known about the other, showing how certain understandings are consonant with, others in contradiction to, truths explicitly revealed.[195] As a related task, it also has the function of supplying for the intellectual deficiencies of the subjects who would acquire it as a habit—the students, the beginners for whom St. Thomas had so much concern[196]—by demonstrating the natural truths necessary for the elaboration of theological wisdom. Both sapiential functions require the employment of demonstrative techniques, and on that account have been referred to as explicative functions which make use of demonstration.[197]

Apart from being a wisdom, however, sacred theology is also a science—a habit of mind which is concerned with conclusions which can be legitimately inferred either from two premises of faith, or from a premise of faith and a premise of reason.[198] As such, its scientific function is primarily one of deducing theological conclusions, through a rigorous

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[195] "Ac ratio quidem, fide illustrata, cum sedulo, pie et sobrie quaerit, aliquam Deo dante mysteriorum intelligentiam eamque fructuosissimam assequitur tum ex eorum, quae naturaliter cognoscitur, analogia, tum e mysteriorum ipsorum nexu inter se et cum fine hominis ultimo. . . ."—*Conc. Vaticanum*, Sess. III, cap. 4, Denz. 1796.

[196] "Quilibet actus exequendus est secundum quod convenit ad suum finem. Disputatio autem ad duplicem finem potest ordinari. Quaedam enim disputatio ordinatur ad removendum dubitationem an ita sit; et in tali disputatione theologica maxime utendum est auctoritatibus, quas recipiunt illi cum quibus disputatur. . . . Quaedam vero disputatio est magistralis in scholis non ad removendum errorem, sed ad instruendum auditores ut inducantur ad intellectum veritatis quam intendit: et tunc oportet rationibus inniti investigantibus veritatis radicem, et facientibus scire quomodo sit verum quod dicitur: alioquin si nudis auctoritatibus magister quaestionem determinet, certificabitur quidem auditor quod ita est, sed nihil scientiae vel intellectus acquiret et vacuus abscedet."—*Quaes. Quodl.* IV, q. 9, a. 3 (a. 18). For the relevance of this text to St. Thomas' concept of sacred theology, see M. Grabmann, *Die theologische Erkenntnis—und Einleitungslehre des heiligen Thomas von Aquin*, (Freiburg/Schweiz: 1948), pp. 161-163. See also *I*, prol.

[197] Cf. Ramirez, "De philosophia morali christiana," *DTP* 14 (1936), p. 115; also, by the same author, *De hominis beatitudine*, Vol. I, p. 4, fn. 5.

[198] *I*, 1, 2. "Scientia enim sumitur hic proprie (i.e., in titulo articuli), ut est intellectualis virtus, et habitus conclusionum per demonstrationem acquisibilis ex principiis. Et quoniam talia sunt subiecta qualia permittuntur a praedicatis, consequens est quod ly 'sacra doctrina' sumatur hic pro doctrina revelata 'ut est conclusionum.' "—*Cajetan, In I*, 1, 2. Cf. also P. Wyser, *Theologie als Wissenschaft*, pp. 182-186.

process of demonstration, from premises that are believed or better known than the conclusions themselves.[199] Such deduction obviously presupposes a knowledge, through divine faith, of one or more premises that are divinely revealed, and the ability to reason from such premises in a human manner, drawing on the philosophical disciplines which perfect the human intellect, to deduce conclusions that participate in the revealed character of the premises.[200] This, in turn, may be done either in direct or indirect fashion: directly, when the discourse proceeds from two premises of faith, or from one premise of faith and another of reason; or indirectly, when it is possible to show a contradictory opposition between two possible propositions, and then to demonstrate that one of the two entails a consequence which is contrary to revealed truth, and therefore that the other must be true.[201]

In addition to the actual deduction of conclusions, it may be noted in passing that the theologian has another office with respect to demonstration: it is his duty to determine the structure of theological demonstrations and the laws which govern their inferences. This methodological study properly pertains to the science of sacred theology and not to the science of logic, insofar as the use of demonstrative logic in sacred theology is not concerned with "logical intentions," but with the subject matter of theology as a real science.[202] Thus, just as every speculative science devotes a section to the elaboration of the methodology proper to the subject about which it demonstrates, so sacred theology has the function of determining

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199 "Sic ergo manifestum est quod *scientia* est habitus demonstrativus, idest ex demonstratione causatus, observatis omnibus illis quaecumque circa scientiam demonstrata sunt in Posterioribus Analyticis. Oportet enim, ad hoc quod aliquis sciat, quod principia ex quibus scit per aliquem modum sint *credita et cognita* etiam magis quam conclusiones quae sciuntur."—*In VI Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 1149.

200 "Hoc enim et in scientiis humanis observatur, quod principia et conclusiones sunt ex eodem genere. Sic igitur principia ex quibus procedit haec doctrina sunt ea quae per revelationem Spiritus Sancti sunt accepta et in sacris Scripturis habentur: hoc est ergo quod concludit, quod nullo modo aliquis debet audere 'dicere,' ore, 'nec etiam cogitare aliquid de occulta Deitate supersubstantiali,' quae est super omnem substantiam, et per hoc est occulta nobis quibus creatae substantiae sunt proportionatae ad cognoscendum et per consequens ad loquendum, 'praeter ea quae *nobis* divinitus ex sanctis eloquiis sunt expressa,' idest, exprimuntur per sancta eloquia. Signanter autem non dicit: *in* sanctis eloquiis, sed 'ex sanctis eloquiis,' quia quaecumque ex his quae continentur in sacra Scriptura elici possunt, non sunt aliena ab hac doctrina, licet ipsa etiam in sacra non contineantur Scriptura."—*De Div. Nom.*, c. 1, lect. 1, n. 11.

201 An interesting series of arguments which are reductively of this type, but which lead more proximately to rational contradictions rather than to statements directly contrary to revealed truth, are given by St. Thomas in *II-II*, 23, 2.

202 Cf. *In IV Meta.*, lect. 4, n. 577.

its own methodological canons, and this work is formally theological, despite its manifest affinity with, and actual use of, the logical sciences.[203]

4. SUMMATION OF DEMONSTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

In summary, then, there are several rational functions of sacred theology that properly employ a demonstrative discourse. These are not limited to the simple deduction of theological conclusions virtually contained in the deposit of revelation, come to be known in recent times under the designation of "conclusion theology."[204] The main purpose of demonstration is rather to perfect the theologian's knowledge of his proper subject, which is God, and to attain this end he must not only formally deduce conclusions through the scientific act of demonstration, but also must employ demonstration in a variety of explicative functions demanded by the sapiential character of his supreme science. The resulting diversity of demonstrative functions in sacred theology, conceived as both a wisdom and a science, is given schematically in the following list of functions, to which we believe every usage of demonstration in speculative theology can ultimately be reduced:

1) Sapiential functions, discoursing *about* theological premises, as such; these functions are more properly explicative, yet they are properly demonstrative insofar as they
   a) explicate a revealed premise
      i) by demonstrating it from one or more other revealed premises, i.e., showing the connection between revealed truths,[205] or
      ii) by demonstrating analogous properties of things in the natural order,[206] or
   b) explicate a rational premise
      i) under the positive direction of faith, by demonstrating "*praeambula necessaria in fidei scientia*,"[207] or
      ii) supply for the deficiency of the subject, by demonstrating what could otherwise be "*per se nota sapientibus*."[208]

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[203] Cf. *In II Meta.*, lect. 5, n. 335.

[204] For the criticisms that have been directed against this concept of sacred theology, and a brief evaluation, see Chenu, *La théologie comme science*, p. 84, fn. 1. Also: M. R. Gagnebet, "La nature de la théologie spéculative," *RT* 44 (1938) p. 239.

[205] *Conc. Vaticanum*, Denz. 1796; *II-II*, 1, 5, ad 2.

[206] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 2, a. 3.

[207] *Ibid.*

[208] *I*, 1, 5, ad 2; *I-II*, 94, 2; *I*, prol.; *Quaes. Quodl.* IV, q. 9, a. 3 (a. 18).

2) Scientific functions, discoursing *from* theological premises to conclusions which are not formally revealed and are unknowable under the light of reason alone,[209] either
   a) directly, by demonstrating such conclusions
      i) from two premises of faith, or
      ii) from one premise of faith and one premise of reason, or
   b) indirectly, by demonstrating that of two contradictory propositions, one leads to *sequela contra fidem* and therefore that the other must be true.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

With this we bring to a close our *praenotanda* on demonstration in sacred theology. While obviously not an exhaustive treatment, it has served to set the general stage for the more detailed study of demonstrative methodology in moral theology in two ways: first by supplying the fundamental notions which underlie the use of demonstration in sacred theology, secondly by eliminating some confusing interpretations of Aristotelian-Thomistic science as applied to different subject matters.

With regard to the first, we have shown the tremendous scope of sacred theology as a wisdom, the queen of the sciences, insofar as its many demonstrative functions employ techniques of proof worked out in all the philosophical disciplines. To elaborate some of the demands of this conception of theology on the integral theologian, we gave extensive prenotes from Aristotelian-Thomistic logic, explaining the notion of demonstration and its various kinds, as well as the procedures which characterize its use in the different speculative sciences. Implicitly following St. Thomas' analogy of grace perfecting nature,[210] we also made more precise the notion of theological demonstration, detailing how the light of faith overlays the entire demonstrative process, conferring its own special certitude, but at the same time demanding the full perfection of rational powers on the part of the theologian.

With regard to the second, we have attempted to clarify the notions of physical and metaphysical demonstration according to the terminology and usage of Aristotle and St. Thomas. In so doing, we have been basically arguing against a Wolffian interpretation of the scholastic tradition, which would reduce all genuine philosophy to metaphysics, and effectively elimi-

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[209] *De Div. Nom.*, c. 1, lect. 1, n. 11.

[210] "Dona gratiarum hoc modo naturae adduntur quod eam non tollunt, sed magis perficiunt; unde et lumen fidei, quod nobis gratis infunditur, non destruit lumen naturalis cognitionis nobis naturaliter inditum."—*In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 2, a. 3.

nate the physical and moral sciences from its pale.[211] Our concern has been to show that the manner of demonstrating in natural philosophy is easily misunderstood, but that in the hands of a theologian who properly understands the methods of treating its subject matter, it can yield conclusions that are formally certain and capable of supporting the illation required for the certitude of the theological conclusion.

Through all this, we have carefully avoided the problem of practical science, as opposed to speculative, nor have we touched any of the difficulties attendant on demonstrating in moral matters or human affairs. The discerning reader will have noted, perhaps, that most of our discussion of physical and metaphysical certitude, and the demonstration from which they result, was but a prelude to the problem of moral certitude and the methods of demonstrating in moral theology. The certitude of moral philosophy is evidently akin to that of natural philosophy, although its matter is even more contingent. From what we have said, one ought not conclude that it subserves sacred theology in exactly the same way as natural philosophy, although one should conclude that it cannot be disposed of *a fortiori,* the way some would dispose of physical certitude and physical demonstration, on the grounds that it is concerned with a highly contingent and variable subject matter.

We now turn to the more special problems presented by the practical science, as such, and the place of demonstration in moral science, which will form the subject of the following Chapter.

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[211] For the general characteristics which differentiate C. Wolff's philosophical synthesis from that of St. Thomas, see J. Ramirez, "De propria indole philosophiae Sancti Thomae Aquinatis," *Xenia Thomistica,* Vol. I (Roma: 1925), pp. 53-64; for the more direct influence of Wolff's thought on sacred theology, see, by the same author, *De hominis beatitudine,* I, 17-20.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PLACE OF DEMONSTRATION IN MORAL SCIENCE

From our discussion of demonstration in the speculative sciences, the question might naturally arise whether it is possible to have a science that is *not* speculative. And if this be answered in the affirmative, since demonstration is the proper act of science and a non-speculative science must demonstrate too, then another question can be posed as to precisely how its demonstration differs from the demonstration of speculative science. The traditional answer to the first question is that there are sciences which are not properly speculative, and which are referred to as practical sciences; it is also common doctrine that the discourse of speculative science differs from that of practical science, and therefore the modes of procedure will likewise be different.[1] It is not our intention here to enter into an elaborate defense and justification of these answers, but rather to explain them briefly because of their relevance to the methodology of moral philosophy and theology, which will be taken up in more detail in succeeding Chapters. In order to do so, we shall first have to clarify the notion of practical knowledge, since this is the proximate genus under which practical science is contained. In the course of this, it will be found that practical science considers a different type of subject matter from that of speculative science, and as a consequence has a different way of proceeding. Our task in this Chapter will be to show wherein this difference consists, and ultimately to explain how this affects the way of demonstrating in moral science precisely as practical, as opposed to the methodology of speculative science.

I. THE NOTION OF PRACTICAL SCIENCE

St. Thomas has no explicit treatment of moral science precisely under its aspect of being a practical science, nor does he treat expressly of practical science as such, with its characteristic mode of proceeding. His references to practical and speculative occur with great frequency in his tracts on God's knowledge and the human intellect, and also in the Aristotelian commentaries, but his usage of the terms varies considerably in these places.

[1] For one of the clearest expositions of Thomistic doctrine on the difference between speculative and practical, see: Paulus Soncinas, O.P., *Quaestiones Metaphysicales Acutissimae,* In VI Metaphy., qq. 2-8 (Venetiis: 1588), pp. 107-116; also Caietanus Sanseverino, *Philosophia christiana cum antiqua et moderna comparata,* (Neapoli: 1878) Tom. VII, art. 35, pp. 268-279. Cf. Ramirez, III, 189, fn. 1.

What is obviously required, then, is a reconstruction of the doctrine implicit in these references. We shall attempt such a reconstruction, based on our own interpretation of the classical texts involved, but not without a notable dependence on secondary sources.[2]

1. SPECULATIVE AND PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

In perhaps one of his most formal treatments of human science, the commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate*, where he is treating of the specification of the speculative sciences, St. Thomas first draws the general line of distinction between speculative and practical knowledge, in order to eliminate the latter from his immediate consideration. The basis of the distinction is slightly different from what we have already seen in discussing the distinction of speculative sciences in Chapter One. It is taken not from the object of the knowing act, but rather from the *end*: the speculative intellect has for its end the knowledge of truth in itself, while the practical intellect seeks truth only as a means, to order it to operation as its proper end. As a consequence, both are concerned with different matters: practical knowledge considers things that we can do, or operables, while speculative knowledge considers things that we cannot do, or non-operables.[3] And, ultimately, both are perfective of man, but in different ways: practical knowledge leads to the happiness of the active life, while speculative knowledge leads to the happiness of contemplation.[4]

From other texts, it can be gathered that practical knowledge is causative of things, while speculative knowledge is merely apprehensive.[5] Similarly, the object of practical knowledge is not truth alone, but the operable good under its aspect of being true.[6] Practical knowledge, then,

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[2] One of the most helpful sources for the notions of speculative and practical science, and the resolution and composition proper to each, has been S. E. Dolan, "Resolution and Composition in Speculative and Practical Discourse," *LTP* 6 (1950), 9 ff. Also very useful because of the large number of texts collected and analyzed is J. Pétrin, *Connaissance Spéculative et Connaissance Pratique: Fondements de leur distinction*, Ottawa: 1948. Other references include: H. Pichette, "Considérations sur quelques principes fondamentaux de la doctrine du spéculatif et du pratique," *LTP* 1 (1945), 52-70; L. Thiry, *Speculativum-practicum secundum S. Thomam: quo modo se habeant in actu humano*, Roma: 1939; M. Labourdette, "Savoir spéculatif et savoir pratique," *RT* 44 (1938), 564-568; and A. D. Lee, *Relationship of the Speculative and Practical in Theology* (Unpublished Lectorate Dissertation, Dominican House of Studies), Washington, D. C.: 1957. The latter study is particularly useful for its analysis of Thomistic terminology and its detailed examination of the modes characteristic of speculative and practical science.

[3] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1; *In II Meta.*, lect. 2, n. 290. See also John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.*, In I, 1, disp. 2, a. 10, n. 5.

[4] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 4. Cf. *II-II*, 179, 2.

[5] *II-II*, 83, 1; cf. John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.*, In I, 1, disp. 2, a. 10, n. 4.

[6] *In II Ethic.*, lect. 9, n. 351; *I*, 79, 11, ad 2; *De Ver.*, q. 22, a. 10, ad 4.

must have an order to operation; still not any order to operation whatsoever characterizes such knowledge—there must be a proximate relation, it must be knowledge that directly regulates operation, that bears immediately on the operable and its causes.[7] Practical knowledge must be applicable therefore to particular operation,[8] and in the final analysis at a particular time and in a particular way.[9] Although it has its beginnings in considering the same subject as speculative knowledge, what ultimately distinguishes it from speculative knowledge is that it terminates differently from the latter, in such and such a particular thing that is to be done.[10]

But speculative and practical are not necessarily spoken of in a mutually exclusive way. The intellect which is perfected by speculative and practical knowledge is one and the same,[11] and there are degrees of both speculative and practical knowledge, so that it is possible to distinguish between actually practical and formally practical, and between completely speculative and formally speculative.[12] Likewise, there can be some overlapping: we can have speculative knowledge of an operable, and we can even make our "simple speculation" in some sense practical.[13] In the former case, such speculative knowledge is not of great value unless it is actually ordered to operation, and therefore it is said to be principally practical and only secondarily speculative; in the latter case, the speculative knowledge is worth having even if it is never ordered to operation, and thus it is said to be principally speculative and only secondarily practical.[14] And even in purely practical knowledge, we still speculate, which means that in a certain sense practical knowledge presupposes speculative knowledge, although the reverse is not necessarily true.[15]

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[7] *De Ver.*, q. 14, a. 4.

[8] *In III de Anima*, lect. 12, n. 780.

[9] *In II Meta.*, lect. 2, n. 290.

[10] *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 1132.

[11] *I*, 79, 11.

[12] Cf. *De Ver.*, q. 3, a. 3, where St. Thomas distinguishes between actually practical (in actu) and formally practical (practica habitu vel virtute); also completely speculative (de rebus illis quae non sunt natae produci per scientiam cognoscentis) and formally speculative (res cognita est quidem operabilis per scientiam, tamen non consideratur ut est operabilis).

[13] *De Ver.*, q. 3, a. 3, ad 2 and ad 4.

[14] *In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 2, a. 3, qla. 2.

[15] "Gegenstand des praktischen Erkennens dagegen ist nur ein relativer Sachverhalt: nämlich das Verhältnis des Handelnden und seiner Mittel zu einem bestimmten Ziel. Da jedoch niemand das Verhältnis eines Dinges zu einem anderen erkennen kann, ohne auch das Ding selbst schon einigermassen erkannt zu haben, ist ein rein praktisches Erkennen ohne jedes theoretische Erkennen schlechthin undenkbar."—M. Thiel, "Die wissenschaftliche Eigenart der philosophischen Ethik," *DTF* 14 (1936) 290. Cf. *In III de Anima*, lect. 15, n. 820; *De Ver.*, q. 2, a. 8.

From these preliminary indications of St. Thomas' thought, we can conclude to at least two bases of distinction between speculative and practical knowledge, one taken from the subject matter with which it is concerned, the other taken from the end of the knowledge itself; speculative knowledge has for its object the non-operable, while practical knowledge is concerned with the operable; the end of speculative knowledge is truth, while that of practical knowledge is operation. Other bases of distinction are obviously implied also, but these will become clearer from the consideration of other texts more properly concerned with the special type of practical knowledge in which we are interested, namely, practical science.

2. SPECULATIVE AND PRACTICAL SCIENCE

As speculative knowledge is distinct from practical knowledge, so also is speculative science distinct from practical science. As sciences, however, both share a common characteristic—that, namely, of being knowledge through causes.[16] It is not then the search for principles and causes which serves to distinguish speculative science from practical science; practical science must uncover causes too, and demonstrate through them.[17] Its distinctive note is that it is concerned with the principles and causes of *operables*. Still, insofar as it engages in causal analysis, it can speculate and use theoretical procedures similar to those of the speculative sciences. This does not mean, again, that even the more theoretical parts of practical science should be regarded as speculative science;[18]—the latter are only called speculative or theoretical in the sense that they are more remote from operation, which is the proper end of practical science and as such specifies the science and all its parts.[19]

The more detailed consequence of this difference between speculative and practical knowledge is that speculative science seeks demonstrative

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[16] *De Ver.*, q. 3, a. 3, ad 3 contra.

[17] *In VI Meta.*, lect. 1, n. 1145.

[18] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 4.

[19] For the terminological usage of "subject" as being specificative of a science, see what has already been said (and references cited) in Chapter One, pp. 23-28. St. Thomas applies this doctrine, together with the notion of end mentioned in the previous section, to argue to the unity of medical science, as follows: "Cum autem medicina dividitur in theoricam et practicam, non attenditur divisio secundum finem. Sic enim tota medicina sub practica continetur, utpote ad operationem ordinata. Sed attenditur praedicta divisio secundum quod ea, quae in medicina tractantur, sunt propinqua vel remota ab operatione."—*In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 4. This conclusion also can be applied to moral science, in light of the analogy: "Sic ergo se habet politicus ad considerandum de anima cuius virtutem quaerit sicut medicus ad considerandum de corpore cuius sanitatem quaerit."—*In I Ethic.*, lect. 19, n. 227.

knowledge of its subject, while practical science seeks actually to *construct* its subject, precisely as operable, and needs scientific knowledge in order to do so.[20] This operational requirement demands of practical science an even more detailed knowledge of its subject than is found in speculative science. It does not suffice in practical science, for instance, to know merely the cause of an effect; the perfection of the science will require a knowledge of all the movements and operations necessary to assure that such an effect will actually follow from that cause in the order of execution.[21] Practical science therefore presupposes speculative knowledge, as we have already said, but it extends further than speculative knowledge, all the way to knowledge of how the singular subject can be produced and actually perfected in the order of being.[22]

As a further consequence of the difference of subject matter, there is also a difference in the modes of procedure of speculative and practical science. Speculative science is said to proceed *resolutively*, because its ultimate function is to resolve a conclusion to its proper principles, or, in other words, to resolve to a middle term in one or other order of causality. Practical science, on the other hand, is said to proceed *compositively*. It must resolve to causes too, but its ultimate function is to apply universal principles and simple causes to the construction of composite singular entities which can exist in the operational order.[23] In this, practical science is imitative of nature, which likewise produces complex singulars from simple causes and therefore proceeds compositively in the order of generation.[24]

Notwithstanding the fact that practical science is said to be compositive in mode and speculative science resolutive in mode, there is still a certain flexibility in terminology with respect to this usage, similar to that we have already seen in the case of "speculative" and "practical" when applied to knowledge generally. St. Thomas indicates some of the variations in usage when he says:

> Some knowledge is speculative only; some is practical only; and some is partly speculative and partly practical. In proof whereof it must be observed that knowledge can be called speculative in three ways.

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[20] *In I Anal.*, lect. 41, n. 7. Cf. *In I Polit.*, proem., n. 6; *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 5.

[21] *In II Ethic.*, lect. 2, nn. 255-256.

[22] *In I Polit.*, proem., n. 8.

[23] *In I Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 35.

[24] *In I Polit.*, proem., n. 2.

> First, on the part of the things known, which are not operable by the knower; such is the knowledge of man about natural or divine things.
>
> Secondly, as regards the manner of knowing—as, for instance, if a builder consider a house by defining and dividing, and considering what belongs to it in general: for this is to consider operable things in a speculative manner, and not as practically operable; for operable means the application of form to matter, and not the resolution of the composite into its universal formal principles.
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> Thirdly, as regards the end; 'for the practical intellect differs in its end from the speculative,' as the Philosopher says in III *De Anima*. For the practical intellect is ordered to the end of operation; whereas the end of the speculative intellect is the consideration of truth. Hence if a builder should consider how a house can be made, not ordering this to the end of operation, but only to know, this would be only a speculative consideration as regards the end, although it considers an operable thing.
>
> Therefore knowledge which is speculative by reason of the thing itself known, is merely speculative. But that which is speculative either in its mode or as to its end is partly speculative and partly practical. And when it is ordained to an operative end it is simply practical.[25]

Some sciences, according to this text, even though they be concerned with an operable, nevertheless proceed in a speculative or resolutive manner, and therefore can be referred to as speculative in a certain way. Similarly, the intention of the knower has some bearing on the procedure which he uses, and therefore on the denomination of his science as speculative or practical. Thus Thomistic commentators introduce at this point a distinction between the end of the science, as such, and the end intended by the scientist.[26] For instance, as this text indicates, there can be knowledge

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[25] *I*, 14, 16 (trans. English Dominicans).

[26] Thus, for example, Cajetan teaches: "Circa hanc partem, adverte primo quod practicum et speculativum hic sumitur non solum ut sunt conditiones scientiae secundum se, sed etiam ex parte scientis. . . ."—*In I*, 14, 16, n. 3. John of St. Thomas explains this distinction in greater detail as follows: "Itaque quando D. Thomas dicit considerationem aliquam esse speculativam ex fine, et posse esse practicam ex fine, idque docet esse practicum et speculativum secundum quid: loquitur de speculativo et practico ex parte scientis, seu quantum ad intentionem et usum scientis:

which is orderable to action of itself, but which the knower does not intend to so use, and which on this account can be said to be partly speculative and partly practical.[27] And conversely, in other texts, although knowledge that is in no way orderable to action is simply speculative,[28] there are truths of speculative science which can be used by the knower to guide his action remotely, and therefore these can be said to be at least remotely practical.[29]

When these ways of speaking about science are taken into account, the problem of characterizing practical science as such becomes more complex. Knowledge itself, as we have seen, is either practical or speculative according as it considers either the operable or the non-operable, and according as its end is either operation or truth. We have said that science is either practical or speculative according as its mode is either compositive or resolutive. And now we have the further basis of distinction that sciences are said to be practical because their knower intends operation, while they are also said to be speculative because their knower intends truth and proceeds resolutively, even though the science as such is concerned with an operable.

3. PRACTICAL SCIENCE

Combining these various distinguishing notes, it is possible to enumerate at least five different categories of knowledge which can be termed speculative or practical in various ways, and in which practical science as such will have to be located.

The first two categories will be those of knowledge whose object is the non-operable considered precisely as such, whose end as a consequence is truth, and whose mode is therefore resolutive. The first category is constituted when the knower intends truth; in such a case, his knowledge is

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non ex parte scientiae et secundum specificationem eius."—*Curs. Theol.*, In I, 1, disp. 2, a. 10, n. 15. It should be noted in connection with John of St. Thomas' statement that he is understanding "end of a science" in its specificative meaning as the *genus subiectum* of the science, following St. Thomas' usage in *In I Anal.*, lect. 41, n. 7. We are making a further precision in this terminology, following St. Thomas' usage in *In II Ethic.*, lect. 2, nn. 255-256; *In II Meta.*, lect. 2, n. 290; and *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1. Thus we distinguish, for instance, between the proper subject of practical science, which is the *operable* as such, and the end of practical science, which is *operation*; apart from these, then, there is also the end of the *knower*, which in practical science may be either *truth* or *operation*, according to the text we are now discussing, namely: *I*, 14, 16. Cf. also *De Ver.*, q. 3, a. 3, ad 2 contra.

[27] *De Ver.*, q. 3, a. 3, c. and ad 2 contra.

[28] *Ibid.*, q. 3, a. 3.

[29] *Ibid.*, q. 14, a. 4.

in no way practical, and can be said to be simply speculative, or, in St. Thomas' terminology, speculative *"tantum"*[30] or *"semper."*[31] The second category is constituted when the knower does not intend truth, but rather operation; in such a case, his knowledge can be said to be formally speculative (St. Thomas: *"principaliter"*),[32] insofar as the subject matter, end, and mode are those of speculative knowledge, and only accidentally practical (St. Thomas: *"secundario,"*[33] *"remota occasio,"*[34]) because it is merely the intention of the one knowing which confers a practical character on the knowledge.

The third category will be that of knowledge whose object is the operable viewed precisely as non-operable, whose end as a consequence is truth, and whose mode is therefore resolutive; here the knower can only intend truth, since he is abstracting from the operable's ordination to operation, and his knowledge is denominated by St. Thomas as *"secundum quid"* speculative and *"secundum quid"* practical.[35]

The fourth and fifth categories will be those of knowledge whose object is the operable considered precisely as such, whose proximate end is therefore operation, and whose mode is therefore compositive. The fourth category is constituted when the knower does not intend operation, but rather truth; in such a case, his knowledge can be said to be formally practical (St. Thomas: *"principaliter,"*[36] *"habitu,"* *"virtute,"*[37]) insofar as the object, end, and mode are those of practical knowledge, and only accidentally speculative (St. Thomas: *"quodammodo"*),[38] because it is merely the intention on the part of the knower which confers a speculative character on the knowledge. The fifth category, finally, is constituted when the knower actually intends operation; in such a case, his knowledge is in no way speculative, and can be said to be actually practical, or, in St. Thomas' terminology, practical *"in actu."*[39]

These five categories can be represented schematically in the following fashion:

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[30] *I*, 14, 16.

[31] *De Ver.*, q. 3, a. 3. Cf. *In I Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 35, for the mode of such knowledge (modo resolutorio).

[32] *In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 2, a. 3, qla. 2.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] *De Ver.*, q. 14, a. 4.

[35] *I*, 14, 16.

[36] *In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 2, a. 3, qla. 2.

[37] *De Ver.*, q. 3, a. 3.

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] *Ibid.*

KNOWLEDGE

	whose OBJECT is	whose MODE is	whose END is	whose KNOWER intends	is called "SPECULATIVE"	is called "PRACTICAL"
1.	Non-operable as such	resolutive	truth	truth	simply (*tantum, semper*)	- - -
2.	Non-operable as such	resolutive	truth	operation	formally (*principaliter*)	accidentally (*remota occasio, secundario*)
3.	Operable as non-operable	resolutive	truth	truth	partially (*sec'd quid*)	partially (*sec'd quid*)
4.	Operable as such	compositive	operation	truth	accidentally (*quodammodo*)	formally (*habitu, virtute, principaliter*)
5.	Operable as such	compositive	operation	operation	- - -	actually (*in actu*)

An examination of this schema will show that practical science obviously does not pertain to the first two categories, for these have all the characteristic notes of speculative science, which we are here attempting to distinguish from practical science. Nor does practical science pertain to the fifth category, which is characteristic of the habits of prudence and art. The reason for this will be seen in more detail when we treat of prudence itself in the next Chapter; for the moment, a general reason can be seen in the distinction between the fourth and fifth categories of knowledge just indicated. In the fifth category, the knower actually intends to produce a singular existent operable, and this is characteristic of prudence and art, which are concerned with singular contingents;[40] in the fourth category, on the other hand, the knower immediately intends the truth about the operable at a more general level, abstracting from the direct intention to operate, and this is characteristic of reason alone, which can thus be perfected by the habit of practical science.[41]

Practical science then will have to be placed in the third or fourth categories. It is not completely practical knowledge, and in this it is distinguished from prudence, and at the same time it is not completely speculative knowledge, nor is it even formally speculative and only accidentally

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[40] *I-II*, 57, 5, ad 3.

[41] Prudence also can be said to be partly in the appetites, while practical science is only in the intellect: "Omnia ergo de quibus hic fit mentio, in tantum sunt species prudentiae, in quantum non in ratione sola consistunt, sed habent aliquid in appetitu. In quantum enim sunt in sola ratione, dicuntur quaedam scientiae practicae, scilicet, ethica, oeconomica et politica."—*In VI Ethic.*, lect. 7, n. 1200.

practical, and in these characteristics it is distinguished from speculative science. In itself, it is partly speculative and partly practical. According to one way of speaking, it perhaps can be said to be formally practical and only accidentally speculative, insofar as it is concerned with an operable as such, proceeds in a composite mode, has operation for its end, but the knower immediately intends only the truth about the operable and abstracts from the direct intention to operate. According to another way of speaking, it perhaps can be said to be *secundum quid* practical and *secundum quid* speculative, insofar as it is concerned with an operable considered precisely as non-operable, proceeds in a resolutive mode, and has truth for its end, which the knower himself immediately intends.

When these ways of speaking are compared, moreover, additional problems arise. Are they mutually exclusive, for instance, or can they be understood in such a way that both correctly characterize practical science? Does practical science, as a science, proceed resolutively or compositively, or does it proceed in both modes at the same time, or now in one mode, now in the other? Is it, as some authors hold, practical by reason of end but speculative by reason of mode, so that it only partly pertains to the third category and partly to the fourth?[42] And if it pertains properly to *both* categories, which gives the more accurate characterization of practical science as such, i.e., as both science and practical?

The answers to these questions obviously have important bearing on the method of demonstrating in practical science, insofar as they concern the procedure which is proper to practical science. We shall therefore attempt to resolve the difficulties which they present, but first will have to

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[42] This characterization of moral science derives from a summary of Capreolus, which reads as follows: "Scientia moralis est speculativa quoad modum, sed quoad finem est practica: procedit enim modo speculativo definiendo, dividendo, universalia praedicata considerando, sed finis eius est non solum ut sciamus, sed ut boni efficiamur, et ideo est simpliciter practica."—(*Defensiones*, In I Sent., d. 35, a. 2, ad 1). It is cited with approval by Ramirez (I, 61) as indicating that moral science is *simpliciter practica* and only *secundum quid speculativa*, and is attributed by H. Grenier (*Thomistic Philosophy*, IV, n. 817) to Maritain and Marquart as giving an essential and formal description of the nature of moral philosophy. The difficulty this interpretation presents is one of understanding how a science can attain a practical end by the exclusive use of speculative means. John of St. Thomas (*Curs. Phil.*, Log., II p., q. 1, a. 4, and q. 27, a. 1, resp. ad 1am diff.), who is followed by J. Gredt (*Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelicae-Thomisticae*, I, n. 103), and L. Thiry (*Speculativum-practicum*, pp. 61-63), adopts the simple solution that moral science is *in se* speculative, and only practical insofar as it includes prudence, and thus leaves the practical means to prudence alone. This solution is rejected by Y. Simon (*Critique de la connaissance morale*, pp. 89-90) and by O. Lottin (*Morale Fondamentale*, I, pp. 4-5), with good reason, as we shall point out below, because it is not in accord with Aristotelian-Thomistic doctrine as exposed in the *Nichomachean Ethics* and its commentary. Cf. fn. 83 *infra*, p. 93.

elaborate further the difference between *resolution* and *composition* as applied to a science, in order to supply the conceptual framework for the solution.

II. RESOLUTION AND COMPOSITION IN MORAL SCIENCE

The terms "resolution" and "composition," like "speculative" and "practical," have a wide variety of usages in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. Some meanings of the terms are quite general or common, while others are restricted to very special applications. Our primary interest here is one of understanding the precise way in which resolution is said to be characteristic of speculative science and in which composition is said to be characteristic of practical science, and also the relations which may obtain between the two modes of proceeding. To do so, we shall first have to delineate various understandings of the terms, in order to eliminate those which do not relate to our immediate problem.

One usage of resolution and composition is that which serves to differentiate the human from the angelic way of knowing, as when it is said, for instance, that it is proper for a rational nature to proceed *per viam resolutionis*, and for an intellectual nature to proceed *per viam compositionis*.[43] Another usage, closely related to this, describes a type of resolution which is found among the human sciences, when, for instance, the entities studied in physics are said to be resolved to their ultimate principles in the metaphysical order, and on which account metaphysical consideration is assimilated to the angelic way of knowing.[44] Since both of these usages involve two orders of knowing, or involve a process of proceeding from one science to another, and therefore do not refer to resolution and composition as they are found *within* one science, neither of these will concern us here.

A third usage is a very general one, which describes the mode of proceeding in human sciences and within any one science in order to attain truth. St. Thomas describes this as follows:

> There is a twofold way of proceeding to knowledge of the truth. One is by way of resolution, according to which we proceed from composite things to simple things, and from the whole to a part, as is said in Book I of the *Physics*, that 'confused things are more known to us.' And in this way knowledge of truth is completed when one arrives at individual parts that are distinctly known. The other is the way of composition, through which we

[43] *C. Gent.*, II, 100.

[44] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1, sol. 3.

> proceed from simple things to composites; knowledge of the truth is completed in this way when one arrives at the whole.[45]

According to this understanding, a resolutive mode is one which proceeds from composite things to simple things, while a compositive mode is one which proceeds from simple things to composites. This common notion of resolution and composition, as we shall see, will be verified both of the discourse of speculative science and that of practical science, and according to this usage, therefore, both can be said to proceed resolutively *and* compositively.

A fourth usage does not concern discourse, properly speaking, but rather the process of abstraction which precedes demonstrative discourse. According to this usage, there are two resolutions which are effected by the human intellect: one according to the abstraction of form from matter, where resolution is made to the ultimate subject or more material principle; the other according to the abstraction of universal from particular, where resolution is made to the more formal principle.[46] Although not our immediate concern, this type of resolution will be of interest in describing the discourse of demonstrative science, and therefore is noted here.

The fifth and last usage is one to which we have already referred in discussing the distinction between speculative and practical science, and is also one which presents a special problem. St. Thomas, in speaking of the method proper to moral science, makes the statement:

> It is necessary in every practical science to proceed in a composite manner. On the contrary in speculative science, it is necessary to proceed in a resolutive manner by breaking down composite things into simple principles.[47]

Further, in speaking of God's practical knowledge, he notes that there can be a resolution of operables in the non-operable mode:

> Since He knows the things which He makes or is able to make, not only as they exist in their own act of existence, but also according to all the notes which the human intellect can find in them by analysis (*resolvendo*), He knows things that He can make (*operabilibus*) even under an aspect in which they are incapable of execution (*eo modo quo non sunt operabiles*).[48]

And again, in describing how operables can be considered "*modo speculativo*," he makes implicit reference to the compositive mode which is proper

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[45] *In II Meta.*, lect. 1, n. 278; cf. also *In I de Caelo*, proem., n. 2.
[46] *Compendium theologiae*, c. 62.
[47] *In I Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 35 (trans. C. I. Litzinger).
[48] *De Ver.*, q. 3, a. 3 (trans. R. W. Mulligan, p. 153).

to the consideration of operables, and which is different from the resolutive mode:

> This is to consider operable things in a speculative manner, and not as practically operable; for operable means the application of form to matter, and not the resolution of the composite into its universal formal principles.[49]

This usage, then, is the one which characterizes the compositive mode as proper to practical science and the resolutive mode as proper to speculative science, although it also countenances a use of the resolutive mode in practical science. It is the one which we shall have to investigate in more detail, in order to clarify the use of demonstration in practical science.

Since the implication of these texts is that speculative science has its own resolutive mode, which is sometimes found also in practical science, despite the fact that practical science has its own compositive mode, we shall consider the resolution of speculative science first, and then proceed from that to the composition of practical science.

1. THE RESOLUTIVE MODE OF SPECULATIVE SCIENCE

In the demonstrative process of speculative science, as we have already seen, certitude is achieved by a process of resolution, namely, by resolving the conclusion to *per se* principles.[50] Sometimes this resolutory process is referred to as a *"via iudicii,"* insofar as all demonstration terminates in a judgment, in which the conclusion is judged in light of a middle term; it is the latter which moves the intellect to assent to the conclusion, insofar as it furnishes the reason why the subject can be joined to the particular predicate.[51] And, as we have likewise seen, in more perfect demonstrations, this middle term will be a cause, which is prior in the order of being to the effect which is demonstrated. In fact, the basic need for the resolution which is found in the demonstrations of speculative science comes about from the weakness of our intellects, from the fact that we first apprehend things that are posterior in being, and have to resolve them to their causes, which are prior in being. Because the order of our knowledge is different from the order of being, our speculative discourse is dominated by the resolution of the prior in knowledge to the prior in being, of the simple *quoad nos* to the simple *quoad se*.[52]

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[49] *I*, 14, 16.

[50] Certitudo nihil aliud est quam determinatio intellectus ad unum. . . . In scientia vero conclusionum causatur determinatio ex hoc quod conclusio secundum actum rationis in principia per se visa resolvitur."—*In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 2, a. 2, qla. 3.

[51] *I*, 79, 8. Cf. also: *I*, 79, 12.

[52] *I-II*, 14, 5.

Such being the case, the demonstrative process in speculative science usually commences with a search for causes, sometimes referred to as a *"via inventionis"*,[53] and, in the order of intrinsic causes, this is frequently effected by an abstractive resolution—the fourth usage of resolution referred to above—which arrives at the form and the matter through the method of division and definition. But the perfect knowing of demonstrative science demands more that the discovery of causes. The cause must also be seen as the cause of this effect, or, in other words, it must be *applied* to the effect, for it to be of any use in the judgment of the conclusion.[54] This second stage of the demonstrative process involves a type of composition, then, by which the cause is composed with the effect. And, insofar as the cause is simpler in the order of being than the effect which it produces, there is a true process from the simple to the complex, or there is a true composition in the general sense—the third usage of composition referred to above. But the final judgment of the demonstrative process is not effected by this composition alone; more properly, the conclusion is judged in the *light* of the middle term, or, in other words, it must be seen precisely as *resolved* to the cause which makes it to be what it is.[55] Thus the end of the demonstrative process is a resolution of judgment—the fifth usage of resolution referred to above—which terminates in the cause, more intelligible in itself and more simple *quoad se* than the conclusion, and therefore which is able to guarantee the truth and certitude of the conclusion.

In the light of this analysis, the demonstrative process of speculative science can be seen as involving two resolutions and one composition, all pertaining to different orders, but not without a certain subordination among themselves. First there is an abstractive or definitive resolution, where the objects of sense knowledge, in themselves confused wholes or effects, are resolved to their causes; secondly, there is a common type of composition, where these causes are applied to their effects, or the conclusion is composed from the premises; and finally, there is a proper type of resolution, the resolution of scientific judgment, where the conclusion is seen as resolved to its causes or principles. The final resolution is the one which dominates, and also denominates, the whole process of speculative science. It terminates with the speculative scientist contemplating truth, the end of his science, as seen mediately through a cause and not immediately in itself, which serves to distinguish his science from other habits of the specu-

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[53] For a detailed example of the use of the *"via inventionis"* and *"via iudicii"* in speculative science, see my *Scientific Methodology of Theodoric of Freiberg*, pp. 174-227.

[54] *In I Anal.*, lect. 4, n. 5.

[55] Cf. *I-II*, 54, 2, ad 2; *II-II*, 1, 1; *Q. D. de Caritate*, q. un., a. 13, ad 6.

lative intellect. His whole process is predominantly resolutive, although it is achieved through a kind of composition, in the common or general sense of the term.

2. THE COMPOSITION PROPER TO PRACTICAL SCIENCE

Practical science, its object being the operable, differs from speculative science in two notable respects: first of all, the principle to which speculative discourse resolves is replaced by the end, which is the term of practical discourse;[56] and secondly, in things which can be done by us, the causes are simpler and prior in the order of being when compared to their effects—since our operation imitates nature in proceeding from the simple to the composite—and therefore the process in the order of knowing corresponds to that in the order of being.[57] On both accounts, the mode of procedure characteristic of practical science will be that of composition, and it will thus differ from the procedure of speculative science.

Despite this difference, however, it is important to note that the order of reasoning about operation is opposite to the order of operation itself; there is a difference between the order of intention and the order of execution, and precisely because of this, there is a resolutory process which is likewise essential to practical discourse. This is best illustrated in the resolution of counsel, which starts with an end to be attained, and inquires for the appropriate means to realize that end.[58] Because in this case the end is first in knowledge, but the means will be the first in being or execution, a resolution is necessary; this resolution, moreover, will proceed from the end, considered precisely as an effect and therefore as composed, all the way to the first cause or action which has to be placed, and which therefore is simple.[59] Thus it fulfills the common notion of resolution—the third usage mentioned above—which proceeds from composites to simples. In a completely similar way, moral science, precisely as a practical science, must also resolve in its discourse: it resolves something that *can be* done, i.e., an operable as such, but without actually intending operation—and in this respect it differs from counsel—to the movements and operations required for the end to exist, which are more simple than the composed end.

But practical science, unlike speculative science, does not terminate in a resolutive process, and this is likewise important. Its proper mode is to

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[56] *De Ver.*, q. 15, a. 3. Cf. also *I-II*, 1, 4.

[57] *I-II*, 14, 5; also: *In I Polit.*, proem., nn. 2-3.

[58] *I-II*, 14, 5, ad 1.

[59] *I-II*, 14, 5. Cf. *In III Ethic.*, lect. 8, nn. 475-476; also *In III de Anima*, lect. 15, n. 821.

consider the causes and operations which are attained by resolution, and to compose them in the order of execution, all the way up to the point where they produce the existent operable in all its complexity. Here it can only go so far, however, because its character as a science prohibits it from being completely practical; it must ultimately be complemented by prudence or one of the practical arts, in order to attain the singular existent.[60] Its function, precisely as science and as practical, is to give *aliquod auxilium* for the production of the operable, the way medical science helps the doctor to cure, actually, without itself effecting health in the patient.[61] But the end of practical science is still operation, and not the contemplation of truth, and this is what, in the final analysis, dictates that its proper mode be compositive.

This composition which is proper to practical science can be illustrated by examples taken from particular sciences. It should be noted, however, that there are differences within the operative sciences themselves, for not all attain the particular operable with which they are concerned in exactly the same way. The biggest difference is between the operative science which deals with human action (*agere*) as such, or moral science, and those which deal with external objects that are the result of human production or "making" (*facere*),[62] which come under the Thomistic designation of *"scientia factiva,"*[63] and would be known today as mechanical or engineering sciences.[64] Medical science, on the other hand, is a practical science which falls somewhere between these two categories, but it has more in common with the *scientiae factivae* in the sense that it is *factiva sanitatis*,[65] despite the fact that the doctor merely cooperates with nature in the production of his effect. Being closer in method to moral science, because of its concern

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[60] "Scientia vera moralis, quamvis sit propter operationem, tamen illa operatio non est actus scientiae, sed magis virtutis, ut patet in libro *Ethic.*; unde non potest dici ars, sed magis in illis operationibus se habet virtus loco artis."—*In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 3.

[61] *In II Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 259.

[62] St. Thomas sometimes uses the term "facere" to mean the same thing as "agere," as in *II-II*, 134, 2, but he usually distinguishes formally between the two: "Differt autem facere et agere quia . . . factio est actus transiens in exteriorem materiam, sicut aedificare, secare et huiusmodi; agere autem est actus permanens in ipso agente, sicut videre, velle, et huiusmodi."—*I-II*, 57, 4. Cf. also *Comp. Theol.*, I, 96; *I-II*, 57, 5, ad 3.

[63] *In XI Meta.*, lect. 7, n. 2253.

[64] "Differunt enim agere et facere: nam agere est secundum operationem manentem in ipso agente, sicut est eligere, intelligere et huiusmodi: unde scientiae activae dicuntur scientiae morales. Facere autem est secundum operationes, quae transit exterius ad materiae transmutationem, sicut secare, urere, et huiusmodi: unde scientiae factivae dicuntur artes mechanicae."—*in VI Meta.*, lect. 1, n. 1152.

[65] Cf. *I*, 13, 10; *In VII Meta.*, lect. 6, nn. 1404-1410.

with an operable that is basically a natural entity and not a mere artifact, medical science has more interest for us and will supply useful analogies for understanding the compositive process of moral science.

Beginning with engineering science, however, and paraphrasing St. Thomas' commentary on the *Metaphysics* where the *scientiae factivae* are being discussed, we can say that before the engineer could have proceeded to build anything, he must first have known the nature or essence of what he was to build, known more technically as its *species factiva* or its *quod quid erat esse*.[66] Not only must he have known this, but he must have reasoned back to all the intermediate constructions, with their quiddities and their appropriate efficient causes, in order to arrive at the first step in the constructive process, and also at the order to be followed in the actual construction. Yet this knowledge, called by St. Thomas the *intelligentia* which precedes *factio*, is really only a preliminary;[67] the real work of engineering comes when this knowledge is applied to work. Here there may have to be variations in the plans dictated by contingent circumstances, for which the engineer is essential and in which he is most properly "engineering." In any event, his knowledge must govern the actual building process, and this is the composition which makes engineering to be a practical science.[68] Even here, moreover, the engineering science of itself does not

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[66] "Illa fiunt ab arte, quorum species factiva est *in anima*. Per speciem autem exponit quod quid erat esse *cuiuslibet rei factae per artem*, ut quod quid erat esse domus, quando fit domus."—*In VII Meta.*, lect. 6, n. 1404. The term "species factiva" thus expresses the quiddity as a regulative idea existing in the mind of the engineer, while the "quod quid est" is the quiddity as realized in the completed structure. Both terms are based on the analogy which exists between art and nature; cf. *In II Phys.*, lect. 4, nn. 5-6; lect. 13, nn. 3-4; *De Ver.*, q. 11, a. 1.

[67] "In generationibus et motibus artificialibus est aliqua actio quae vocatur intelligentia et aliqua quae vocatur factio. Ipsa enim excogitatio artificis vocatur intelligentia, quae incipit ab hoc principio, quae est species rei fiendae per artem. Et haec operatio protenditur, ut supra dictum est, usque ad illud quod est ultima in intentione, et primum in opere. Et ideo illa actio quae incipit ab ultimo, ad quod intelligentia terminatur, vocatur factio, quae est motus ipso in exteriorem materiam."—*In VII Meta.*, lect. 6, n. 1408. It should be noted that there is a difference between *art*, as a practical habit dealing directly with singulars, and *engineering*, as a practical science dealing with universals. Thus there is a twofold way of understanding *intelligentia*, one as the understanding of a *species factiva* at the level of the *vis cogitativa*, the other a more perfect understanding at the level of reason. Cf. *II-II*, 49, 2, SC, ad 1, and ad 3. St. Thomas sometimes identified art with "factive" science, as he sometimes identifies prudence with moral science; cf. *In VI Meta.*, lect. 1, n. 1152; *In XI Meta.*, lect. 7, n. 2253; also *infra*, p. 126, fns. 110 and 111.

[68] This application to work is also necessary for the formation of engineers, as it is for the acquisition of the building arts: "Sed operando secundum virtutem accepimus virtutes, sicut etiam contingit in artibus operativis, in quibus homines faciendo addiscunt ea quae oportet facere postquam didicerunt. Sicut aedificando fiunt aedificatores et cytharizando cytharistae."—*In II Ethic.*, lect. 1, n. 250.

produce the completed structure. The engineer's universal knowledge as to how to produce a structure of this kind (*species specialissima*) must be complemented by the mechanical arts of the workmen to produce the singular existent structure from individual matter.

Medical science, closer than engineering to the moral science which is our proper concern, makes more intimate use of nature in the active production of its end, namely, health.[69] The doctor, like the engineer, first reasons back from the notion of health until he comes to the first action with which he can initiate a return to health in the sick person, say, a particular type of medicine which will normally overcome a particular type of infection.[70] This requires a technical knowledge of the quiddity of health in various organs, the quiddity of diseases, the proportionate causes, which can overcome abnormalities and restore normal operation, etc.[71] But again, this is knowledge preparatory to action; the doctor cannot give a prescription to the patient and then never see him again. He is actually "doctoring" when he *applies* the causes to the actual return to health, checks the progress and effects of the medication, revises the dosage, etc. Here too his universal knowledge is not enough; he is dependent on the art of the pharmacist and medical technicians, and on the individual natural dispositions of the patient, as efficient causes, to achieve the ultimate effect: the concrete health of this individual.

Considering these examples, it can be seen that the discourse of practical science commences with an end, which presents itself as something simple in the order of intention, and with respect to which the means can be regarded as something complex. Thus at this very first stage there is a quasi-composition, insofar as it proceeds from the simple to the composed, and this verifies the general or common notion of composition, although it is in the order of intention. In order to proceed to action, it is then necessary to resolve the end, considered now as a complex entity, or something which can be produced or done, to principles of action or causes. This resolutive process must investigate all the intermediate quiddities and their corresponding efficient causes, until it comes to the first action that must be initiated in the order of execution. Finally, when this is known, the compositive process proper to practical science begins. This proceeds in the order of being or operation, applies the causes to the construction of the operable, which is the end or complex entity which results from the causes as operationally more simple. And to achieve the singular existent,

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[69] "Ita enim se habet philosophia ad curationem animae, sicut medicina ad curationem corporis."—*In II Ethic.*, lect. 4, n. 288. Cf. *In I Ethic.*, lect. 19, n. 227.

[70] *In VII Meta.*, lect. 6, n. 1406.

[71] *Ibid.*, nn. 1409-1410.

it is necessary that the practical science be complemented by prudence or art, which removes the indeterminacy of the universal with respect to contingent circumstances and individual matter.

Unlike speculative discourse, then, practical discourse involves two compositions and one resolution. The first composition is in the order of intention, where the end, considered as something simple, is composed to the means as composites, i.e., as effects or conclusions. The resolution which follows on this reverses this order, to get to the order of execution. It considers the end as a composite, and resolves to the actions or causes necessary to produce it.[72] The final composition is the one proper to practical discourse, which recomposes these actions arrived at through resolution, to produce the existent operable. The last composition is the one which dominates, and also denominates, the whole process of practical science. It terminates with the practical scientist constructing the subject he has been studying, with the help of other practical habits, and thus with him operating, and not contemplating truth.[73] His whole process is predominantly compositive, although it cannot be achieved without an intermediate process of resolution.

3. THE DEMONSTRATIVE PROCESS IN MORAL SCIENCE

This brings us finally to the key question. The resolution presupposed to the composition which is proper to practical science, as we have seen, fulfills at least the common or general notion of resolution—the third usage mentioned above—insofar as it proceeds from composites to simples. Does it also fulfill the *special* notion of resolution which is characteristic of demonstration in speculative science—the fifth usage—so that there will further be a strict demonstrative process, in the speculative mode, which is found in practical science?

This question, we believe, cannot be answered affirmatively or negatively in such a way as to apply to *all* practical sciences.[74] Since our interest in

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[72] "Licet enim in intentione finis sit sicut principium et medius terminus, tamen in via executionis, quam inquirit consiliator, finis se habet sicut conclusio, et id quod est ad finem sicut medius terminus."—*In VI Ethic.*, lect. 8, n. 1251.

[73] Cf. *In I de Anima*, lect. 8, n. 119.

[74] The difficulty here arises from the fact that some practical sciences are concerned with natural entities, while others are concerned with pure artifacts. Thus it ultimately reduces to the question of whether artifacts properly have "quiddities" or "natures," and as such can be subjected to causal analysis which is univocal with that used to study natural entities. It would seem that the *"quod quid est"* of an artifact is primarily *constructed* by the artist and not primarily *discovered* by an analytical process, although it could be so discovered by another human who studied the artifact as already produced. Thus it is only said analogously to the *"quod quid est"* of a natural entity, which in no way is constructed, but must be discovered by all men from a study of the operations of nature.

practical science as such, however, is merely ordered to an understanding of moral science, we believe that a satisfactory answer can be given if we restrict ourselves to those practical sciences which are concerned with operables resulting directly from the operation of nature, such as medical science and moral science.[75] In such sciences, the operating supposite, or the *subiectum inhaesionis* of the operation, is a natural entity, and not a mere artifact. Because it is a natural entity, it pertains to the physical order as such; and in this order, the process of our knowing is the reverse of the order of being.[76] Since this, then, is the very situation that dictates the use of demonstrative resolution in speculative science, it also requires that there be a demonstrative resolution in such practical sciences. Therefore we conclude that at least in medical and moral science, the resolution preceding composition involves more than the common notion of resolution: it also involves the proper notion of resolution which is found in speculative science, together with the preliminary resolution and composition which normally accompany it.

That such is the case may be seen more clearly, perhaps, by comparing such practical sciences with their corresponding natural sciences, e.g., medical science with vertebrate zoology and moral science with human psychology. Medical science, for instance, will be interested in tumors which grow regularly in the intestinal tract. To study them, it will have to employ the same procedures as are used by the zoologist in studying the intestines or any other organ, and thus it will have to proceed in the resolutive mode proper to this speculative science. Since it does so, it may be asked why is it not the same as vertebrate zoology, or why are tumors studied in medical science and not in zoology? The Aristotelian answer to this is that the ends of the sciences are different, and this dictates the relative importance assigned to subject matters.[77] For the zoologist, for instance, the intestine is an integral part of the animal organism and worthy of consideration in its own right; the tumor, on the other hand, is only an incidental thing, an abnormality, which disrupts the normal functioning of nature. For the medical doctor, on the other hand, the situation is reversed: his proper con-

[75] It is noteworthy that these are the only two practical sciences recognized by the Salmanticenses: "Scientia practica tantum est duplex, nempe, medicina et philosophia moralis."—*Curs. Theol.*, tract. de virt., arbor praedicamentalis, n. 32 (ed. Palmé, VI, 434).

[76] "Quia nos ratiocinando notitiam acquirimus, oportet quod procedamus ab his quae sunt magis nota nobis: et si quidem eadem sunt magis nota nobis et simpliciter, tunc ratio procedit a principiis, sicut in mathematicis. Si autem alia magis nota sint simpliciter, et alia quoad nos, nunc oportet e converso procedere, sicut *in naturalibus et moralibus*."—*In I Ethic.*, lect. 4, n. 52.

[77] St. Thomas adopts this answer also: see *In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 2, a. 3, qla. 2. For Aristotle: *In II Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 256; *In III Ethic.*, lect. 6, n. 452.

cern is health, and with reference to health a tumor can be very important. He must know about the normal functioning of an intestine, but in a sense he can learn that from the zoologist. The special knowledge which he requires respects the abnormality in the intestine, for it is only when he knows about this that he can proceed in the order of operation to restore the patient to health. Apart from that, his preliminary methods of investigation parallel those used by the zoologist, and these are in the speculative mode with its proper resolution. But the entire reason for such investigation is that he be able to proceed in the order of composition, which is distinctive of his science as practical.[78]

A completely analogous situation obtains between moral science and human psychology. The psychologist can study the faculties of the soul and the virtues with which they are endowed, as well as the opposed vices; yet his study usually terminates with the major parts of the subject he is considering. The moralist, on the other hand, will investigate virtues and vices in great detail, all the way, for example, to delineating very precisely the *objectum formale quo* of a quasi-integral part of a potential part of one of the moral virtues.[79] Is such knowledge important in itself, so that it would be worthwhile for the psychologist, for instance, to terminate his speculative mode of consideration in the contemplation of the resulting truth? Again, the Aristotelian answer is no. In itself, such knowledge is trivial; it is only because it can be useful for directing human action, which is the end of moral science as practical, that it is worth acquiring in the first place.[80] But in order to acquire it, the moralist must employ the speculative procedures characteristic of psychology, and in so doing he must properly demonstrate. Thus he uses the proper resolution of speculative discourse, although this is for him only a preliminary to his more proper work of composition in the actual direction of human action.

Thus we conclude that there is a proper resolution in the practical sciences which we have been discussing. They proceed in the resolutive mode, considering their subject, as St. Thomas says, "defining and dividing

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[78] "Videmus autem quod excellentes medici multa tractant circa cognitionem corporis, et non solum circa medicinales operationes. Unde politicus habet aliquam considerationem de anima."—*In I Ethic.*, lect. 19, n. 227.

[79] For instance, *fiducia* with respect to *magnanimitas* and *fortitudo*. Cf. *II-II*, 128, a. un.; 129, 5 and 6 ad 3.

[80] "Si inquisitio huius scientiae esset ad solam scientiam veritatis, parum esset utilis. Non enim magnum quid est, nec multum pertinens ad perfectionem intellectus, quod aliquis cognoscat variabilem veritatem contingentium operabilium, circa quae est virtus." *In II Ethic.*, lect. n. 256. "Actiones nostrae sunt quaedam singularia contingentia, et cito transeuntia. Unde earum cognitio vel opinio, non multum quaeritur propter veritatem quae sit in eis, sed solum propter opus."—*In III Ethic.*, lect. 6, n. 452.

and considering what belongs to it in general," and resolving to "its universal formal principles."[81] But this is merely an intermediate stage for such sciences, because in the final analysis, as practical, they will have to be compositive in mode. Their composition, however, is one that incorporates a resolution that is basically the resolution of speculative science. It need not be one by way of opposition to the resolutive mode, but rather one which presupposes and completes the latter for the case where the object of the science is the operable as such, and not merely the contemplation of truth.[82]

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This concludes our introduction to the method of moral science, in which we have located demonstration as an integral part of such method, precisely insofar as moral science is a practical science. In order to do so, it has been necessary for us to explain the differences between practical and speculative knowledge in a general way, and also to interpret the many Thomistic texts bearing on this subject, for their relevance in determining the nature of practical science itself. Our solution has been given in terms of the Aristotelian-Thomistic doctrine on resolution and composition, and has consisted in showing that not all practical sciences need use a strict demonstrative method, but that in those which are concerned with an operable that is not a mere artifact, but is also a natural entity, a proper resolutive discourse employing demonstration must be used. This conclusion is directly applicable to moral science, but it is also true of medical science, which on this account supplies fruitful analogies for comparing the two methodologies.

In terms of this solution, we now can give the basic answer to the questions we asked earlier about the categories of speculative and practical knowledge in which such practical sciences will have to be located. Moral science, for instance, pertains to both the third category and the fourth category in the schema indicated on p. 79. The two are not mutually exclusive. Moral science proceeds both in the speculative mode and in the practical mode, but not at the same time in each; its preliminary investigation is in the speculative mode, while its actual work is in the compositive mode. Thus it is not only practical by reason of end, but also by reason of its

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[81] *I*, 14, 16; fuller citation of text on p. 76.

[82] This conclusion is thus different from that of J. Maritain (*Les Degrés du Savoir*, 4th ed., p. 619; see diagram), who identifies the resolution of moral philosophy with that of physics, mathematics and metaphysics; the mode is similar, but the object of the resolution is not. Also, Maritain attributes the compositive mode proper to moral philosophy to so-called "practically practical sciences," which he holds are really distinct from moral philosophy itself. (*Ibid.*, p. 625).

proper mode, although this does not exclude that it proceed in the speculative mode too.[83] And although it pertains to both categories, it more properly pertains to the fourth: it is *formally* practical science, and only *secundum quid* speculative.

Two extremely important consequences now follow from these conclusions. First of all, because moral science can proceed in a proper resolutive mode, everything that has been said about demonstration in the speculative sciences in the preceding Chapter will be verified of moral science as such; and, *mutatis mutandis*, everything that has been said about demonstration in sacred theology, in general, will be verified of moral theology.[84] Thus Chapter One is not extrinsic to our consideration of moral methodology, but really presents the fundamentals which are necessary to its proper understanding.

Secondly, apart from these fundamentals, there is an additional dimension to moral methodology which is dictated by its compositive or practical mode. Aside from the speculative method characteristic of speculative sciences, there will also be a practical method which is distinctive of moral science, precisely as practical. Moral science is essentially normative science, i.e., it must direct human action.[85] To do this it must first start with a scientific knowledge of its end, the *quid est* of beatitude, say, at least in a general way. It must reason back to the *quid est* of the actions by which this

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[83] The results of our analysis would thus be more in accord with the teaching of Cajetan (cf. *In I-II*, 58, 5, n. 7; 94, 4, n. 1; *In II-II*, 47, 7, n. 1) than with that of John of St. Thomas (cf. *supra* p. 80, fn. 42). On the teaching of John of St. Thomas, Y. Simon makes the significant comment: "Ainsi pour saint Thomas la philosophie morale observe la méthode de synthèse caractéristique de la connaissance pratique. . . . Nous sommes loin de cette science spéculative définie par Jean de saint Thomas, de méthode analytique et étrangère aux réactions de la volonté. Faut-il dire que saint Thomas, expliquant la pensée d'Aristote, ne livre pas ici sa propre doctrine? Les termes du commentaire semblent exclure cette hypothèse. Il est moins onéreux d'accorder que Jean de saint Thomas, contrairement à son habitude, s'écarte ici de la pensée de son maître, sans paraître d'ailleurs en avoir nullement conscience."—*Critique de la connaissance morale* (Paris: 1934), 89-90; cf. also pp. 90-93, and by the same author, "Réflexions sur la connaissance pratique," *Revue de philosophie*, nouv. sér., 3 (1932), 535-537.

[84] Thus we disagree with Grenier when he maintains that moral science is not a perfect science, is not based on demonstration by proper cause, and is only an imperfect habit of the intellect (*Thom. Phil.*, IV, n. 818).

[85] "Si la philosophie morale a pour fin de diriger l'action, fut-ce de loin, elle est proprement connaissance pratique, elle prend place, ainsi que nous l'avons provisoirement admis, sur l'axe descendant qui va du jugement du sens moral au jugement de la prudence, elle est une détermination de ce que le jugement du sens moral laisse dans le vague, non seulement en ce sens qu'elle fait connaître d'une manière déjà précise et détaillée la nature du bien que l'agent libre doit vouloir, mais encore en ce sens qu'elle est essentiellement faite pour provoquer, à la mesure des précisions qu'elle apporte, un nouvel intérêt de désir." Y. Simon, *Critique de la connaissance morale*, p. 93.

can be attained, through all the intermediate stages of perfection, with their accompanying quiddities and opposed aberrations. But when it has attained these, then it must compose again: it must take all this speculative knowledge, and order it in a practical syllogism which can direct human action. Its compositive mode uses all the middle terms which have been found *resolvendo,* but it recomposes and "densifies" them, as it were, between any particular *species specialissima* of human action and the ultimate end of man. Its ultimate task is to show the concatenation of causes which are actually necessary to produce the perfect human being, and this from any stage of development and dissuetude. Its perfection is found in the moralist who is actually directing men in the pursuit of happiness, and it must in its turn be completed by prudence. But it is practical science nonetheless, and thus it has its own practical mode which is not found in speculative science.

The ramifications of this second, or practical, phase of moral methodology will have to await detailed treatment in later Chapters. For the moment, suffice it to conclude that both a speculative and a practical method are proper to moral science; the second gives meaning to the first, complements it, and confers the distinctive character on moral science precisely as practical.

CHAPTER THREE

PROBLEMS RELATING TO DEMONSTRATION IN MORAL SCIENCE

As a consequence of what has been said in the previous Chapter, it can be seen that the practical character of moral science has considerable bearing on what is demonstrated, and more generally on what is demonstrable, within this science. Apart from this factor, which affects the methodology of all practical science, there are other difficulties associated with the peculiar operable object which moral science studies, namely, the human act. These further limit what can be demonstrated, and also dictate that special procedures be employed in this science if demonstrative knowledge is to be attained.

The problems thereby associated with demonstration in moral matters are somewhat analogous to those we have already seen in Chapter One when treating of the science of nature, where the contingency of changeable being and the fact that efficient causes can be impeded in nature's operation require special methodological canons governing physical demonstration. Here, however, the difficulties are multiplied because of the freedom of the human will and the personal character of the human act, with the consequent influence of subjective dispositions and the need for the special habit of prudence in the operating subject. To these come added complications arising from the almost infinite variability of circumstances and modes of human action, all of which would seem to rule out the attainment of any certitude at the universal level which is proper to science, and therefore to call into question the possibility of scientific knowledge of moral matters.

It will be our purpose in this Chapter to examine such difficulties associated with moral demonstration, and thus with the elaboration of moral science as a science in the strict Aristotelian-Thomistic sense of the term. In so doing, we shall treat first of the nature of moral science in general, to indicate its proper subject and mode of development. From this we shall proceed to special difficulties of the practical order, such as the insufficiency of universal knowledge in moral matters, the sources from which operative knowledge can be drawn, the necessity of prudence and the practical syllogism to direct operation, and the notion of practical truth which governs the whole order of practical knowledge. With this we shall be in a position to discuss in detail the problem of moral contingency and its relation to

both speculative and practical certitude, in order to come finally to the type of certitude which characterizes moral science, and the effect of this on its demonstrative process.

I. THE GENERAL NATURE OF MORAL SCIENCE

The philosophical approach to morals through Aristotelian-Thomistic methodology is best worked out in the Thomistic commentary on the *Nichomachean Ethics,* and therefore this will form the main textual basis for our solution of the difficulties just mentioned. As a preliminary, we shall sketch briefly the broad outlines of moral philosophy, in order to supply a general background against which more particular problems can be delineated. Our procedure will be to discuss first the subject of moral science and its relation to the subject of natural science, then the general type of demonstration imposed by this subject, and lastly the method of proceeding in order to attain such demonstration, together with the methodological preoccupation which results from the practical orientation demanded by its subject matter.

1. THE SUBJECT OF MORAL SCIENCE

All sciences are concerned in some way with a study of order or relationships among things: the speculative sciences in general investigate the order which obtains among things which the human intellect can consider but cannot produce, while the practical sciences in general concern themselves with an order which man can not only consider but also produce himself. Within the latter category, moral science distinguishes itself from other practical sciences in that it considers the order which human reason puts in operations which proceed from man's will; thus its special subject is human operation as such.[1] It is concerned with such operations insofar as they are ordered among themselves or to an end. Not everything that man does, nor every operation that goes on within man, pertains therefore to the subject of moral science. Only such things as proceed from man's will according to an order of reason, or operations which are those of a man voluntarily acting to attain an end, properly pertain to the subject of this science.[2]

The extent of the consideration of moral science is nevertheless very great. The investigation of the proper principles of human operation, for instance, embraces the study of the *voluntarium,* all human virtues and vices, and the notion of human happiness itself; to this should then be added everything that contributes to happiness, and enables it to be realized in

[1] *In I Ethic.,* lect. 1, n. 2.
[2] *Ibid.,* n. 3.

the active life.[3] The individual man and his personal operation is thus only the first consideration of moral science. The further development requires a study of the operations which characterize family life, and finally those which are proper to the body politic, or the perfect society in which individuals and families work out their happiness.[4] Of the three parts of moral science which are thus constituted, the most sapiential is the part concerned with politics, or political science. Considering the supreme end of man in the active life, which is operation according to perfect virtue, it takes into account everything which is necessary to realize such operation in human society, and therefore is the most architectonic of the moral sciences.[5] The perfection of human wisdom in the order of operation will thus be found in politics, but the fundamental operations which are those of the elementary unit of human society must first be studied in ethics, or the moral science of the individual.

Because of the primacy of the individual in human operation, the radical subject of investigation in moral science is man, and on this account there is a close connection between moral science and the natural science which studies man, or psychology. Both study the same object, but moral science adds an accidental difference to the object of human psychology: it studies man's rationality with the added connotation of its morality.[6] This accidental difference in the object is such that it gives rise to an entire new set of proper passions associated with the morality of man's operation, and therefore there is a proper subalternation of ethics to psychology, and this not merely by reason of end or principle, but by reason of object.[7] The subalternation does not affect the type of abstraction involved, however—

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[3] Ad moralem philosophum pertinet considerare de delectatione, sicut et de virtute morali et felicitate."—*In X Ethic.*, lect. 1, n. 1957.

[4] *In I Ethic.*, lect. 1, n. 6.

[5] "Optimus finis pertinet ad principalissimam scientiam, et maxime architectonicam. . . . Et sic oportet quod ultimus finis pertineat ad scientiam principalissimam tamquam de fine primo et principalissimo existentem, et maxime architectonicam, tamquam praecipientem aliis quid oporteat facere. Sed civilis scientia videtur esse talis, scilicet principalissima, et maxime architectonica. Ergo ad eam pertinet considerare optimum finem."—*In I Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 35. Cf. nn. 26-31. Moral science is also ordered to the happiness of the contemplative life, as is explained more fully in Book X of the *Nichomachean Ethics*. For a discussion of this point and its influence on Aristotelian methodology, see H. Margueritte, "Note critique: Une lacune dans le premier livre de l'Ethique à Nicomaque," *Revue de l'histoire de la philosophie*, 4, (1930), 176-188; also "La composition du livre A de l'Ethique à Nicomaque," *ibid.*, 250-273. A general resumé and critique of the Aristotelian doctrine on happiness is given by D. Murphy, *The Aristotelian Concept of Happiness* (Fribourg, Switzerland: 1920).

[6] Salmanticenses, *Curs. Theol.*, tract. de virt., arbor praedic., n. 32 (ed. Palmé, VI, 434).

[7] *Ibid.*, n. 31 (VI, 433-434).

as in the case of the subalternation of optics to geometry—for both moral science and natural science function at the same level of abstraction.[8] The relationship between the two, as we have already indicated, is exactly similar to that between medicine and natural science, but whereas medicine is proximately concerned with the human body and considers it precisely *"ut sanabile,"* moral science is proximately concerned with acts that have their origin in the human soul, and considers them precisely *"ut morales et ratione regulabiles."*[9]

2. DEMONSTRATION THROUGH THE FINAL CAUSE

Because of this subalternation of moral science to natural philosophy, it is to be expected that there will be some affinity in their characteristic methods of demonstration. Man is a natural being, and as such he acts for an end in all his operations; but in those that are properly human, insofar as they proceed from the will, the causality of the end is even more manifest. Here too, as we have already indicated, contingency makes its appearance in a two-fold way: not only are man's acts those of a form in matter, but they are those of an agent acting deliberately with free choice. On both scores, the absolute necessity which is most characteristic of metaphysical demonstration is lacking, and thus demonstration *ex suppositione finis,* which we saw to be most characteristic of physics, will also be found most frequently in moral science. In this connection, it should be noted that the example given in the *Posterior Analytics* to illustrate demonstration *ex suppositione finis* is taken from moral science,[10] and again, the example used to explain *propter quid* demonstration in the order of final causality is likewise one involving human activity.[11]

Since the final cause enjoys such primacy in moral science, it is not

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[8] "Philosophia moralis pertinet ad idem genus subiectum psychologiae, cuius partem tantum considerat, nempe actum humanum seu deliberatum, et procedit sub eodem gradu abstractionis, quamvis cum modalitate speciali adaptata propriae materiae considerandae."—J. Ramirez, "De philosophia morali christiana," *DTF* 14 (1936), p. 119.

[9] "Scientia practica tantum est duplex, nempe medicina et philosophia moralis. Illius obiectum est corpus animale ut sanabile; istius vero actus humani ut morales et ratione regulabiles."—Salmanticenses, *Curs. Theol.*, tract. de virt., arbor praedic., n. 32 (VI, 434). It is noteworthy in this connection that Grenier (*Thom. Phil.*, IV, n. 819) holds that moral science is not subalternated to any speculative science, because no speculative science can furnish proper principles to a practical science such as moral. This misconstrues the nature of the subalternation involved: moral science uses speculative knowledge of the soul the way the doctor uses a zoologist's knowledge of an intestine, to *arrive at* practical principles that are properly its own, not to *take them* from the speculative science.

[10] *In II Anal.*, lect. 7, nn. 2-3.

[11] *In I Anal.*, lect. 38, n. 3.

surprising that one of the first tasks of the moralist will be to demonstrate the existence of an optimum end towards which all human activity is ordered,[12] and that thereafter everything else in the science will be dominated by the causality of this end as first cause.[13] It should not be thought from this, however, that every demonstration is made directly through such an end precisely as optimum and ultimate. It is also necessary to investigate all the intermediate and proximate ends of human activity, for these are the causes which, in the last analysis, constitute the entities studied in moral science in their moral species, and give their proper explanation.[14] The resulting procedure of demonstrating through the final cause is so axiomatic in moral science that it is worked into the technical vocabulary of the science —particularly in expressions relating to the specification of acts, habits and potencies by their objects—and so is often taken for granted. Hence it is important to insist here on its methodological basis: in moral science, as in no other science, is the end really the cause of causes, and demonstration of the *quod quid est* made most frequently *ex suppositione finis*, according to the usage indicated in Chapter One.

3. THE MODE OF PROCEDURE IN MORAL SCIENCE

Apart from this primary methodological consideration, the mode of proceeding in moral science is further dictated by the kind of knowledge of the end of human operation that is desired: it must be at once sapiential, as extending to the highest causes which control human living, and practical, precisely as directive of human affairs. The first of these confers on ethical science all the difficulty of a metaphysical consideration,[15] while with the second comes the ever-present complication that there is no simple, uniform way of manifesting practical truth in human affairs.[16] Men *de facto* have different opinions about their obligations in society, and even about what can be called "virtuous" living. Also the external goods which they use to attain their ends are subject to chance and fortune, and cannot be depended upon invariably. Thus the matter with which the moral scientist works is by nature variable and non-uniform, and his method of dealing with it must

[12] "Sic necesse est esse aliquem finem ultimum, propter quem omnia alia desiderantur, et ipse non desideratur propter alia. Et ita necesse est esse aliquem optimum finem rerum humanarum."—*In I Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 22.

[13] "Tota humana vita oportet quod ordinetur in optimum et ultimum finem humanae vitae. Necesse est ergo habere cognitionem de ultimo et optimo fine humanae vitae. Et huius ratio est, quia semper ratio eorum quae sunt ad finem, sumenda est ab ipso fine, ut etiam in II Physic. probatur."—*Ibid.*, n. 23.

[14] Cf. *In III Ethic.*, lect. 15, n. 550; *In IV Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 668; *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 1136; *I-II*, 1, 3.

[15] *In I Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 24.

[16] *Ibid.*, lect. 3, n. 32.

be well adapted to extracting certain knowledge wherever and however it can be found.[17]

The classical method for so doing, conceived by Aristotle, is paraphrased by St. Thomas in the following fashion:

> And because in the art of demonstrative science, principles must conform to conclusions, it is desirable and preferable when treating subjects so variable, and when proceeding from premises of a like nature, to bring out the truth *first* in a rough outline by applying universal principles to singulars, and by proceeding from the simple to the complex where acts are concerned. . . . *Secondly* we should bring out the lineaments of the truth, that is to say an approximation to the truth. And this is to proceed from the proper principles of this science. For moral science treats the acts of the will, and the thing moving the will is not only good but even apparent good. *Thirdly* we are going to speak of events as they happen in the majority of cases, that is of voluntary acts which proceed from the will, inclined perhaps to one alternative rather than another, but never operating under compulsion. In these too, we must proceed in such a way that principles be conformable to conclusions.[18]

The proper method of moral science, then, will have three characteristics: 1) it will apply universal, simple principles to the singular, complex entities involved in human acts—which is the compositive mode of practical science; 2) it will proceed from principles that are commonly accepted among men who have experience in human affairs; and 3) it will proceed from principles or middles that are verified frequently, so that the premises will be conformed to the conclusions, in accordance with the common doctrine of the *Posterior Analytics*.[19] This method is obviously different from that employed in a speculative science dealing with necessary matter, such as mathematics, being accommodated to a much more difficult subject matter, as we have already indicated.[20]

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[17] *Ibid.*, nn. 32-34.

[18] *Ibid.*, n. 35 (trans. C. I. Litzinger). The second point made in this text, that "we should bring out the lineaments of the truth, that is to say an approximation to the truth," accents the dialectical inquisition required to establish the principles of this science. The Latin text is more precise: "oportet ostendere veritatem 'figuraliter,' idest verisimiliter." For Aristotle's use of the term "figuraliter," see also *In I Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 24; lect. 11, n. 131; *In II de Anima*, lect. 2, n. 244. Cf. L. Roy, *La certitude de la doctrine morale*, p. 84, fn. 2.

[19] *In II Anal.*, lect. 12, n. 3.

[20] *In I Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 36. Cf. *In I Meta.*, lect. 2, n. 47; *In II Meta.*, lect. 5, n. 336.

The mode of procedure in moral science not only has its intrinsic difficulties, but it also demands special qualifications on the part of one who would employ it properly, or even on the part of one who would learn its use. Thus it cannot be taught to a youth, who has not lived long enough to acquire it.[21] For this reason, ethics should be treated rather late in the educational process, to students who are already adept at logic, mathematics and natural philosophy. After having studied so long, it is possible that they will have acquired sufficient experience, and will themselves have overcome the impulses of passion which are strong in the young.[22] If they have not done this, then despite even advanced age, they are still children in moral matters; as such they are not fit subjects, and merely waste their time trying to learn a science whose main purpose is to develop virtue by inculcating reason into human action.[23] Moral science, then, requires a subject who is experienced, and not in a mere chronological way but in a way that has tempered his passions, and thus who has a good sense of what is right and just; only such a person will appreciate and understand the principles which form the foundation of moral science.[24]

This practical requirement has a further consequence for the mode of procedure which is proper to ethics: this science is not so much interested in *propter quid* demonstrations which proceed from intrinsic causes, as are the speculative sciences. Rather it can be content in many instances with *quia* knowledge, much in the same way as the medical doctor can be satisfied to know that such and such a drug cures such and such a disease, without inquiring into all the details of why and wherefore. It is precisely such knowledge, moreover, which can be acquired by personal experience, or from the experience of others, and this again accents the empirical basis for moral science.[25] But this does not mean that quidditative and causal

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[21] *In I Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 38.

[22] *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 7, n. 1211.

[23] *In I Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 40. Cf. also n. 39.

[24] *Ibid.*, lect. 4, n. 53.

[25] "Et si hoc sit manifestum alicui, non multum est necessarium ei ad operandum cognoscere propter quid. Sicut medico sufficit ad sanandum scire quod haec herba curat talem aegritudinem. Cognoscere autem propter quid requiritur ad sciendum, quod *principaliter intenditur in scientiis speculativis*. Talis autem, quae scilicet est expertus in rebus humanis, vel per seipsum habet principia operabilium, quasi per se ea considerans, vel *de facili suscipit ea ab alio*. . . Ille autem, qui neque per seipsum potest intelligere, neque alium audiens potest in animo reponere, est inutilis quantum ad acquisitionem scientiae." *In I Ethic.*, lect. 4, n. 54. It is on the basis of this section in the *Ethics* that Grenier (*Thom. Phil.*, IV, n. 818) holds that only *quia* demonstration is used in moral science. This, we believe, is an extreme interpretation: the sense of Aristotle and St. Thomas would seem to be that for the most part *quia* demonstration suffices, without excluding the possibility of knowledge of the *quid* and *propter quid*.

knowledge of the *bonum humanum* are not sought; the scientific character of ethics demands that it inquire into the *quid sit* of habits and virtues,[26] that it seek definitions through proper causes and demonstrate through them.[27] The point is rather that the type of knowledge sought in the speculative sciences is not of interest to the moralist for its own sake, but only insofar as it is necessary to direct operation.[28] To spend too much time on speculative considerations merely to contemplate their truth would be actually *otiosum* for the moral scientist, insofar as it would take him away from the proper object of his science: the operations of man which are properly human and productive of perfect virtue, in which the happiness of the active life is ultimately to be found.[29]

II. PARTICULAR DIFFICULTIES IN MORAL METHODOLOGY

Within the framework of this general mode of procedure, however, special difficulties arise on practically every point that has been mentioned as being characteristic of moral methodology. Universal principles, for instance, are supposed to be applied to singular acts, but it would seem that such principles primarily perfect the intellect, and are too vague and general to direct specific operation as it is realized in the individual case. Again, principles are said to be taken *verisimiliter,* from commonly received opinions, but then it would appear that these are dialectical principles and not those on which a proper science can be based. In similar fashion, principles that are only verified frequently would seem again to be dialectical, and therefore not sufficient to generate the universality and certitude required of demonstrative science. Finally, the end of moral science has been said to be the actual production of moral virtue in the one acquiring the science, but

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[26] "Principium inquirendi *quid sit* aliquis habitus est considerare materiam ipsius, sicut patet ex modo procedendi Aristotelis in praecedentibus." — *In VII Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 1329; cf. *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 5.

[27] "Quia unumquodque cognoscitur per suam causam, ideo definitionem voluntarii tradit removenda causas involuntarii."—*In III Ethic.*, lect. 4, n. 425.

[28] "Secundum hunc modum faciendum est in aliis scientiis operativis, ut non sequatur hoc inconveniens ut in scientia operativa fiant sermones plures ad opera non pertinentes; puta si in hac scientia morali aliquis vellet pertractare omnia quae pertinent ad rationem et alias partes animae, oporteret de hoc plura dicere, quam de ipsis operibus. Est enim in unaquaque scientia vitiosum, ut homo moretur in his quae sunt extra scientiam."—*In I Ethic.*, lect. 11, n. 136.

[29] *Ibid.* Another example: "Quaerere autem, utrum homines post mortem aliqualiter vivant secundum animam, et utrum cognoscant ea quae hic aguntur, aut si ex his aliquo modo immutantur, non pertinet ad propositum, cum Philosophus hic agat de felicitate praesentis vitae, sicut ex supradictis patet. Et ideo huiusmodi questiones, quae longa discussione indigerent, hic praetermittendae sunt, ne in hac scientia quae est operativa, plures sermones extra opera fiant, quod supra Philosophus reprobavit. Sed alibi haec plenius disseruimus.—*In I Ethic.*, lect. 17, n. 212. Cf. *In II Ethic.*, lect. 2 n. 256; *In III Ethic.*, lect. 6, n. 452.

the very procedure of the science would seem to presuppose a subject who already possesses the virtue it is intended to produce. The more detailed consideration that each of these difficulties demands will now be undertaken. It will prove useful for a further delineation of the character of moral science and the demonstrative procedure from which it results.

A. THE EFFECTIVE DIRECTION OF HUMAN ACTION

All of these problems, it will be noted, stem from the practical character of moral science, and as a consequence from the difficulties inherent in effectively directing human action to its proper goal. To arrive at a solution, therefore, it will be necessary to examine more closely how knowledge functions in a regulative and directive way in the production of the human act, not only at the level of moral science, but also at the level of prudence, where the more proximate relation of practical knowledge to moral virtue is involved. Thus we turn now to a more detailed study of the role of knowledge in the control of human action, which will also prepare for a fuller resolution, in a later section, of the same basic problems in terms of the Thomistic doctrine on practical truth and moral certitude.

Our discussion will follow the general order of the problems presented, and thus will be directed first at clarifying the role of universal knowledge in directing human action, to explain how this cannot be purely in the speculative order, nor at the same time even too universal in the practical order. After this the problem of dialectical principles will be taken up, to show the sense in which such principles can be productive of knowledge that is at once practical and scientific. Then a resolution of the difficulties about moral virtue will be attempted by explaining the relation of reason to the appetites, and the function of synderesis, prudence, and moral science in the formation of moral virtue. Finally, since the organic unity of all practical knowledge is best seen as it functions in the practical syllogism, we shall conclude with a brief treatment of the latter, preparatory to a fuller exposition in the section to follow on practical certitude.

1. THE INSUFFICIENCY OF UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE

The end of moral science is virtuous living, and such an end cannot be realized if one merely has a general knowledge of what virtue is; beyond this, the moral virtues themselves must be possessed as habits, and they must be put to active use.[30] Of itself, then, knowledge will not make a man

[30] "Finis scientiae quae est circa operabilia, non est cognoscere et speculari singula, sicut in scientiis speculativis, sed magis facere ipsa. Et quia secundum virtutem sumus boni et operatores bonorum, non sufficit ad scientiam, quae intendit bonum humanum, quod aliquis cognoscat virtutem. Sed tentandum est, quod aliquis habeat eam, scilicet secundum habitum, et utatur ea, scilicet secundum actum . . ."—*In X Ethic.*, lect. 14, n. 2138.

virtuous.[31] Those who think that they can attain the end of moral science merely by reasoning about virtue, without *doing* anything to acquire it, make a serious error: they misconstrue the very nature of moral science as practical, and are like people who go to a doctor to find out how they can get well, and then do nothing to carry out the instructions that he gives them.[32]

From this consideration, it can be seen that universal speculative knowledge is not directly proportioned to the end of moral science. The knowledge rather that is adequate to this end is practical knowledge, and this practical knowledge must in turn be capable of directing particular operation. But to be so used, the very nature of the case prohibits that even in the practical order statements be made in too general and universal a way. This additional requirement for the principles of moral science is described by St. Thomas as follows:

> If then our study be about actions considered only universally, it will be futile both because it does not accomplish its purpose which is the direction of individual actions, and because a study from a universal point of view—where deficiencies in particulars may not occur—cannot be made in these things by reason of the changeableness of the matter. . . . But the study of particulars is more effective being suitable to direct actions, and also more accurate because particulars are understood according as the universal is verified.[33]

If knowledge therefore is too general, it cannot be really practical; and again, in practical matters, if one tries to make statements that are very general, they will probably not be true, because there are too many differences to take into account when dealing with operables. The universal principle, for instance, that *"deposita sunt reddenda"* is said by St. Thomas to be merely *"ut in pluribus verum"* because of the many circumstances that can

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[31] "Scientia parvum vel nullum habet momentum ad hoc, quod homo sit virtuosus, sed totum consistit in aliis, quae quidem adveniunt homini ex frequenti operatione virtuosa, et sic immobiliter se habet."—*In II Ethic.*, lect. 4, n. 284.

[32] "Arguit quorumdam errorem, qui non operantur opera virtutis, sed confugiendo ad ratiocinandum de virtutibus aestimant se fieri bonos philosophando. Quos dicit esse similes infirmis, qui sollicite audiunt ea quae dicuntur sibi a medicis, sed nihil faciunt eorum quae sibi praecipiuntur. Ita enim se habet philosophia ad curationem animae, sicut medicina ad curationem corporis. Unde sicut illi qui audiunt praecepta medicorum et non faciunt, nunquam erunt bene dispositi secundum corpus, ita neque illi qui audiunt documenta moralium philosophorum et non faciunt ea, nunquam habebunt animam bene dispositam."—*In II Ethic.*, lect. 4, n. 288.

[33] *Ibid.*, lect. 8, n. 334.

render its direct application unreasonable in the individual case.[34] Thus universal knowledge in the sphere of human activity is quite insufficient and, in some cases, of itself almost useless. It is not difficult to find analogies bearing out the truth of this statement. A doctor, for instance, who knows that alkalis are good for relieving stomach acidity, but does not know any drugs that are alkalis, cannot effect *any* cures, whereas a man who knows that bicarbonate of soda is good for this purpose, can be extremely effective in curing people.[35] And so it is in moral science: universal considerations are not enough—they must be complemented by the knowledge of very particular truths, which are appropriate for directing human activities.[36]

From this, two consequences of methodological importance follow. The development of moral science must be carried considerably beyond the point of knowing the *quid sit* of happiness or virtue in general. It must extend to the knowledge of how virtue can be acquired,[37] of what each one of the particular virtutes is and what its parts are,[38] and of how they are to be used and applied in the difficult circumstances of daily living.[39]

Closely connected with this first point, however, is another of equal importance. In the final analysis, applications will have to be made in the singular case, because human acts are individual ones.[40] The last judgment

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[34] *I-II*, 94, 4; *In V Ethic.*, lect., 12, nn. 1028-1029.

[35] Cf. *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 6, n. 1194.

[36] "Oportet quod non solum dici universaliter quid est virtus, sed etiam adaptare in speciali ad singula. Et rationem huius assignat; quia in sermonibus qui sunt circa operationes universales sunt magis inanes, et particulares sunt magis veri. Et huius rationem assignat, eo quod operationes sunt circa singularia. Et ita opportunum est quod sermones qui sunt de operabilibus concordent cum particularibus."—*In II Ethic.*, lect. 8, n. 333. Cf. also lect. 2, n. 256.

[37] "Postquam Philosophus determinavit de virtute quid sit, hic ostendit quomodo aliquis possit virtutem acquirere: quia . . . finis huius doctrinae non est cognitio veritatis, sed ut boni efficiamur."—*In II Ethic.*, lect. 11, n. 369.

[38] "Non est malum, immo utile ad scientias morales, pertranseunter tractare de virtutibus. Quia per hoc magis sciemus ea quae pertinent ad mores, si pertranseamus tractando ea, quae pertinent ad singulos habitus. Quia cognito rerum moralium perficitur per hoc quod particularia cognoscantur."—*In IV Ethic.*, lect. 15, n. 832.

[39] "Quia sufficienter determinavimus de pecuniativa in eo quod pertinet ad *cognoscendum naturam ipsius*, oportet breviter ea quae pertinent ad usum eius, qualiter scilicet sit ea utendum: omnia enim huiusmodi, quae pertinent ad operationes humanas, habent liberam, idest expeditam contemplationem; quia facile est ea considerare in universali; sed tamen necesse est, quod habeatur experientia circa ipsa, ad hoc quod homo possit perfectum usum eorum habere."—*In I Polit.*, lect. 9, n. 135.

[40] "Quia vero actus sunt circa singularia, magis est iudicanda conditio actus, secundum considerationes singularium quam secundum considerationem universalium."—*In III Ethic.*, lect. 1, n. 390. "Quia actus circa singularia sunt, in his

useful for directing human action will therefore be a prudential one, and for this, as we have already indicated, moral science will have to be complemented by prudence, which is the habit of the practical intellect bearing on the singular as such. But this does not mean that it is impossible to have *universal* practical knowledge, which can properly be called scientific.[41] This, in fact, is the type of knowledge sought in moral science; but what is demanded is that this be knowledge of particular kinds of acts, which in turn is universal with respect to the singular. Moral science then seeks universal knowledge, and this is necessary for it to be a science, but it seeks such knowledge of the *species specialissimae* of human action, to know exactly how and in what way specific human acts are morally good or bad, and this is necessary for it to be practical and efficacious in the direction of human affairs.[42]

2. THE DIALECTICAL SOURCE OF OPERATIVE KNOWLEDGE

The source of such knowledge, however, likewise presents its difficulties. The principles of any science are by their very nature indemonstrable, and have to be sought in a way accomodated to the matter with which they deal. In mathematics, for instance, they can be gotten by induction through the use of the imagination, while in natural science they must be based on the observation of the workings of nature; thus it is that in moral science,

quae agenda sunt magis consideratur quod est hic vel nunc tale, quam quod est simpliciter tale: sicut Philosophus dicit, in *III Ethic.*, de voluntario et involuntario."—*II-II*, 106, 2.

[41] "Ratio primo quidem et principaliter est universalium: potest tamen universales rationes ad particularia applicare (unde syllogismorum non solum sunt universales, sed etiam particulares) . . ."—*II-II*, 47, 3, ad 1.

[42] "Denn Ziel der Ethik ist die Auffindung der letzten Gründe, warum gewisse menschliche Akte sittlich gut und andere sittlich schlecht sind." M. Thiel, "Die wissenschaftliche eigenart der philosophischen Ethik," *DTF* 14 (1936), 301-302. Thus we see no need for the so-called "practically practical" moral sciences introduced by J. Maritain between "moral philosophy" and prudence (cf. p. 92, fn. 82 *supra*). Their very conception is based on an equivocation of the word "science," adapted by Maritain from modern usage, which is one of the main points in which his neo-scholasticism differs from traditional Thomism. If one uses the term "science" in the strict sense (= cognitio certa et evidens per causas), there is no more need for multiplying sciences in the moral order than there is for multiplying them in the physical order. For a refutation of Maritain's position regarding moral science, see J. Ramirez, "Sur l'organisation du savoir moral," *BT* 12 (1935), 423-432; "De philosophia morali christiana," *DTF* 14, (1936), 87-122, 181-204. For the refutation of the same position regarding physical science, see C. DeKoninck, "Les sciences expérimentales, sont-elles distinctes de la philosophie de la nature?", *Culture*, 5 (1941), 465-476; "Introduction à l'étude de l'âme," *LTP* 3 (1947), 9-65; also V. E. Smith, *The General Science of Nature* (Milwaukee: 1958), pp. 26-51.

which is concerned with human action, principles must be taken from the customs of men.[43] But here is precisely the difficulty, because the only basis for any generalization in human conduct is that which happens *ut in pluribus*, and which therefore permits of considerable variation of judgment.[44] The situation is further complicated by the fact that men tend to judge in moral matters according to their own subjective dispositions.[45] And even among those who have overcome passion and incontinence, it is no simple matter to select what is good and proper in human action. If things are considered in a general way, there are so many factors to be taken into account that the intellect is not forced one way or another, as it is in the speculative sciences;[46] and, at the other extreme, if a particular action is considered, the decision might be made on the basis of expediency, and not on the basis of what is really the good.[47]

Aware of these problems, Aristotle begins his treatment of the nature of moral virtue with the remark that his principles will not be *"secundum certitudinem,"* and St. Thomas comments on this as follows:

> He explains the method of investigating matters of this kind. We must presume, he says, that any discussion like this which is concerned with actions to be performed, ought to be given in a 'typical' way, that is as a precedent or as likely, but not as

[43] "Ipsa principia non eodem modo manifestantur. Sed quaedam considerantur inductione, quae est ex particularibus imaginariis, utputa quod omnis numerus est par aut impar. Quaedam vero accipiuntur sensu, sicut in naturalibus; puta quod omne quod vivit indiget nutrimento. Quaedam vero consuetudine, sicut in moralibus, utpote quod concupiscentiae diminuuntur, si eis non obediamus. Et alia etiam principia aliter manifestantur; sicut in artibus operativis accipiuntur principia per experientiam quamdam."—*In I Ethic.*, lect. 11, n. 137. In this connection, St. Thomas frequently refers to the Aristotelian adage, "consuetudo est quasi natura" (Aristotle, *De memoria et reminiscentia*, cap. 2, 452a28; St. Thomas, *ibid.*, lect. 6, n. 383); cf. *In III Ethic.*, lect. 15, n. 549; *In VII Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 1509; *I-II*, 32, 2, ad 3; 56, 5; 97, 3; *II-II*, 49, 1, ad 2, etc. For a study of the apparently contradictory adage, "plures homines sequuntur passiones" (cf. *In I Ethic.*, lect. 5, n. 60; *In IX Ethic.*, lect. 8, nn. 1863-1864; *I-II*, 9, 5, ad 3; 31, 5, ad 1; 71, 2, ad 3; *II-II*, 95, 5, ad 2, etc.) see H. Pitman, "The Behaviour of the Multitude: A Psychological Study," (Dissertatio ad lauream apud Pontificium Athenaeum "Angelicum"), Rome: 1959.

[44] "Vel certiora principia dicit ea quae sunt magis nota et exquisita. Simplicia autem ea, quae magis superficialiter exquiruntur, sicut est in scientiis moralibus quorum principia sumuntur ex his quae sunt in pluribus."—*In VI Meta.*, lect. 1, n. 1146.

[45] Cf. *In III Ethic.*, lect. 10, nn. 493-495. Also L. Ollé-Laprune, *De la certitude morale*, p. 389.

[46] *In III Ethic.*, lect. 13, n. 518.

[47] *Ibid.*, n. 519.

> certain. . . . The reason is that the discussions are to be carried on according to the nature of the subject matter. . . .[48]

This is clearly the procedure which characterizes a dialectical inquiry, which stays in the order of opinion or what is commonly believed, and which St. Thomas, in his commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate*, attributes to moral science as being its characteristic mode.[49] But if moral science takes its principles dialectically, and proceeds in a dialectical mode, the question naturally arises as to how it can be called a *science* in the strict sense of the term. The conclusion would seem to contain no more than the principles, and if the latter are merely true *ut in pluribus*, then the same can only be said of the conclusion, and thus they lack the universality and necessity of scientific knowledge.[50]

A complete resolution of this difficulty must await further development of the relationship between moral science and the other habits of the practical intellect, prudence and synderesis, as well as of the notion of practical truth and its certitude. For the moment, two observations are noteworthy about this particular aspect of moral methodology.

First, the fact that a science begins, or even proceeds, dialectically is no indictment of its strict scientific character. In fact, this is a moral procedure which is an integral part of scientific methodology, and as such can be found in any one of the sciences. As St. Thomas explains in his commentary on Boethius' statement about the modes characteristic of the various sciences:

> Sometimes, however, the investigation of reason cannot arrive at the ultimate end, but stops in the investigation itself, that is

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[48] *In II Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 258 (trans. C. I. Litzinger).

[49] "Philosophus ibi (VI Ethic.) pro eodem ponit ratiocinativum et opinativum, unde patet quod pertinet ad secundum modum assignatum (scil., dialecticum). Ratiocinativo autem vel opinativo attribuit Philosophus ibidem agibilia humana, de quibus est scientia moralis ratione suae contingentiae. Unde potest ex dictis colligi quod primus modus rationabilitatis (scil., logica docens) est maxime proprius scientiae rationali, secundus (scil., logica dialectica utens) scientiae morali, tertius (scil., discursus demonstrativus) scientiae naturali."—*In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1, sol. 1, ad 4.

[50] This is more than an academic question: the difficulty inherent in it has caused Burnet, and following him, Festugière, to reject completely the scientific character of Aristotle's *Ethics*. Thus Gauthier and Jolif observe (*L'Ethique à Nicomaque*, pp. 35*-36*): "La conclusion s'imposait, que Burnet tira et que naguère encore le P. Festurière reprenait: l' *Ethique à Nicomaque* n'est pas un ouvrage scientifique, mais un simple exercice dialectique, une analyse des vues du sens commun, où il n'y a pas lieu de chercher l'idéal personnel d'Aristote." Also p. 88*. Cf. J. Burnet, *The Ethics of Aristotle* (London: 1900); A—J. Festugière, *Contemplation et vie contemplative selon Platon*, (Paris: 1936), p. 316.

> to say, when two possible solutions still remain open to the investigator. And this happens when we proceed by means of probable arguments, which are suited to produce opinion or belief, but not science. In this sense, 'rational' method is contradistinguished to 'demonstrative' method. And we can proceed rationally in all the sciences in this way, preparing the way for necessary proofs by probable arguments.[51]

Thus a dialectical process is justified in any science, so long as it is used to prepare the way for necessary proofs. That such is the case in moral science can be seen by examining the principle which prompted Aristotle's statement and Thomas' commentary which have been quoted above: the principle which is there taken "as a precedent or as likely, but not as certain" is nothing more than a statement that operations which are causative of moral virtue are those which are according to right reason.[52] This in itself is true and certain, although it need not be *seen* as such at the beginning of the science; later, when the relation between prudence and the other moral virtues is well understood, the reason for its truth can be comprehended in scientific fashion.[53] It is in this sense, then, that moral science proceeds *"modo ratiocinativo vel opinativo,"* and more so than the other sciences because of the difficulty of its subject matter.[54] Such a mode can therefore be attributed to it as characteristic, as Boethius has attributed other modes to the speculative sciences, without this entailing that such a designation is an exclusive and definitive characterization of its method, as we have already explained at length in Chapter One.

The second point is that operative principles which govern the practical order are no more "proved" in moral science than first principles which govern the speculative order are "proved" in mathematics or metaphysics. Such principles arise not from the science itself, but from a distinctive habit of mind which is already presupposed to the science.[55] In the case of moral science, the natural habit of synderesis furnishes everyone with the very first principles of the practical order, and then this is further complemented by the results of personal experience and the

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[51] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1, sol. 1 (trans. Maurer, pp. 51-52).

[52] Cf. *In II Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 257.

[53] Cf. *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 11, nn. 1283-1285; *In X Ethic.*, lect. 12, n. 2111.

[54] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1, sol. 1, ad 4.

[55] "Sicut enim in mathematicis principia non docentur per rationem, sic neque in operabilibus finis docetur per rationem. Sed homo per habitum virtutis, sive naturalis sive per assuetudinem acquisitae, consequitur rectam aestimationem circa principium agibilium quod est finis."—*In VII Ethic.*, lect. 8, n. 1431.

acquired habit of prudence.[56] In this matter, moreover, one can learn from others, and if these others are prudent and long experienced in human affairs, this is one of the best sources of operative knowledge. As St. Thomas remarks:

> The understanding of principles of the order of operation is attained through experience and age, and is perfected through prudence. Thus it is that one should pay attention to what experienced, elderly and prudent men think and say about human actions. Although they do not furnish demonstrations, what they give is not less than demonstrative, but even more so. For these men, because they have experience of 'things seen,' that is, a right judgment of things to be done, grasp the principles of the order of operation. And principles are more certain than the conclusions of demonstrations.[57]

It is in this sense, then, that opiniative knowledge is most useful as a starting point for moral science: not that the opinions of all are to be taken to be of equal value, but that particular attention be paid to those who are wise, and who manifest in their own lives the truth of what they say.[58] Such a source is dialectical, but it leads to certain knowledge; indeed, it gives the proper principles for a practical science such as morals, and since "*principium videtur plus esse quam dimidium totius*," it gives virtually the entire content of moral science.[59]

3. PRUDENCE AND THE RIGHT APPETITE

The full methodological import of this conclusion can only be seen in the light of a more complete explanation of the work of prudence in directing human action. We have already indicated that this practical virtue is necessary to complement moral science so that it can attain to the singular operable as such. Now we would amplify this explanation, and in addition show how prudence, in a certain way, is even necessary for the proper acquisition of moral science.

The subject of moral science, the human act, is an action which is

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[56] "Sicut autem animae humanae est quidam habitus naturalis quo principia speculativarum scientiarum cognoscit, quem vocamus intellectum principiorum; ita in ipsa est quidam habitus naturalis primorum principiorum operabilium, quae sunt naturalia principia iuris naturalis; qui quidem habitus ad synderesim pertinet."—*De Ver.*, q. 16, a. 1.

[57] *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 9, n. 1254.

[58] "Circa actiones et passiones humanas minus creditur sermonibus, quam operibus. Si enim aliquis operetur quod dicit esse malum, plus provocat exemplo quam deterreat verbo."—*In X Ethic.*, lect. 1, n. 1960. Cf. also lect. 13, n. 2132.

[59] *In I Ethic.*, lect. 11, n. 138.

deliberately willed by man, and therefore proceeds from both his intellect and his will. Of these two principles of human operation, the intellect is primary in the order of final and formal causality, while the will is primary in the order of efficient causality, although a certain efficiency is also attributed to the intellect insofar as it is the faculty through which the will comes to exercise its causality.[60] The will, moreover, has a natural appetite for the good in general, to which it tends spontaneously as soon as this is presented to it by the reason: apart from this, in its other acts, it is directed and guided by the intellect to attain its goal in a reasonable manner. And again, there are additional appetites in man at the sense level, which are thus intimately connected with his bodily dispositions, and which also come under the direction of reason, although not so completely as does the will.[61]

For a human act to be morally good, or virtuous, it does not suffice that it be merely deliberate and regulated by reason; it must be *properly* regulated, or be under the control of what is called "right reason." The latter expression means, in general, that the control of reason must be in conformity with man's nature, and thus conduce to the production of the good and perfect man, who will ultimately be endowed with all the human virtues, and actually live according to them. The repetition of such morally good acts will thereupon rectify the appetites, producing in them habits of action by which they become more and more responsive to the direction of reason ordered to man's perfection, which itself becomes habitual. The latter habit is then nothing more than the virtue of prudence, or the *recta ratio agibilium*,[62] while the habits of action in the appetites are themselves the moral virtues: justice, fortitude and temperance. Each appetite is consequently said to be "right," or rectified, insofar as it is in conformity with reason, and reason itself is said to be "right," insofar as it, in turn, is in conformity with the right appetite.[63]

The latter way of speaking, however, gives rise to a difficulty, because it seems to involve a vicious circle: right reason and right appetite are placed in mutual dependence, and there seems to be no way in which either

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[60] "Omnino recte dici potest, intellectum voluntatem movere per se primo per modum causae finalis et formalis, per se secundo autem per modum causae efficientis, ut 'qua' scilicet. Voluntas intellectum movet in genere causae efficientis tantum et quoad exercitium."—C. Williams, *De multiplici virtutum forma*, (Romae: 1954) p. 51.

[61] *In III Sent.*, d. 33, q. 1, a. 2, qla. 1. Cf. C. Williams, *De multiplici virtutum forma*, pp. 51-54.

[62] *I-II*, 57, 4.

[63] *I-II*, 57, 5, ad 3; also *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 1131. Cf. C. Williams, *De multiplici virtutum forma*, pp. 54-59.

one can be attained without already presupposing the other. This difficulty is resolvable through a more detailed examination of the way in which moral virtue is generated in the individual. No person is born already endowed with natural virtues at their full state of perfection, and yet each man is nonetheless endowed with certain natural habits and potencies through which he can acquire such virtues. Thus, in his intellect, he has the habit of first principles of the practical order, or synderesis, which give him a correct and certain knowledge of what he should do, in general, in order to attain his proper perfection as a man. And in his appetitive faculties, he also has initial general inclinations, which are natural and therefore right, or in conformity with his nature, and which are further controllable by reason so that they will conduce to specific action that is morally good.[64] Some of these primary inclinations he shares in common with all men; others are individual and depend in large degree on his own bodily dispositions.[65]

With this natural endowment, the individual can acquire moral virtue by placing the general inclinations of his appetites more and more under the control of reason, as he exercises them in particular matters and through repeated acts.[66] This he effects in each act by a practical judgment, which itself is motivated by, and in conformity with, the general intimations of synderesis,[67] and suffices for him to moderate his appetitive inclinations in a reasonable way.[68] The latter moderation, in turn, consists in finding the mean between excess and defect in the various matters with which his actions are concerned. At first this is done with difficulty, then with facility as he acquires more and more experience.[69] Through repeated actions, therefore, he generates the habits of virtuous action to which we have already referred: one in his intellect which enables him to find this mean easily and well, and is the virtue of prudence; others in his appetites which render them obedient to the intimation of reason, enabling them to attain this mean in quick and accustomed fashion, which are the moral virtues.[70]

The relation of prudence to the appetites, when this more perfect state of operation according to virtue is attained, is such that there is no

[64] Cajetan, *In I-II*, 66, 3, ad 3, n. 12.
[65] *In III Sent.*, d. 33, q. 1, a. 2, qla. 1.
[66] Cajetan, *In I-II*, 66, 3, ad 3, n. 12.
[67] To take fuller account of the way in which a Christian can acquire moral virtue, his judgment should be conformed to the divine law, not only as the latter is known naturally through the principles of synderesis, but also as it is known through sacred doctrine and infused knowledge. Cf. *De Ver.*, q. 17, a. 5, ad 4; also *I-II*, 19, 4, ad 3; *II-II*, 8, 3, ad 3.
[68] *I-II*, 58, 4, ad 3.
[69] *De Virt. in comm.*, q. un., a. 6.
[70] Cf. C. Williams, *De multiplici virtutum forma*, p. 68; Cajetan, *In I-II*, 66, 3, ad 3, n. 12.

vicious circle involved in speaking of right reason as being conformed to a right appetite, and vice versa. The judgment of prudence is said to be right insofar as it is in conformity with the *end* to which the appetites naturally incline, which is the good of the individual man, while the appetites themselves are said to be right insofar as they are in conformity with the *means* found for them by the judgment of right reason, thenceforth become the act of the virtue of prudence itself.[71] Although both reason and appetite are therefore said to be right with reference to one another, their individual rectitudes are judged according to different standards which become consecutively available in the generation of moral virtues, and in no way involve a circular process.[72]

4. THE PRACTICAL SYLLOGISM

The significance of this relation between prudence and the right appetite for the guidance of human operation becomes further apparent when discussed in relation to the practical syllogism, which directly imperates the singular operable, and therefore brings into existence the object of moral science precisely as practical.[73]

In the normal case, the decision to act is the result of a reasoning process similar to that of the demonstrative syllogism, but differing from the latter in that the subject of its conclusion is a singular term.[74] The predicate of the conclusion, on the other hand, derives ultimately from a universal proposition furnished by the habit of synderesis, and states that this singular

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[71] *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 1131.

[72] It should be noted here that there is a different dependence of moral virtue on prudence in the order of generation of virtue, and in the state where virtues are already generated. For a detailed analysis, see Cajetan, *In I-II*, 66, 3, ad 3, nn. 12-13.

[73] J. Ramirez explains the role of the practical syllogism in organizing moral knowledge as follows: "Enfin, selon S. Thomas, toute l'organisation du savoir moral ordonné à l'action se condense dans le syllogisme pratique, qui, de toute nécessité, ne comprend que trois termes et de trois propositions: la majeure, qui appartient à la syndérèse; la mineure, qui correspond à la science morale, c'est-à-dire à la raison supérieure ou surnaturelle (théologie) ou à la raison inférieure ou naturelle (éthique ou philosophie morale): et la conclusion, qui est double: l'une immédiate de l'ordre du connaître, qui est le dernier jugement pratique (conscience), et appartient à la prudence; l'autre médiate, de l'ordre affectif, et qui est l'acte d'une vertu morale."—"Sur l'organisation du savoir moral," *BT* 12 (1935), 426-427. Here we are speaking of the practical syllogism in its primitive form, without relation to moral philosophy or moral theology, as described in *In VII Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 1845. For a description of this simpler form of the practical syllogism, see H. D. Noble, "Le syllogisme moral," *RSPT* 10 (1921), 560-564. The latter also discusses the relation of conscience to the practical syllogism; for Thomistic texts on this point, see: *In II Sent.*, d. 24, q. 2, a. 4; *De Ver.*, q. 17, a. 1, ad 4.

[74] *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 9, n. 1253.

action is either good and to be done, or evil and to be avoided.[75] Prudence itself has the task of assuring that this conclusion is the correct one under the given circumstances confronting the individual. It does this by searching for a middle term which indicates the moral character of the contemplated singular action. In order to do this properly, the prudent man must be experienced himself and have a good memory of the past, he must be able to collate many particular incidents and extract the relevant items that pertain to this singular action, he must be docile enough to take counsel and learn from others; beyond this, he must also have foresight, circumspection, and caution, to guard himself against unforeseen errors.[76] When he possesses prudence in its full perfection, he will have facility in locating a middle term among all the things that this knowledge furnishes him.[77] This middle term, moreover, will not be merely a logical mean—it will also establish the mean of reason in the matter with which he is concerned.[78] Because he possesses the moral virtues, his appetites will be conformed and responsive to the direction of right reason, and his judgment will also be in accord with the right inclinations of his individual appetites.[79] He will therefore make his decision with assurance and certainty, and imperate an action which is morally good and perfective of himself as a human being.[80]

The case is quite different, however, for a person who lacks the virtue of prudence and whose appetites are consequently disordered.[81] Such a

[75] Cf. *In VII Ethic.*, lect. 3, nn. 1345-1346.

[76] Cf. *II-II*, 49, 1-8.

[77] "Solertia non solum se habet circa inventionem medii in demonstrativis, sed etiam in operativis: puta cum aliquis videns aliquos amicos factos coniecturat eos esse inimicos eiusdem, ut ibidem (1 Post. Anal.) Philosophus dicit. Et hoc modo solertia pertinet ad prudentiam."—*II-II*, 49, 4, ad 1. Cf. *In I Anal.*, lect. 44, n. 12.

[78] It is also noteworthy that this is not a mathematical mean: "Ratio virtutis non consistit in indivisibili secundum se, sed ratione sui subiecti, in quantum quaerit medium: ad quod quaerendum potest aliquis diversimode se habere, vel peius vel melius. Et tamen ipsum medium non est omnino indivisibile; habet enim aliquam latitudinem: *sufficit enim ad virtutem quod appropinquet ad medium*, ut dicitur II Ethic."—*De Virt. in comm.*, q. un., a. 11, ad 16. Cf. also *In II Ethic.*, lect. 11, nn. 375-376; *In IV Ethic.*, lect. 13, n. 813; *In IV Sent.*, d. 15, q. 3, a. 1, qla. 2, ad 1.

[79] *I-II*, 57, 4.

[80] This explains why the object of the practical intellect is "bonum sub ratione veri": "Agibilia sunt quidem materia prudentiae secundum quod sunt obiectum rationis, scilicet sub ratione veri. Sunt autem materia moralium virtutum secundum quod sunt obiectum virtutis appetitivae, scilicet sub ratione boni."—*II-II*, 47, 5, ad 3.

[81] It should be noted that it is possible for such a person to place a prudent act, even though he lacks the virtue of prudence, and in this way he can proceed to acquire the virtue. Such an action, however, is placed with difficulty, and even with a certain violence. As St. Thomas remarks: "Ante virtutem facit homo sibi

person also goes through a reasoning process which can be expressed in an operative syllogism, but the disorder in his appetites introduces a fourth term into the syllogism, and causes him to come to an erroneous conclusion. His appetites still retain their initial universal inclinations which are right and according to nature, but they do not respect the mean presented to them by reason in this particular thing to be done.[82] For instance, in an example cited by St. Thomas, the sense appetite, following its universal inclination, might propose that "all sweets are delightful," at the same time that the practical intellect proposes the universal proposition, "no sweets are to be taken between meals." The incontinent man, although assenting to the truth of the latter proposition in general, will thereupon find his reason bound by his appetite, and not apply the universal of reason in the concrete case. Instead, he will, at least implicitly, subsume his singular operable under the universal furnished by his appetite, and follow its intimation into the order of operation.[83] His practical syllogism is consequently not only illogical, in the sense of having four terms, but it also fails to indicate the mean of reason in this singular case, and therefore imperates an action that is unreasonable and morally bad.[84]

To return now to moral science, we have said earlier that its work, precisely as practical, is also one of supplying middle terms that can be used in the practical syllogism and be productive of virtuous action. In terms of the example that has just been given, it can be seen at this point why the moral virtues, and the prudence which accompanies them, are a necessary pre-requisite for moral science to function in such a practical mode. The incontinent man, as we have just seen, is in possession of universal intellectual knowledge as to what should be done, but practically it is of no use to him, because in effect he pays no attention to it, but follows

quamdam violentiam ad operandum huiusmodi. Et ideo tales operationes habent aliquam tristitiam admixtam." *In II Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 265.

[82] *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 11, n. 1274.

[83] *In VII Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 1347. Cf. also nn. 1348-1350; *I-II*, 77, 2, ad 4; *II-II*, 20, 2.

[84] A similar analysis can also be applied to an imprudent decision relating to the application of the general principle, "deposita esse reddenda": "Prout in syllogismo igitur continentis et incontinentis, de quo supra . . . ita et in casu occurant depositum habenti duae praemissae maiores: Favorem negandum esse impugnatori patriae, atque: Deposita esse reddenda; et dum imprudenter sub hac praemissa quid concluderet: Ensem depositatum esse reddendum, quamvis ad impugnandam patriam, prudenter concluderet sub illa: Ensem, quamvis depositatum, non esse impugnatori patriae reddendum. Nam ad prudentiam pertinet, prout iam cum Auctore monuimus, non quod homo sit ratiocinativus, ut possit applicare principia ad casum, sed 'quod homo sit *bene* ratiocinativus, ut possit *bene* applicare universalia principia ad particularia.' (*II-II*, 49, 5, ad 2)."—P. Lumbreras, "Ethica situationis et doctrina Aquinatis," *Ang* 35 (1958) 147.

instead the unregulated inclination of his appetites. Exactly the same analysis applies to moral science, and renders it of no use in the practical order, unless it is acquired by a person who is already endowed with moral virtue, and has sufficient control of his passions to follow the intimation of reason which its additional knowledge will give to his actions. Such a person must therefore be already prudent, in order to acquire and use moral science for the end to which it is *per se* ordained.

Here, then, we have the answer to the difficulty proposed earlier about moral science, in its practical mode, presupposing the possession of virtue it is intended to produce. A person does not require moral science in order to acquire virtue. His habit of first practical principles and the natural rectitude of his appetite, as we have already seen, are sufficient to generate prudence and the moral virtues, without a strict scientific habit furnishing conclusions in the moral order. Moral science itself furnishes but a supplement to the practical knowledge he already possesses in a pre-scientific way. But a person who has the habit of moral science, and at the same time is prudent and has moral virtue, has a vastly superior source of universal practical knowledge which he can use to direct his action reasonably and consequently to *grow* in virtue.[85] This is the sense in which moral science has for its end the production of moral virtue, while at the same time it presupposes some moral virtue in one who would learn to use it for its proper end. The two requirements are not contradictory; they refer to different stages in the development of one and the same person, who is thus progressing to perfection in the order of moral virtue.

Prudence, therefore, can be said in a certain way to contain within itself the beginnings of moral science. It uses the same sources of practical knowledge as we have already indicated to be proper to moral science: personal experience, the experience of others, general principles that have been proved to produce results in the practical order.[86] But properly speaking, it works opiniatively and in a pre-scientific mode; it functions at

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[85] A more theological aspect of the utility of moral science is indicated by M. Thiels: "Sehen wir einmal ganz ab von jeder übernatürlichen Offenbarung, und nehmen wir an, zwei Menschen seien mit der Tugend der Klugheit gleich vollkommen ausgestaltet, aber nur der eine kenne die philosophische Ethik, so hat dieser vor dem anderen zwei weitere grosse Vorteile. Fürs erste bewahrt ihn seine genauere Kenntnis des göttlichen Gesetzes auch vor manchen materiellen Sünden, in die der andere notwendig fällt . . . (Und er) wird dadurch nicht nur gleichförmig mit dem göttlichen Verstande, da ihn seine Kenntnis der Gründe zugleich befähigt, Gott sogar in seiner Eigenschaft als Gesetzgeber nachzuahmen." —"Die wissenschaftliche . . . ," *DTF* 14, (1936), pp. 303-304.

[86] The first principles of prudential knowledge, according to St. Thomas, are more *connatural* to man than those of moral science. See *II-II*, 47, 15; *In II Sent.*, d. 23, q. 2, a. 2; *De Ver.*, q. 18, a. 7, ad 7.

the level of the *vis cogitativa* as well as at the level of human reason, the former being necessary for it to attain the singular act, which is its proper object.[87] But this is also an imperfection, which is capable of being complemented by another habit of the practical intellect which is exclusively a perfection of reason itself, and further develops its universal practical knowledge.[88] This is the habit of moral science, which complements prudence, and is complemented by it as well. The two practical habits, inseparable in origin and in use, function together to direct proper human action: prudence imperates the singular operable itself, while moral science furnishes *"aliquod auxilium"* which is extremely useful for this task.[89]

B. MORAL CONTINGENCY, PRACTICAL TRUTH, AND CERTITUDE

We are now in a position to make more precise the way in which moral science deals with contingent matter, and at the same time attains truth, with a certitude which can properly be called scientific. Much has already been said about the contingency and variability of the subject of this science, and in Chapter One discussion has already been initiated on the much-spoken-of distinction between physical and metaphysical certitude; to this we now add the third member, and inquire into the meaning of moral certitude, and what relation this might have to the subject matter of moral science. Our inquiry will lead us to an explanation of the notion of practical truth, to a distinction of various certitudes which can be had in moral matters, and finally to a characterization of the certitude which is the property of moral science, precisely as scientific.

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[87] *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 9, n. 1255; Cf. also n. 1249. It should be noted, however, that in the *Summa* St. Thomas elaborates Aristotelian doctrine further to conclude that prudence is principally in the intellect and only "per quandam applicationem" in the cogitative sense (*II-II*, 47, 3, ad 3; cf. also *corpus articuli* and ad 1). For a discussion of the disparity between the teachings in the *Ethics* and the *Summa*, together with Cajetan's resolution of the difficulty thereby created, see J. Peghaire, "Un sens oublié, la cogitative," *RUO* 13 (1943), 167*-171*.

[88] Ainsi, il est nécessaire de charger la philosophie morale d'un rôle moteur, parce que nous avons besoin, pour la parfaite rationalité, la parfaite humanité de notre conduite, d'une lumière pratique émanée de l'essence même ou du fond intelligible des choses; et il semble qu'il n'y ait nul péril à le faire, pourvu que l'on comprenne ce qu'implique ce rôle moteur et à la condition que la pensée pratique-universelle, consciente de n'être qu'imparfaitement motrice, sache ménager le libre développement des exigences propre de la pensée pratique-singulière, seule parfaitement motrice.—Y. Simon, *Critique de la connaissance morale*, p. 96.

[89] For the function of prudence, see *I-II*, 57, 5, c. and ad 3; *I*, 86, 1, ad 2; *In III Ethic.*, lect. 7, nn. 465-466. For that of moral science, see *In II Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 259.

1. CONTINGENCY IN MORAL MATTERS

In the *Perihermenias* mention is made of three types of contingency that affect statements about the future: one type is of things that happen *"ut in paucioribus,"* and this is said to come about by chance; another type is of things that happen *"ut in pluribus,"* and this is said to be associated with the workings of nature; and the third type is of things that can be *"ad utrumlibet,"* and this is said to arise from free choice.[90] All three types are reduced to one of two causes: either they have their origin in matter, whose potency is not completely determined, or they have their origin in the fact that men take counsel about the means they will employ to attain their ends, which likewise are not determined.[91] And in the *Ethics* human actions are identified as taking their contingency from both these causes, and are thereby excluded from the certitude which is that of scientific knowledge.[92]

This, however, is not the complete picture with regard to contingency, for the statement is also made that contingent things can be known in two ways: either "according to universal reasons," and when known in this way immutable reasons can be given for them and they pertain to demonstrative science; or they can be known "in particular," and then they pertain more to the senses than they do to the intellect, and are too variable to be known scientifically.[93] The explanation of the first possibility is given by St. Thomas in the following words:

> Every contingent thing has in it something necessary. . . . Hence if we consider the objects of science in their universal principles, then all science is of necessary things. But if we consider the things themselves, thus some sciences are of necessary things, some of contingent things.[94]

The capital distinction is made here between the certitude of the science, and the certitude of the things or the matter with which the science deals. In the light of this, it can be seen that many of the statements in the *Ethics* refer to the variability, contingency, or lack of certitude in the *matter* with which moral science deals, without necessarily implying that our knowledge of that matter need be uncertain, and therefore non-scientific.[95]

[90] *In I Periherm.*, lect. 13, n. 9.
[91] *Ibid.*, lect. 14, n. 8; cf. n. 24.
[92] *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 4, n. 1165; lect. 5, n. 1175. Cf. also *In I Anal.*, lect. 4, n. 5; lect. 44; n. 3.
[93] *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 1, n. 1123.
[94] *I*, 86, 3 (trans. English Dominicans).
[95] Texts in which the lack of certitude is assigned to the matter of moral science, and not to the science itself, include the following: *In I Ethic.*, lect. 3, nn. 32-36; lect. 11, nn. 135-137; *In II Ethic.*, lect. 2, nn. 256-259; lect. 8, nn. 333-334; *In III Ethic.*, lect. 6, n. 452; lect. 13, n. 518; *In IX Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 1774; n. 1779. Cf also: *II-II*, 47, 9, ad 2; 70, 2; *I-II*, 96, 1, ad 3; *In II Meta.*, lect. 5, n. 336; *In VI Meta.*, lect. 1, n. 1149.

This presents no difficulty, from what has already been said in Chapter One, particularly in view of the fact that beings have a different mode of existence in the mind than they do in extramental reality, and that a necessity *"ex suppositione"* can be found in all being, while only certain things have about them an absolute necessity.[96]

The problem arises in connection with the second possibility, when knowledge is sought of contingent things "in particular." Here St. Thomas makes the observation, rather surprising when compared to what has just been said, that practical science is concerned with contingent things "in particular," and in this differs from speculative science. The text reads as follows:

> Since the knowledge of contingents cannot have a certitude of truth that eliminates falsehood completely, precisely as pertaining merely to the order of knowledge contingents are passed over by the intellect which is perfected by the knowledge of truth. Yet knowledge of contingents is useful for the direction of human operation, which is concerned with contingents. Thus when treating of intellectual virtues he considers contingents only insofar as they are the subjects of human operation. Whence only the practical sciences are concerned with contingents precisely as they are contingents, namely, in particular. Speculative sciences are not concerned with contingents except according to universal reasons, as has been said above.[97]

According to this text, then, the speculative sciences treat of contingent things according to universal reasons, while the practical sciences—because seeking usable knowledge of contingent operables—treat of contingent things insofar as they are contingent. Whence the question: Can moral science, as a practical science, attain to truth and certitude about the singular operable as such, and if so, is this truth and certitude scientific in the proper sense of the term?

2. PRACTICAL TRUTH

The answering of this question entails that a precision be made between the practical and speculative orders, in order to explain how a habit of the practical intellect attains truth, as opposed to the way in which one

[96] *I*, 14, 13, ad 2. Cf. *In I Periherm.*, lect. 15, n. 2.
[97] *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 1152.

of the speculative intellect does so. Certitude itself is nothing more than a firmness of assent to the truth, and if there are two orders of truth, namely, speculative and practical, it follows that there will also be two certitudes, one speculative and the other practical. The question thus becomes one of ascertaining whether there is a practical truth and certitude which is associated with moral science precisely as practical; its answer can be given in terms of the practical truths and certitudes which characterize the other habits of the practical intellect, namely, prudence and synderesis.

St. Thomas introduces his doctrine on practical truth in the *Summa* in the tract on the intellectual virtues, more particularly in an article on the necessity of prudence, and more particularly still, as an answer to an objection which he formulates as follows:

> An intellectual virtue is one by which one always tells the truth, and never a falsehood. But this does not seem to be the case with prudence: for it is not human never to err in taking counsel about what is to be done; since human actions are about things that may be otherwise than they are. . . . Therefore it seems that prudence should not be reckoned an intellectual virtue.[98]

The difficulty, then, is this: an intellectual virtue must have for its object truth, and therefore cannot be subject to error; but this cannot be verified of prudence, which is concerned with singular operables in which errors can be made because of the contingency of the subject matter. Thus prudence is subject to error by the very nature of its object, and cannot be called an intellectual virtue. This argument, it should be noted, could also be applied to the judgment of moral science insofar as it has the operable for its object, and has an added interest for us on that account.

St. Thomas responds to the argument in the following way:

> As stated in *Ethic.* vi. 2, truth is not the same for the practical as for the speculative intellect. Because the truth of the speculative intellect depends on conformity between the intellect and the thing. And since the intellect cannot be infallibly in conformity with things in contingent matters, but only in necessary matters, therefore no speculative habit about contingent things is an intellectual virtue, but only such as is about necessary things.
>
> On the other hand, the truth of the practical intellect depends on conformity with right appetite. This conformity has no place in necessary matters, which are not affected by the human will; but only in contingent matters which can be effected by us, whether they be matters of interior action, or the products of external work. Hence it is only about contingent matters that an intellectual virtue is assigned to the practical intellect, viz., art, as regards things to be made, and prudence, as regards things to be done.[99]

[98] *I-II*, 57, 5, arg. 3 (trans. English Dominicans).

The difficulty proposed in the objection is here resolved along the general lines of the distinction between the speculative and the practical intellects. St. Thomas concedes that the major premise of the argument is valid if one is speaking about speculative habits, which must be of necessary things, and therefore there cannot be a speculative intellectual virtue which is directly concerned with singular operables, precisely as contingent. But he denies the validity of the argument when applied to practical habits: the truth of such habits, he says, is judged differently from the truth of speculative habits, because they are concerned with non-necessaries, i.e., the contingent things that we do. Therefore there can be a practical intellectual virtue which is directly concerned with singular contingents, and, in the case of human action, this is the virtue of prudence.

Elaborating this response further, a sixteenth-century Thomistic commentator, Conradus Köllin, O.P., has shown that it implies a distinction which can be applied to the major premise of the original argument, in order to indicate the precise way in which a practical intellectual habit attains truth. His analysis is the following:

> As to the major, 'An intellectual virtue is one by which one always tells the truth, and never a falsehood': this I distinguish and say that a speculative intellectual virtue is one by which one always tells the truth, in such a way that the habit itself always attains truth and is concerned with things that are always true; while a practical habit is itself always true, but it is not concerned with things that are always true. In fact, it is sometimes concerned with things that are false, but with the true for the most part.[100]

This distinction, like the argument to which it is applied, is a very general

[99] *Ibid.*, ad 3; cf. also *In I Sent.*, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2.

[100] "Ad maiorem, 'virtus intellectualis est, secundum quam contingit semper dicere verum, et nunquam falsum': illam distinguo, et dico, quod virtus intellectualis speculativa est, secundum quam contingit semper verum dicere, ita quod ipse habitus habet semper veritatem, et est de semper veris; sed habitus practicus est quidem semper verus, sed non est de semper veris, immo quandoque falsis; veris tamen ut in plurimum."—Conradus Köllin, *Expositio: Commentaria prima . . . in Primam Secundae* (Venetiis: 1589), In I-II, 57, 5, ad 3.

one: it is stated in such a way as not to be exclusively concerned with prudence, but with any practical habit as such. It separates the truth of a speculative intellectual habit from that of a practical intellectual habit by the fact that, in the speculative order, the habit and its subject matter are both always "true,"[101] whereas in the practical order, the habit itself always attains truth, but it is concerned with a subject matter that is not always "true"—indeed it is sometimes false, although true for the most part.

The latter statement is rather cryptic, and is further explained by Köllin as follows:

> The reason for the second branch of the distinction applied to the major is this: that the true and the truth (and consequently the goodness and virtuousness) of a practical habit depends on conformity with right appetite and good intention; and this is always found in the practical habit, and thus it is always a true habit and good. But since the right appetite, and consequently the true intellectual habit conformed to it, can only be concerned with contingent things (for necessary things as such do not come under election), this habit is not always concerned with true things, for the contingent is what can be otherwise. As a result the major is not completely true of such a practical habit, whose truth is measured by conformity with what is right (that is, with a good appetite, even though it be ordered to the false and err). For it can happen (as the argument proves) that the virtuous and prudent man judge something to be useful for attaining a good end which is not useful; then the habit is indeed true, and true prudence, because conformed to its principle, but it is not concerned with the true. For prudence permits of a certain falsehood of infrequent occurrence (*ut in paucioribus*), but true prudence does not permit of a disordered inclination. It is apparent therefore that true prudence and what is truly a virtue can be concerned with something false. . . . For it can happen that the prudent man sometimes tells falsehood and errs, as is urged in the minor; but this is not opposed to the nature of true prudence.[102]

[101] This is a literal translation of Köllin's distinction; it would be more accurate to say that the subject matter must always have at least a suppositional necessity, in line with what we have explained in a previous section about demonstrative science.

[102] "Ratio autem secundi dicti ad maiorem est; quia verum, et veritas (et sic per consequens bonitas, et virtuositas) habitus practici est per conformitatem ad appetitum rectum, et bonam intentionem; et illa semper convenit habitui practico, ideo est semper verus habitus, et bonus; sed quia appetitus rectus, et per consequens habitus intellectualis sibi conformis, et verus, non potest esse nisi contingentium (nam necessaria, ut sic non cadunt sub electione) ideo non semper est verorum, quia contingens est, quod aliter potest esse, et per consequens maior non est omnino vera de tali habitu practico, cuius veritas attenditur, quia est conformis recto (idest bono appetitui, esto sit falsi, et erret). Potest enim (ut argumentum probat) virtuosus, et prudens iudicare aliquid esse utile ad bonum finem, quod non est utile; ideo est *tunc quidem verus, et vera prudentia quia conformis principio suo*, sed non est veri. Stat enim prudentia sub aliqua falsitate, ut in paucioribus, sed non stat vera prudentia cum pravo affectu. Pater igitur, quod prudentia vera, et vere virtus potest esse falsi. . . . Potest namque prudens aliquando falsum dicere, et errare, ut vult minor; sed hoc non est contra rationem verae prudentiae."—*Ibid.*, In I-II, 57, 5, ad 3.

[103] Thus St. Thomas can define the opposite of practical truth, or sin—in its most general sense—as a defect in this ordination, and this applies to nature's operation and the production of artifacts, as well as to voluntary action. "Nihil enim est aliud peccatum, sive in rebus naturalibus sive artificialibus sive voluntariis dicatur, quam defectus vel inordinatio propriae actionis, cum aliquid agitur non secundum quod debitum est agi. . . . ."—*De Ver.*, q. 24, a. 7.

[104] Rectitude of the appetites is not necessary for the artist to attain practical truth in his art; for this reason, the sin of the artist can sometimes be a sign of his greater proficiency in his art: "Bonum autem artificialium non est bonum appetitus humani, sed bonum ipsorum operum artificialium: et ideo ars non praesupponit appetitum rectum. Et inde est quod magis laudatur artifex qui volens peccat, quam qui peccat nolens; magis autem contra prudentiam est quod aliquis peccet volens, quam nolens; quia rectitudo voluntatis est de ratione prudentiae, non autem de ratione artis."—*I-II*, 57, 4; "Principia artificialium non diiudicantur a nobis bene vel male secundum dispositionem appetitus nostri, sicut fines, qui sunt moralium principia: sed solum per considerationem rationis. Et ideo ars non requirit virtutem perficientem appetitum, sicut requirit prudentia."—*Ibid.*, 58, 5, ad 2.

According to this analysis, the truth of a practical intellectual habit is judged according to the very norm we have already found to apply to the *"recta ratio"* or the judgment which imperates a good moral act, namely, the right appetite. Speaking more generally, it perhaps would be better to say that the truth of a practical habit is judged according to a proper ordination, i.e., according to whether what is planned is right, or conformed to the rules which should govern proper operation.[103] In the order of art, then, this would mean that the artist attains practical truth by directing his activity according to the rules of his art and the nature of the matter with which he works, whereas in the order of human action, the person acting according to reason attains practical truth by respecting the right inclination of his moderated appetites.[104] In either event, the object of this ordination must of necessity be a singular thing, because only such things can be "done" or brought into actual existence, and further it must be a contingent thing, because necessary things as such do not come under human control. Therefore the object about which the practical habit attains truth must be a singular contingent, and *cannot* be something necessary.

Lacking this element of necessity, in Köllin's words it will not be always "true" itself, although it can always be intended or planned properly, and thus be the source of the truth of the practical habit.

Examining more closely what is meant by saying that the object of the practical intellect will not always be "true" itself, we see that Köllin takes non-truth here as equivalent to judging "something to be useful for attaining a good end which is not useful." Thus practical truth is that of a judgment about a useful means to an end, which may or may not turn out to be the true and adequate means to that end.[105] Such an eventuality can come about in moral matters in a variety of ways. For instance, in an example cited by St. Thomas, a man who is inculpably ignorant and thinks that fornication is morally good, attains practical truth *per se* when he acts according to a good intention and elects to fornicate, although he actually errs *per accidens* because of his ignorance, and elects a means that will not lead to his full perfection as a man.[106] In more normal situations, the same thing can also happen to the man with a right conscience – and here not because of ignorance of the natural law,[107] but because of his

[105] Here it is useful to keep in mind John of St. Thomas' distinction between the knowing act as itself formally practical, and the external work with which it is concerned as objectively practical. (Cf. *Curs. Theol.*, In 1, 1, disp. 2, a. 10, n. 4). It is the latter which Köllin obviously intends when he speaks of the "utile ad bonum finem." The "bonum finem" here should thus not be confused with the "good" of the perfect prudential act itself, in accordance with St. Thomas' terminology in *De Veritate:* "Bonum illud ad quod virtus ordinatur, non est accipiendum quasi aliquod obiectum alicuius actus; sed illud bonum est ipse actus perfectus, quem virtus elicit."—q. 14, a. 3, ad 3. Also even more important to note is the fact that the practical intellect always seeks the true means to the external work with which it is concerned as a particular end, but that this particular end is itself a means which may or may not attain a yet more general end. Again it is the *particular* end which is spoken of here as "utile ad bonum finem." For the way in which the prudential judgment is concerned with a particular end, J. Peghaire is helpful: "La mineure singulière du syllogisme prudentiel tend à une conclusion pratique, donc à une fin dont, si on la connaît formellement comme mineure, elle est déjà grosse et prégnante. On peut donc dire qu'elle-même en ce sens exprime une fin; fin non pas universelle, c'est la synderèse qui l'énonce à la majeure, mais fin particulière s'incarnant dans l'acte concret suggéré par la prudence; fin particulière et, par conséquent, moyen jugé capable de conduire à la fin générale, soit dans l'ordre d'une vertu, la justice par exemple, soit dans l'ordre humain tout court. On pourra donc très légitimement affirmer que l'intellect qui entre dans l'acte prudentiel est une estimation correcte d'une fin particulière."—"Un sens oublié, la cogitative," *RUO* 13, (1943), p. 170*.

[106] *In VII Ethic.*, lect. 9, n. 1438; Cf. 1436-1437, 1439.

[107] We speak here of natural law as the first practical principles that are known through synderesis: "Synderesis dicitur lex intellectus nostri, inquantum est habitus continens praecepta legis naturalis, quae sunt prima principia operum humanorum." *I-II* 94, 1, ad 2. These principles, however, are not known equally as to extent or certitude by all men; cf. *I-II*, 100, 11.

ignorance of the future. Thus, whenever he concerns himself with a particular thing to be done here and now, he decides on a means which is proportioned to this end, all factors known to him at the time being taken into consideration. In the sequel, however, he may find out that the means on which he decided was not actually proportioned to the end, because of changed circumstances and the arrival of the untoward and unforeseen. This is the reason, incidentally, why solicitude must accompany prudence, and why the latter is continually necessary for the direction of human affairs. But in the practical judgment itself, he *always* attains practical truth *per se* when he directs his action according to right reason and a good intention; in general, or *ut in pluribus*, he will choose a means that will prove to be the "true" and useful one, while in the exceptional case, and *per accidens*, he will choose a "false" one that is not adequate to the attainment of his proper end.

Precisely because of this latter possibility, the truth of the practical habit is not the same as the "truth" of the contingent operable with which it is concerned. This means that, in moral matters, the truth of the practical habit is judged by conformity to the right appetite, while the truth of the operable is judged by whether or not it *de facto* attains the end for which it was intended. The habit can therefore attain truth, its proper object, and still be of something false *ut in paucioribus*.

Applying these considerations to moral science precisely as practical, we gain a better insight into the methodology which characterizes it, particularly as opposed to that of the speculative sciences. Moral science, as has already been established in Chapter Two, differs from the speculative sciences in that it proceeds in both a speculative mode *and* a practical mode. When it proceeds in the speculative mode, its object is the operable considered as non-operable, it searches for the element of necessity found in the operable, and attains to the truth of the speculative intellect. When it proceeds in the practical mode, on the other hand, its object is the operable as such, and its end is operation and not the contemplation of speculative truth. The operable itself, as we have now likewise seen, must be singular and contingent, and therefore will be attained directly by prudence, which as a consequence is necessary to complement moral science as it proceeds in the compositive mode. Moral science as practical, then, has for its object, through prudence, the *contingent as contingent*. As such it is a habit of the practical intellect, and can attain to practical truth as its proper object.[108]

[108] This is the sense, we believe, in which John of St. Thomas' statement is true that "scientia *moralis, si sumatur practice*, est idem quod prudentia" (*Curs.*

It is for this reason, we believe, that St. Thomas says that practical science considers the contingent as contingent, and not as universal, the way it is considered in speculative science.[109] Thus his statement should be understood of moral science taken in conjunction with prudence, since the two are ordered to one and the same operable, and, as we have already explained, are inseparable in use. This further gives the reason why the term "moral science" is sometimes used in such a way as to include prudence in its very notion.[110] And at the other extreme, it explains why the term "prudence" is sometimes used in such a way as to include moral science in its proper notion, and this with even more reason, because one has to be prudent even in the application of universal judgments to operables, while one need not necessarily be scientific in order to have universal judgments to apply.[111]

When this practical mode of moral science is understood, it becomes further apparent why universal principles are inadequate in moral science. In the order of speculation, the more universal and the more abstract is the more true; but this is not the case in the practical order, where the more particular and the more concrete is more conformed to the rules which govern operation, and therefore more true.[112] It is in this sense that "*par-*

Phil., Log. II p., q. 27, a. 1, resp. ad 1am dist.). We disagree, however, with his statement that a strict practical science is itself impossible: "Non detur scientia practica, si vere et proprie scientia est, quia scientia procedit resolvendo et definiendo, practica movendo et componendo" (*Ibid.*, q. 1, a. 4, circa finem). This is to ignore the whole Thomistic doctrine on practical science which we have explained in the previous Chapter, and simply equates science itself with speculative science.

[109] Cf. text on p. 119.

[110] This is implied by St. Thomas when he says that practical science must explain "quomodo singula perfici possunt" (*In I Polit.*, proem., n. 8); also when he attributes Aristotle's use of the term "virtue" to practical science (*In I Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 24). It is explicitly stated by John of St. Thomas. "Scientia moralis potest dupliciter considerari: uno modo, ut etiam includit prudentiam; alio modo, ut eam excludit et solum versatur circa cognitionem virtutum speculando. Primo modo, habet rationem practici ex parte prudentiae quam includit. . . ."—*Curs. Phil.*, Log. II p., q. 1, a. 4. Cf. also text cited in fn. 108, *supra*.

[111] "Si vero prudentia sumatur large, secundum quod includit etiam scientiam speculativam, ut supra dictum est (47, 2, ad 2); tunc etiam partes eius ponuntur dialectica, rhetorica et physica, secundum tres modos procedendi in scientiis. . . . Potest tamen dici quod haec tria pertinent ad prudentiam proprie dictam, quae ratiocinatur interdum quidem ex necessariis, interdum ex probabilibus, interdum autem ex quibusdam coniecturis." *II-II*, 48, a. un. "Certitudo prudentiae est duplex. Quaedam in sola cognitione consistens. Et haec in universali quidem est eadem cum certitudine scientiae moralis, cuius universale est verum ut in pluribus. In particulari autem non excedit certitudinem opinionis, cum de futuris concludit aut absentibus. . . ."—Cajetan, *In II-II*, 47, 3, ad 2, n. 1. Cf. also *De Virt. in comm.*, a. 6, ad. 1.

[112] Cf. *In III de Anima*, lect. 12, n. 780.

ticulares sermones sunt veriores" in moral science: they participate more in the truth of the practical intellect.[113]

Similarly, it is for the same reason that moral science must proceed in a dialectical mode, and argue from things that are found to be true for the most part. When complemented by prudence and incorporated into its practical syllogism, moral science always attains practical truth, and this because the last practical judgment is in conformity with a right appetite; but still moral science itself is not about operables that are always true: it is concerned rather with human actions that, viewed extrinsically as means to further ends, are found to be proportioned to those ends only *ut in pluribus*. Yet, as a human science based on the customs of men, it takes its practical principles from a study of such actions as they are seen externally. This explains why it argues dialectically: its principles must be conformed to its subject matter, and from such principles—dialectical with respect to speculative science[114]—practical truth is generated, which is useful to direct human action at the level of practical science.

And finally, this is the ultimate reason why prudence and moral virtue are a necessary concomitant to moral science. If they are lacking, there is no way of assuring the influx of reason into operation, there is no regulation of the passions and thus no right appetite which can be the measure of practical truth. Moral science, therefore, cannot be taught in its full perfection to the youth or to the incontinent or passionate man. Its speculative mode, of course, and the speculative truth which the latter yields, can be communicated to them by a teacher in much the same manner as geometry or natural science.[115] But this brings them merely to the intermediate stage of moral science. As soon as the transition is made from the resolutive to the compositive mode—the distinctive mode of moral science precisely as practical—they lack the ability to apply what they have learned speculatively in their own lives. The practical truth to which the latter mode is ordained simply cannot be grasped by such people, because they are without the norm essential to its comprehension.

Thus does the notion of practical truth supply the key to an understanding of the proper methodology of moral science. The latter proceeds differently from speculative science because basically it is seeking a different type of knowledge—a knowledge, namely, which perfects the human

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[113] *In II Ethic.*, lect. 8, nn. 333-334.

[114] Cf. Cajetan, *In II-II*, 47, 3, ad 2, n. 1; text given above in fn. 111. Also *De Ver.*, q. 15, a. 2, ad 3.

[115] Cf. *II-II*, 45, 2.

intellect to direct human action truly, and not merely to contemplate the truth of such action itself.[116]

3. MORAL CERTITUDE

This answers in part the question we asked earlier as to whether moral science attains practical truth about the singular operable as such. There yet remains the further aspect of the question relating to practical certitude and its relation to moral science.

The notion of practical truth, as we have seen, is best realized in the judgment respecting the singular contingent thing to be done, and therefore is found most perfectly in the last practical judgment of prudence. Such truth will have its own certitude, which because of the matter with which it is concerned, is frequently referred to as moral certitude. It is this certitude which accompanies every action that is properly human, for it is this which gives conviction that here and now, in these particular circumstances and for this particular person, the singular action that is contemplated is the right thing to do. Here the certainty, like the truth of the practical intellect, is not prognostic of the future: it is not a certainty that this operable will actually prove useful to attain the end for which it is intended. For this reason, as we have already mentioned, it is not a certitude which removes all solicitude from the one placing the action.[117] In fact, in its very nature it is one that demands caution, foresight and circumspection even before a decision can be made as to what is to be done, and then continued attention throughout the process of execution, to see if additional decisions are necessary to adapt to changing circumstances.[118] But apart from this solicitude for the future, in any given set of circumstances a decision to act can be made at the moment, and in its making much more than opinion is generated in the practical intellect.[119] What accompanies the decision to act is the practical certitude that what is intended is *properly* intended, that it is an action that is well planned, that

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[116] Cf. A.-D. Sertillanges, *La philosophie morale de S. Thomas d'Aquin*, (Paris: 1946), p. 7.

[117] *II-II*, 47, 9, ad 2.

[118] "Il est bien certain que le contingent échappe à l'infaillible assurance d'une vérité spéculative; mais il n'échappe pas forcément à l'infaillible justesse d'une direction pratiquement vraie. L'homme est trop sujet à l'erreur involontaire pour qu'il ne soit pas nécessaire de donner à sa vie morale une certaine indépendance par rapport à la pure vérité spéculative; mais cette erreur même est un tel dommage pour un être intelligent, qui a entre ses mains la direction de son agir, qu'il faut également affirmer son devoir de tout faire pour l'éviter dans le domaine de son action."—M. Labourdette, "Théologie morale," *RT* 50 (1950) p. 211; Cf. *II-II*, 49, aa. 1-8.

[119] *In III Ethic.*, lect. 6, n. 454.

it is the right thing to do when everything that can be taken into account has been accounted for.[120]

The firmness of assent in the certitude of prudence therefore involves something different from adherence of the intellect to the truth of an already existent entity, as is the case with the certitude of a speculative habit.[121] Its adherence is rather to the rectitude of something to be done, and this involves a firmness of assent to the rectitude of the appetites, to the intention of the will, to the proper *ordination* of the act in conformity with a right appetite and a right intention, all of which we have seen to be involved in the very notion of practical truth.[122] But just as the firmness of assent of the speculative intellect to the true thing which is its measure constitutes speculative certitude, so the firmness of assent of the practical intellect to the right appetite which is its measure constitutes practical certitude.[123] The two are analogous; they are both modalities of their corresponding truths.

Precisely to guarantee this moral certitude of prudence, however, other habits are further necessary in the practical intellect. One of these is the virtue of *eubulia,* which perfects the conciliative power of the individual so that he can take counsel properly about what is to be done.[124]

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[120] "Au-dessous de ce doute—dit spéculatif parce qu'il porte sur la vérité des choses—, et sans le résoudre, le réservant à de plus amples réflexions ou m'en remettant aux 'sages' je puis atteindre *hic et nunc* non pas seulement une opinion, mais une *certitude pratique* de ce que *j'ai à faire*, en tout état de cause. Par un curieux renversement, c'est ici la certitude même que promet le probabilisme et qu'il requiert. *Je dois être pratiquement certain que, quoi qu'il en soit des choses, moi du moins, tel que je suis, dans les circonstances présentes, je puis agir ainsi.*"—M. Labourdette, "Théologie morale," *RT* 50 (1950), p. 222.

[121] Cf. Cajetan, *In II-II*, 47, 3, ad 2, n. 2: "Certitudo practicae veritatis . . . consistit in confesse se habere appetitui recto. Et haec est propria prudentiae, quae non in sola ratione consistit. Et talis certitudo semper adest prudentiae, etiam singularium absentium et futurorum."

[122] "Mais qu'est-ce que cette *vérité* pratique? C'est, d'un mot, la *conformité* d'une oeuvre ou d'une action à l'*idée directrice* qui préside à sa réalisation, qui lui fait atteindre sa fin. Cela suppose une étroite union de la pensée et du vouloir, car cette fin de l'oeuvre ou de l'action, elle n'est pas seulement pensée par celui qui agit, elle est déjà portée en son appétit, en sa volonté, sous forme de tendance et d'inclination. Si cet appétit n'est pas rectifié, n'est pas droit, dans sa tendance à cette fin, la direction rationnelle sera faussée, aucune vérité pratique n'est possible."—M. Labourdette, "Théologie morale," *RT* 50, (1950), pp. 211-212.

[123] Cf. J. Ramirez, "De certitudine spei christianae," *CT* 57 (1938), p. 28: "Haec igitur certitudo (scil., ordinis seu intentionis), secundum quod est in agente intellectuali, dicitur firmitas directionis rationis practicae vel intentionis voluntatis in proprium et verum finem; prout vero est in agente mere naturali, vocatur firmitas inclinationis ejus in propriam operationem et finem; ac universaliter appellari potest firmitas adhaesionis principiorum actionis ad suam propriam regulam, ex qua formaliter pendet propriae operationis rectitudo."

[124] Cf. *II-II*, 51, 1-2.

Another is *synesis*, which assists him in making a good practical judgment on the basis of all the normal factors his conciliative process has made available to him.[125] Still another is the habit of *gnome*, which gives him facility in judging the extraordinary case, where special factors have to be taken into account apart from the normal ones, as in the example we have already mentioned: "*impugnatori patriae non est depositum reddendum.*"[126] But most important of all is the habit of *synderesis*, which supplies the initial direction for virtuous action. Although many practical habits are thus ultimately involved in such direction, St. Thomas observes that "all have their efficacy from one first habit, the habit of first principles, which is called *synderesis*."[127]

Synderesis, then, concerned with things to be done at a most general level, has greater certitude than prudence, and actually contributes to the certainty of the prudential judgment in the way that understanding (*intellectus*) guarantees the certitude of the scientific judgment.[128] It has an immutable rectitude, which is necessary to safeguard the first principles of the practical order, in terms of which all else will have to be judged, and from which all moral certitude will ultimately derive.[129] Yet, by way of paradox, precisely because concerned with only the most universal truths, synderesis does not attain to the particular operable itself, and as such does not attain to practical truth in all its perfection.[130] This is obvious not only from its object, but from the fact that it is a natural habit found in every individual, prerequisite to the rectification of the appetites and to the generation of moral virtue, and therefore independent of the norm we have shown to be the measure of practical truth.

The incongruity apparently involved in this relation of synderesis and prudence to practical truth disappears when we recall that practical discourse, in general—even apart from that of practical science—involves two compositions and one resolution, as we have already shown in Chapter

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125 *Cf. Ibid.*, 3.

126 *Ibid.*, 4. Apart from the virtue of *gnome* in the intellect, as a potential part of prudence, there is also the virtue of *epieikeia* in the will, which is a subjective part of justice, and as such inclines the individual to moderate his observance of a general law in singular circumstances (cf. *II-II*, 120, 1-2). In this connection, some writers on situation ethics confuse the two virtues, and speak of *epieikeia* in contexts in which *gnome* is the proper virtue to judge the morality of a particular situation (cf. *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 9, n. 1243; also T. Deman, *La prudence*, pp. 334-335). See, for example, J. Fuchs, *Situation und Entscheidung*, (Frankfurt: 1952), pp. 53-61; also R. Egenter, "Ueber die Bedeutung der Epikie in christlichen Leben," *PJ* 53 (1940), 115-127.

127 *I*, 79, 13, ad 3.

128 *I-II*, 58, 5; *II-II*, 47, 6, ad 3.

129 *De Ver.*, q. 16, a. 2. Cf. also *In II Sent.*, d. 39, q. 3, a. 1.

130 *I-II*, 94, 2-4.

Two. The first composition is in the order of intention, where the end, as simple, is viewed as a good to be done, and it is this composition which, when concerned with *agibilia* (as opposed to *factibilia*), is initiated and controlled by the habit of synderesis, although not independently of the general inclination of the will. After this comes the resolutive process, which resolves to the proper means necessary to attain this end, and is effected under the influence of moral virtue, but more proximately by the habits of *eubulia, synesis* and *gnome,* which function conciliatively and judicatively in making the resolution. Finally comes the second and last composition, which is that proper to the habit of prudence, and which composes to the singular operable itself. Its distinctive character as prudential is that its composition is not only in the order of execution, but is in this order as actually imperating the singular contingent action, *in actu exercito,* and thereby bringing it into being in the existential order.[131] It is in view of this, moreover, that prudential knowledge belongs in the fifth category of speculative-practical knowledge in the schema on page 79; it is *actually* practical knowledge in the full sense of the term "actual," and in no way belongs to the speculative order.

Precisely because of this terminative function, then, prudence attains most proximately and perfectly to the practical truth and certitude which is that of the singular contingent itself. This does not mean that it does so independently of synderesis. It must always begin with the latter's judgment as the initial step required in any practical discourse concerning human action; and also, on that account, synderesis must motivate the entire discourse with the basic certitude proper to first principles. But the latter

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[131] Cajetan has a good summary of the order of this composition, and how synderesis and prudence function in it to attain a judgment, which is not merely *in actu signato,* but rather *in actu exercito:* "Est autem ordo talis in huiusmodi agibilibus. Primo, est synderesis in intellectu, dictans et praestituens virtuti morali suum obiectum, quod est finis: propositiones enim quae sunt principia in agibilia, ex fine, qui habet rationem principii in operabilibus, conficiuntur. Et sic virtus moralis, ad quam spectat tendere in finem praecognitum, ad finem praestitum sibi a synderesi, tendit actu qui vocatur velle vel intentio in voluntate, et in appetitu sensitivo appetitus per modum intentionis. Tertio loco venit prudentia, habens se ad synderesin, sicut scientia ad intellectum in speculatis. Prudentia autem, cum sit recta ratio, cuius est discurrere, utitur duabus praemissis, quae sunt principia conclusionis. Prima praemissa est propositio spectans ad synderesin, verbi gratia: 'Bonum rationis tam in passionibus quam operationibus, est prosequendum.' Secunda vero praemissa est particularissima, scilicet: 'Bonum rationis nunc, hic, salvatur in tali, tanta, etc., audacia vel ira.' Et tunc sequitur conclusio praeceptiva, non *in actu signato,* idest, 'Ergo hoc est mihi nunc praecipiendum, eligendum, prosequendum'; sed *in actu exercito,* idest, 'Ergo actualiter sum in exercitio iudicii, praecepti, electionis, prosecutionis.' Hoc enim est quod multos decipit in hac materia: quoniam propositiones istae tam synderesis quam prudentiae, *in actu signato* disputantur; et tamen oportet intueri naturam et vim earum *in actu exercito.*"—*In I-II,* 58, 5, n. 8.

certitude, like that of all first principles, is one associated with most general truths, which require further determination before they can be applied to a singular contingent.[132] Prudence effects this application by composing to the singular operable—but not without the assistance of the other habits of the practical intellect, in turn motivated by synderesis[133]—and with their aid attains to practical truth most perfectly itself.[134] Therefore prudence has the greatest moral certitude about the singular operable, although synderesis can be said to have a greater practical certitude about what is to be done in general, abstracting from the application to the concrete case.[135]

4. THE CERTITUDE OF MORAL SCIENCE

Intermediate between prudence and synderesis comes the practical habit which judges the intermediate truths governing human action—not the most general first principles of synderesis and not the last practical judgment of prudence, but rather more and more particular universal truths that can be judged in terms of their proximate operating causes—and this is the habit of moral science, considered precisely as practical.[136] The question of its certitude will now concern us, and it is noteworthy at the outset that a satisfactory answer cannot be given in a simple way. As we are about to show, because moral science proceeds in both a speculative and a practical mode, there are two certitudes that are proper to it, one speculative and the other practical.[137] Since the latter is more properly a

[132] *De Ver.*, q. 16, a. 2, ad 1.

[133] Cf. *I*, 79, 13, ad 3.

[134] Cf. *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 9, nn. 1239-1240.

[135] A more complete exposition of moral certitude would have to take into account common usages which derive in one way or another from the certitude of prudence, such as the certitude of human laws (*I-II*, 91, 3, ad 3) which would seem to participate in the political prudence of the law-giver, and the certitude of court judgments, (*II-II*, 70, 2), where the testimony of witnesses would seem to be used as a prudential measure of truth. Understandably we are only interested here in the certitude of prudence and synderesis for their particular relevance to that of moral science.

[136] Cf. *De Virt. in comm.*, q. un., a. 6, ad 1.

[137] It should be noted that this, again, is not the teaching of John of St. Thomas. Consistent with his general position, he ascribes only a speculative mode to moral philosophy. Cf. *Curs. Theol.*, In *I*, 1, disp. 2, a. 10, n. 23 (ed. Solesmes, I, 402): "Philosophia (moralis) non habet dirigere finem virtutum, neque de ipso fine tractare sub ratione boni et virtutis, licet tractet sub ratione veri et quidditatis: tractare enim de illis sub ratione convenientis et boni, pertinent quantum ad principia ad synderesim, et quantum ad applicationem mediorum ad prudentiam." He does, however, ascribe a practical mode to moral *theology*, as we shall see *infra* (cf. pp. 193 and 202, fns. 90 and 118), because of its direct dependence on divine faith as practical. Our analysis envisages an analogous situation in the philosophical order, where the practical mode of moral philosophy derives directly from synderesis, precisely as practical in a sense similar to divine faith. Thus we would further distinguish the statement quoted above, and say that moral philosophy considers the operable not only *sub ratione veri et quidditatis*, but also *sub ratione boni et operabilitatis*, not *quantum ad principia* in the manner of synderesis, nor *quantum ad applicationem mediorum* in the manner of prudence, but *quantum ad media ipsa*, and this through causal analysis in the manner proper to a practical science that also uses a resolutive mode of analysis. Such a position would seem to be implicit in Cajetan's statement: "An sit irascendum, tristandum, delectandum, nihil vel usque ad tantum terminum, non dictat naturalis ratio sufficienti evidentia absque rationis discursu: propter quod de hoc variae dicuntur opiniones. Et ad moralem philosophiam spectat hoc in communi determinare, ut evidens nobis sit. Ad prudentiam autem spectat uti principiis his, 'Non est plus vel minus delectandum, operandum, etc., sed moderate'; et applicare ea ad particulares passiones, scilicet hanc iram, hanc tristitiam, etc., et sic determinare quae sit tristia media, non maior nec minor quam oporteat, nunc, hic, mihi, in tali casu, etc." (*In II-II*, 47, 7, n. 1).

moral certitude, we shall therefore consider it first, and then conclude with the speculative certitude which is a prerequisite, as it were, to its attainment.

The practical certitude of moral science is a certitude that participates in the practical certitude of synderesis, and is completed by the practical certitude of prudence, in much the same way as prudence itself participates in the certitude of synderesis, and the certitude of synderesis is perfected by that of prudence. In order to make our treatment complete, we shall thus have to take account of its relations to both these practical certitudes, insofar as they influence its own special character.

As a type of practical discourse, moral science must take its initiation from the first practical principles of synderesis, and when it does so, its relation to synderesis in the practical order is analogous to that of speculative science to the habit presupposed to such science, namely, understanding or *intellectus*. This does not mean that the practical certitude of moral science is to be identified with that of synderesis, any more than the certitude of speculative science is to be identified with that of *intellectus*. In both cases, different habits of mind are involved, and these attain different types of truths, and have different certitudes as modalities of those truths. For example, synderesis proposes the general truth, "evil is not to be done," with the most immediate evidence and certitude of the practical order; moral science, on the other hand, proposes a much more determinate truth, such as "theft is not to be done,"[138] with a mediate certitude deriving partly from the latter and partly from its proper analysis in the speculative mode. Thus, the latter analysis yields a certain judgment on the nature of theft, to show not only what it is,[139] but also, as a conse-

[138] Cf. *De Virt. in comm.*, q. un., a. 6, ad 1.

[139] Cf. *II-II*, 66, 1-4.

quence of its nature, that it is evil or contrary to reason.[140] This, composed with the more universal principle, "evil is not to be done," yields the conclusion, "theft is not to be done," which is thereupon known with a mediate practical certitude. The latter does not have the immediate evidence and certainty of synderesis, as is attested by the fact that it is not known to all men,[141] but for those who possess the habit of moral science, it is known with the certitude proper to practical science.[142] It is in this sense, then, that moral science as such can give a more particular knowledge than synderesis, which is at the same time a *certain* knowledge of what should be done in the practical order to attain the *bonum humanum*.[143]

In view of this particular relation of moral science to synderesis, it can be said that prudence and moral virtue are not necessary for a partial possession of moral science as a practical habit, insofar as they are not necessary for synderesis itself.[144] Because of this, a person who possesses moral science in the speculative mode can place his knowledge at the disposal of others, and can even use that knowledge himself, as an adjunct to synderesis, to acquire or re-acquire moral virtue and prudence.[145] This then is a use of moral science in the practical mode which does not attain perfectly to practical truth, but which nonetheless disposes to its attainment.

In the more perfect view of moral science, however, apart from the

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[140] Cf. *II-II*, 66, 5-6.

[141] Cf. *I-II*, 94, 4.

[142] This knowledge, by its very nature, is also capable of resolving doubts about whether it is licit to take what belongs to another in grave necessity, or in various other moral circumstances, which is not the case of knowledge possessed solely in the opiniative or pre-scientific mode. Cf. *II-II*, 66, 7.

[143] It is only in such a way, we believe, that moral science can conclude in the practical order, to say for example: "fornicationem esse malam," or "furtum non esse faciendum" (cf. *De Virt. in comm.*, q. un., a. 6, ad 1). John of St. Thomas' position (cf. *fn.* 137 *supra*), on the other hand, would seem to exclude this type of conclusion, and permit moral science to conclude merely to the nature or essence of fornication or theft, without deducing any practical consequences from its causal analysis. Our position is closer to that of O. Lottin, who holds: "Ce premier impératif (scil., 'le bien est à faire'), impersonnel encore, se communique à toutes les propostions de la science morale: après que la raison théorique a prouvé que le vol est vraiment un mal moral, la raison pratique dicte la prohibition du vol, et par la même incline la volonté à s'en détourner. Arrivée à ce terme, la science morale a rempli tout son rôle; elle est science pratique, issue de la science théorique."—*Morale fondamentale*, p. 11.

[144] Cf. *I-II*, 58, 5.

[145] "Unusquisque enim tenetur actus suos examinare ad scientiam quam a Deo habet, sive sit naturalis, sive acquisita, sive infusa: omnis enim homo debet secundum rationem agere."—*De Ver.*, q. 17, a. 5, ad 4.

resolution to synderesis, there is also a proper composition to the last practical judgment of prudence, which attains to complete practical truth and certitude concerning the proper object of moral science as practical, the singular operable. Here the situation becomes more complicated, because the analogy which we have been using with reference to the speculative order breaks down at this point. As we have seen, speculative truth and certitude are best found in the most universal, while practical truth and certitude are only completely realized in the most particular or singular, and thus there is a quasi-inversion of the two orders which militates against too close a comparison. To circumvent this difficulty, however, it is possible to construct another analogy based on the modes of discourse proper to the two orders, insofar as a resolutive process terminates speculative discourse and assures its final speculative certitude, while a compositive process terminates practical discourse and assures its final practical certitude. Following the modes which are proper to each order, and which on that account also furnish the basis for a proper proportion, we therefore can say: just as speculative science is related to understanding in the order of resolution, so moral science is related to prudence in the order of composition. And according to this analogy, just as there are two speculative certitudes involved in the speculative analogate, so there will be two practical certitudes in the practical analogate: the one the immediate certitude of prudence, which assures the mind that this individual attains practical truth here and now, the other the mediate one of moral science, which must be completed by the former, but which nevertheless gives the practical intellect assurance that this singular action is conformed to a more general rule telling what should be done *per se*, by any virtuous human being in similar circumstances, to attain the *bonum humanum*.[146]

The compositive process by which moral science attains its proper practical truth and certitude is thus not to be identified with the composition of prudence. The former begins at the same starting point as the latter, with the first intimation of synderesis, and it even has a certain prudential character in the sense that it evaluates the various moral circumstances which affect its causal analysis, but it is not a composition *in actu exercito* imperating a concrete operable. Rather it is a composition effected *in actu signato*, which gives an habitual type of knowledge indicating what should be done by the virtuous individual confronted by such and such an action in such moral circumstances. Because of this, it looks forward to a proper and prudent application in the singular case, in con-

[146] Thus, moral science can have certainty of the rectitude of a singular action, but conceived as an *individuum vagum*. For an explanation of the latter concept and its relevance to moral theology, see *infra*, p. 200.

formity with the right appetites of the individual placing the action. As a consequence, it also presupposes prudence and the moral virtues in the person who would actually apply such knowledge to the construction of the singular operable for which it is *per se* ordained. And this explains, finally, why the practical certitude of moral science must be complemented by the practical certitude of prudence, and is not to be identified with this most perfect certitude of the practical order.

From the foregoing analysis, then, we have the answer to our question about the practical certitude of moral science and its relation to the singular contingent. The practical certitude of moral science is not the immediate one of prudence, but rather a mediate one which is one level removed from the practical certitude bearing directly on the singular contingent. It is rather a practical scientific certitude of general or universal rules governing virtuous human action,[147] which in turn have a *per se* order to being applied in the concrete case.[148] Yet it is not a certitude of something that is *most* universal and commonly known, for in the practical order this is the certitude of synderesis. Rather it bears directly on the more particular universals which are knowable through their causal antecedents in the practical order, and thus it is properly a scientific certitude on two counts: it is of universals, precisely as distinguished from that of prudence as of singulars, and it is not of commonly or immediately known universals, precisely as distinguished from that of synderesis, but instead is of those which can be known mediately, through causal analysis, although participating in the intimation of synderesis and therefore capable of guiding action in the practical order.

The practical certitude of moral science, in the light of this analysis, is that which characterizes it insofar as it belongs to what we have indicated as the fourth category of speculative-practical knowledge in the schema on page 79. It is a certitude which is associated with knowledge of an operable precisely as true, and thus it is the certitude of the *per se rectum*, or of the *per se verum* governing operation.[149] It is distinguished

[147] Cf. John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.*, In I, I, disp. 2, a. 9.

[148] This is the sense in which practical science is concerned with an object that has little utility or importance apart from its direct relation to the operable: "Ex quibus apparet quod ad hoc quod habitus proprie dicatur esse practicus, aut in intellectu practico, oportet quod sit proxima regula operis, et quod non habeat magnam dignitatem, aut utilitatem, nisi in quantum ordinatur ad opus."—Capreolus, *Defensiones*, prol. Sent. q. 2, a. 1, 5ª concl.

[149] Cajetan has well described this certitude as follows: "Sed quod multos in hac et aliis moralibus materiis decipit, et quia non penetrant quod rectitudo naturalis in humanis actibus *non* est secundum ea quae per accidens contingunt: et quod certitudo mathematica non est expetenda in moralibus, sed demonstrationes

from the completely practical certitude of knowledge of the fifth category, because the knower need not immediately apply such regulatory knowledge *in actu exercito* to this concrete singular, but merely has practical certitude of more general rules *in actu signato* which *can be* applied, should he have the occasion to use them.[150]

The question might be asked here if this certitude is a result of practical demonstration, or if practical science has a proper demonstrative procedure which generates its practical certitude, analogous to that in the speculative order. The answer we would give to this is that to speak of "practical demonstration" is not the best terminology: the term "demonstration" is better left to describe the resolution which is characteristic of the speculative order. A practical science has for its object the operable; it attains that object not by demonstrating it, but rather by *constructing* it, and it does this in the order of execution and proceeding in the compositive mode.[151] Thus we would say that there is no proper "practical demonstration" which is characteristic of practical science, and therefore, while practical science has its own special procedure, it is not in such a sense that it is to be understood.[152]

It is of paramount importance to note, however, that moral science is ordered to use in the *practical syllogism*, and this by its very nature as a practical science.[153] The end of moral science, as we have already indicated, is to supply middle terms which are directly usable in the practical syllogism, which will give greater surety to the practical judgment—will make

morales tunc sunt certae cum ostendunt id quod *per se et ut in pluribus rectum aut non rectum est: et haec ad constructionem universalis in moralibus sufficiunt*, nisi apud disciplinae incapaces, etc. . . . Haec enim . . . error intolerabilis, destructivus totius philosophiae moralis, miscendo per se et per accidens, et ex his quae sunt per accidens falsificans universale ex his quae sunt per se, satis exclusus est ab Aristotele docente qualis in moralibus certitudo, qualis sint moralia universalia. . . . Perit omnis doctrina, nisi sistatur in his quae sunt per se."—*In II-II*, 154, 2, n. 14. (Italics mine).

[150] This knowledge is then formally or habitually practical, because of its order to operation, even though it is not actually applied *in actu secundo*: "Habitus non est actualiter practicus, nisi ordinetur ad finem operis per voluntatem et intellectum. Non tamen oportet quod illa ordinatio vel propositum sit actus secundus; sed sufficit quod sit actus primus, scilicet propositum habituale. Unde qui audit medicinam solum ad hoc ut sciat, non proponendo actualiter aut habitualiter operari per illam, acquirit scientiam practicam solum virtualiter, non autem actualiter."—Capreolus, *Defensiones*, Prol. Sent., q. 4, a. 2, ad arg. contra 3am concl.

[151] Cf. *In I Anal.* lect. 41, n. 7.

[152] It should be noted, however, that both Aristotle and St. Thomas refer to practical or operative syllogisms as "demonstrations." Cf. *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 9, n. 1253.

[153] Cf. p. 113, fn. 73 *supra*.

prudence doubly sure, as it were, of its decision.[154] Such a concatenation of middle terms, moreover, is the result of a resolutive, demonstrative process, but their composition in the practical syllogism is not. A composition of this type, in effect, would violate the methodological principle that we have stressed many times: that one cannot proceed from cause to effect when they are not *simul* and in an order of causality that can be impeded, and therefore there can be no strict demonstration in this mode.

But it is of equal importance to note that demonstration, and the speculative certitude which accompanies it, is necessary to supply the concatenation of middles when dealing with an operable such as the human act. Moral science, as should not be forgotten in this long discussion of its practical phase, must use a strict speculative resolution to attain to scientific knowledge of its proper subject: it must be speculative, in order to be practical.[155] Thus it has its proper speculative certitude, apart from its practical certitude, and this pertains to it insofar as it belong to the third category of speculative-practical knowledge in the schema on page 79.

Thus there is a demonstrative process which is characteristic of moral science as it proceeds in the speculative mode. This is accompanied by much more dialectics than is found in the other sciences of which we have treated in Chapter One,[156] and it usually concludes to a demonstration *ex*

[154] For example, the prudent man might construct a practical syllogism as follows: "This action (S) *is* theft (M1), *is* punishable by a prison sentence (M2), *is* evil (M3), *is* not being done by me here and now (P)." The primary assent to (M3-P) comes from synderesis, the intermediate judgments (S-M1), (M1-M2), and (M2-M3) from eubulia and synesis, and the last practical judgment (S-P) from prudence itself. Moral science can supply additional middle terms for such a practical syllogism of the type: "Theft (M1) *is* the surreptitious taking of what rightfully belongs to another (M4), *is* opposed to the virtue of justice (M5), *is* destructive of human society (M6), *is* punishable by civil authority (M7), *is* not perfective of man as such (M9)." These not only can reinforce the principal conclusion (S-P), but also give more complete knowledge in terms of which the judgment (S-M1) can be made, for it might happen that the contemplated action is not theft at all, as would be the taking of necessities from another in a case of great urgency (cf. *II-II*, 66, 7).

[155] Thus the speculative conclusion, "Theft is contrary to reason," is arrived at through a resolutive process which manifests its truth by causal analysis, or in terms of its formal definition. The middle terms discovered in such a process, as we have already mentioned, are exactly those which are usable in the compositive process of the practical syllogism, as "Theft *is* the surreptitious taking of what belongs to another, *is* opposed to the virtue of justice, *is* contrary to reason," as in fn. 154.

[156] *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1, sol. 1, ad 4. Cajetan makes reference to this dialectical content as follows: "Dato quod haec non dictare naturalis ratio tanquam necessario scita, saltem tamquam rationabilia dictat. In moralibus autem non oportet expetere certitudinem mathematicam, sed rationabilia sufficiunt."—*In II-II*, 85, 1, ad 1, n. 3.

suppositione finis, similar to that which is found in natural philosophy. It need not always demonstrate in this way, however, for in moral science, as in natural science, it is possible to have quidditative knowledge through formal principles, and to demonstrate in absolute fashion properties which follow from such quiddities. For instance, one of the main concerns of moral science is with the accident of an accident, i.e., the morality of a human act, and it is possible to demonstrate this as a property which flows from the very nature of a human act, just as it is possible to demonstrate the necessity of an extrinsic mover from the very nature of motion. But for the most part, the contingency found in moral matters will have to be circumvented by demonstrating *ex suppositione finis*, and this is what we mean when we say that such demonstration is characteristic of moral science.

A final question can now be asked about the speculative certitude which is proper to moral science: is it less certain than that which characterizes demonstrations in metaphysics or in physics? The answer to this follows directly from our discussion of physical and metaphysical demonstration in Chapter One, and need not be dwelt upon at length. If by certitude is meant the firmness of assent of a knowing faculty to its proper object, then the certitude of all demonstrations, whether they be of metaphysical, mathematical, physical, moral, or logical matters, is one and the same; it is the absolute, strict, apodeictic certitude of Aristotelian-Thomistic science, and is found equally in a moral and a metaphysical demonstration.[157] If the question is understood in a broad sense, however, as when

[157] In explaining speculative certitudes some writers first make a three-fold division into metaphysical, physical and moral certitude, and then go on to speak of metaphysical certitude as though it were the *only* absolute one. Dom Trethowan criticizes such an explanation, given by Phillips (*Modern Thomistic Philosophy*, pp. 11-13), and also found in other scholastic manuals, as follows: "He (Phillips) adopts, however, as the most reasonable view that which accepts moral and physical certitudes as formal certitudes on the ground that 'they exclude fear of error . . . there being in fact but a mere possibility of *it*, due to the fact that we are dealing with contingent things.' But the exclusion of which he here speaks is not, as in the previous quotation, absolute; and it is obvious that we can have no genuine certainty, in the sense in which we have been using that expression, so long as there is *any* possibility of error. It would seem, then, that we have no genuine certainty of the physical or moral kind either on the view which Dr. Phillips rejects or on that which he accepts. . . . This may seem to be a satisfactory conclusion, for physical and moral certainties may seem to mean predictions or interpretations which we are not concerned to claim as certain. But the final remark of the last quotation about 'contingent things' has in fact further implications. 'Contingency' is opposed to 'metaphysical necessity.' Dr. Phillips has already referred in this passage to 'the very nature or essence of the thing known' as determining metaphysical certainty, and it now becomes clear that he equates this metaphysical certainty with certainty proper, denying the latter any wider field. This is common

arithmetic is said to be more certain than geometry because it deals with a simpler subject, or one science is more certain than another because it can demonstrate more things about its subject, then moral science is less certain than any speculative science.[158] It deals with a very complex subject, with almost an infinite variety of factors to be taken into account, and consequently there are many things that cannot be demonstrated in the science.[159] But of those things that *can* be demonstrated, the certitude is no less than that found in any speculative science.[160]

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Here we conclude our discussion of the basic difficulties that present themselves in connection with the demonstrative process in moral science. Obviously much more could be said on each of the points treated, insofar as the methodological problems of moral philosophy are quite complicated, and there is no great unanimity among authors—even in the Thomistic tradition—on the details of their solution. Our interest in the latter, however, is merely preparatory to taking up the method of demonstration in moral theology, which is our proper concern, and which, as we

teaching in Scholastic manuals. . . ."—I. Trethowan, *Certainty: Philosophical and Theological*, (Westminister, 1948), pp. 20-21.

It would seem that such a division has no place in speculative science, and can only generate confusion. Of interest in this connection, is the analysis given by S. Harent (*DTC*, VI, coll. 211-215): "Cette division (de la certitude en métaphysique, physique et morale) . . . ne se rencontre pas dans les premiers temps de la scolastique, mais à une époque plutot tardive. . . . (col. 211) Sylvestre Maurus, un des premiers scholastiques chez qui nous trouvons exposée cette division ternaire, mentionne cette explication. . . . (col. 212) On voit combien peu est justifiée cette division ternaire, et cette certitude suprême que l'on suppose dans notre esprit au sujet de toute vérité métaphysique. Tout bien considéré, il ne reste donc qu'une division sérieuse de la certitude proprement dite, et en deux espèces: la certitude d'évidence, . . . et la certitude . . . inévidente. . . ." (col. 214).

[158] This would seem to be true, in an analogous way, of all practical sciences. Thus St. Thomas observes: "Quanto aliqua scientia magis appropinquat ad singularia, sicut scientiae operativae, ut medicina, alchimia et moralis, minus possunt habere de certitudine propter multitudinem eorum quae consideranda sunt in talibus scientiis, quorum quodlibet si omittatur, sequetur error, et propter eorum variabilitatem."—*In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1, sol. 2. Cf. also *In I Meta.*, lect. 2, n. 47.

[159] It is in this sense, we believe, that certain citations in the *Ethics* should be understood. For example: *In I Ethic.*, lect. 11, n. 135; *In IX Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 1774 and n. 1779.

[160] Here again we disagree with H. Grenier (*Thomistic Philosophy*, IV, n. 818) when he states: "Absolute certitude is impossible of attainment in moral philosophy, because moral philosophy applies its principles to human acts, which, in the concrete, are very variable and contingent." He bases this opinion on the text which we have cited and analyzed on p. 100 and following (*In I Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 35), which according to our view does not warrant such a restricted interpretation.

shall see, is considerably simplified when compared to that of moral philosophy because of the assistance given to the moral theologian by divine revelation. We shall also have occasion in the following Chapter to return to some further questions relating to method in moral philosophy, as we make precise the difference of subject between moral philosophy and moral theology, and its consequent influence on methodological procedures.

In the present Chapter we have been content to sketch the general approach of the moralist, unaided by divine faith, to the elaboration of a science dealing with moral matters. Our conclusion has been that such a science is possible, even though it cannot be attained without considerable difficulty, and that even so, its practical role in the direction of human action serves to distinguish its method quite clearly from that of the speculative sciences. In analyzing the basic problems presented by the variability and contingency of its subject matter, we have explained the role of dialectics in moral science, and how a dialectical method can even be said to characterize it –and thus distinguish it from other Aristotelian sciences— without thereby jeopardizing its strict scientific character. But our major concern has been with the understanding of how moral science perfects the practical intellect, and works with other practical habits in the effective direction of human activity. The results of this study have led to the conclusion that there is more than speculative truth and certitude associated with moral science. Rather, applying the doctrine of the previous Chapter on the resolutive and compositive modes proper to this type of practical science, we have seen that a type of practical truth and certitude is also attained, and that this is what enables it to supply a proximate rule governing human action.

To summarize, then, the principal conclusion to which our investigation has led us, we have argued that there are two certitudes directly associated with moral science. One is a speculative certitude, which is the result of a strict demonstrative process, which terminates in a knowledge of the operable considered as non-operable, and has for its truth the *per se verum* of the speculative intellect. The other is a practical certitude which arises from the former and from the habit of synderesis, is itself that of a compositive process, which terminates in a knowledge of the operable considered precisely as such, and has for its truth the *per se rectum* of the practical intellect—in turn directly applicable to the singular human act through a prudential judgment. These two certitudes, the one speculative and the other practical, arise in the final analysis from the two modes of procedure characteristic of moral science. As a consequence, they are connected in a most intimate way: the former is not usable without the latter, while the latter itself would not be possible without the former.

There remains now the task of applying this conclusion to moral theology, making appropriate adjustments for the influence of divine faith in the latter and the resulting effect on its speculative-practical character, which will be the work of the following Chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SUBJECT OF DEMONSTRATION IN MORAL THEOLOGY

The approach of the moral theologian to the study of human action is, in the final analysis, quite different from that of the moral philosopher, even though both are concerned with what appears to be the same operable, and the moral theologian himself makes use of methodological procedures that are materially identifiable with those of the moral philosopher. Precisely because of these similarities, which have caused some writers to overlook the formal differences between the two approaches, we shall preface our treatment of demonstration as it functions in the speculative and practical method of moral theology by first establishing the distinction between moral theology and moral philosophy.

Following the general method of specification of the sciences outlined in Chapter One, we shall begin the present Chapter by analyzing in some detail the formal subject of demonstration in moral theology, and by solving various problems which can arise from a confusion of its principal, proximate and remote subjects of consideration as an integral part of sacred theology. With this as a basis, we shall then proceed to a similar analysis of the subject of moral philosophy, in order to establish the formal distinction, while at the same time indicating certain parallels between the two orders of investigation. These results will then be applied to a recent innovation in moral doctrine which confuses the two orders, and on this account has a certain negative utility in making more precise the formal differences which traditionally have been maintained between them.

I. THE SUBJECT OF MORAL THEOLOGY

To inquire into the subject of moral theology, according to the Aristotelian-Thomistic terminology we have been using, is the same thing as to inquire into the subject of demonstration in moral theology. Here, however, from the very term "moral theology," a certain duality in the subject matter immediately suggests itself. Precisely as "moral," it would appear that the principal subject of such demonstration would have to be the human act, whereas precisely as "theology," it would appear that the principal subject would have to be God. Whence a special problem which is encountered at the very outset when attempting to make precise the proper subject of moral theology. Its solution will enable us to delineate

the specifying factor in the proper subject itself, while sketching the extent of the various subjects treated in moral theology, and at the same time insisting on the organic unity of moral theology with the other tracts of sacred theology, come to be known since the seventeenth century under the designation of "dogmatic theology."[1]

1. PROXIMATE AND REMOTE SUBJECTS

The general answer to the difficulty about the subject of moral theology is contained in what we have already said in Chapter One about the subject of a science and the bearing this has on the specification of the sciences. A wide variety of things may be contained under the *genus subiectum* of any one science, and no matter how great the differences are among these things, they will not affect the unity of the science unless they somehow alter the *genus scibile* which is proper to it. The *genus scibile* of sacred theology, as we have indicated, embraces all things knowable through divine revelation, and the *ratio scibilis* itself is nothing more than the *ratio Dei*. Since both God and the human act can be considered under the *ratio Dei*, they can be treated in one and the same science, without in any way affecting its intrinsic unity. There is thus no basic opposition in saying that both are the subject of demonstration in moral theology, since both are knowable under the same formal *ratio*.[2]

The precise problem arises in connection with the designation of any one subject as being the "principal subject." When a whole science is being considered in its entirety, the principal subject is usually referred to as the *subiectum attributionis*, which we have previously explained as being the subject to which all else that is studied in the science will be ultimately referred. When, however, attention is directed to an integral part of a science, and the question is asked what is the principal subject studied in that integral part, then the term "principal" takes on a certain relativity in usage. Because of this relativity, and the consequent risk of equivocation, it is more desirable to adopt another terminology, and to speak instead of the proximate and remote subjects which are investigated in any particular

[1] For an outline of the historical origins of the terms "moral theology" and "dogmatic theology," see Ramirez, I, 11-16, particularly fn. 33, pp. 11-13.

[2] "Scientia huius partis non est alia in genere, vel specie, quam scientia primae partis: constat enim quoniam scientiae non secantur secundum species rerum, ut res sunt: sed secundum species scibilium, quod quandoque circa primam partem huius *Summae* Deo duce prolixius explanabimus; quare cum actus humani, vel homo, ut operativus actionum ad Deum adducentium, vel retrahentium, esto plurimum in ratione entis differant, vel magis sint diversa; tamen considerantur hic sub una ratione considerandi formali, sicut in prima parte omnia tractata, et considerata sunt."—Köllin, *In prol. I-IIae*, (*ed. cit.*) p. 1, col. 2.

integral part of the science. The latter terminology, it should be noted, is analogous to that used by St. Thomas when speaking of the matter of a moral virtue,[3] and has been used by Ramirez to characterize the various material objects of moral theology.[4]

Patterning his treatment roughly on that of the *Nichomachean Ethics*, St. Thomas begins the moral part of the *Summa* with a study of the ultimate end of human action, and in so doing, implicitly solves the problem of the *subiectum attributionis* of moral theology.[5] By placing the end of man in God, he makes God Himself, as the final and beatifying cause of man's supernatural activity, the most formal subject of consideration in the entire *Secunda Pars*, and thus identifies it with the *subiectum attributionis* of sacred theology in general.[6] Then, most proximate to this subject as being that by which beatitude is immediately attained, he takes up the consideration of the human act, which thereupon becomes the principal subject of moral theology precisely as practical, i.e., as concerned with the operable which leads directly to the ultimate end.[7] Other subjects also come successively under consideration, as we are about to explain, insofar as they are intermediately or remotely involved in the production of the human act, and these all serve to complete and perfect the practical character of the *Secunda Pars*.

It should not be thought from this practical orientation, however, that moral theology thereby ceases to be speculative in the same manner as the rest of sacred theology. It remains both speculative and practical throughout its entire development, as we shall explain later, and this by reason of

[3] Cf. *In IV Ethic.*, lect. 1, n. 652.

[4] *De hominis beatitudine*. I, 44-53.

[5] "La *Somme théologique* consacre et parfait cet arrangement (de la *Somme contre les Gentils*). Il s'ensuit que la partie morale de la théologie s'ouvre sur la même considération par laquelle commençait *l'Ethique à Nicomaque*. Mais d'un ouvrage à l'autre, quelle différence! Aristote définit la béatitude en philosophie; saint Thomas la met en Dieu: du coup, l'action humaine est transposée au niveau théologique, comme il convient chez une créature qui est l'image de Dieu."—T. Deman, *Aux origines de la théologie morale*, pp. 104-105.

[6] "Haec pars Theologiae non habet aliud subiectum attributionis, quam quod assignatum est in prima parte Doctore sancto, scilicet Deum ipsum, cum sit eadem scientia cum ea, quae in prima parte. Subiectum enim eius attributionis, et formale est Deus, qui et hic est ratio considerandi: omnia enim hic considerantur propter Deum, ut finem omnium virtutum, et operum."—Köllin, *In prol. I-IIae*, (*ed. cit.*), p. 1, col. 2.

[7] "Cum qua tamen potest dici, ut videtur, quod materia huius partis, immo theologiae, ut practica est, sint actus humani, vel homo, ut agit propter beatitudinem, quae Deus est; et hoc videtur Doctor sanctus innuisse, cum dicit: 'Restat ut consideremus de eius imagine,' non videlicet, sicut de subiecto formali huius scientiae, sed sicut de materia partiali theologiae, ut practica est."—*Ibid.*

its end, because the supernatural human act itself is ordered to the perfect speculative knowledge of God in the beatific vision,[8] and also by reason of its mode of consideration, which is both speculative and practical in a manner analogous to the modes of moral philosophy which we have already explained.[9]

If one were to search further for the most radical subject in which the supernatural human act is to be found—sometimes referred to as the *subiectum inhaesionis*[10]—this would ultimately be the human person, considered precisely as a creature of God, from whom the action basically proceeds.[11] Intermediate between this ultimate operating subject and the act itself would then come the various faculties which are the originative sources of human action. These have a certain precedence among themselves insofar as they are more principal in the order of operation: for instance, the human will is most primary; after this come the practical and the speculative intellect—the latter precisely as the subject of divine faith—and finally the sensitive appetites. And because human acts themselves show a dependence upon one another in the moral order, when considered as psychological entities they also can be classified according to their primacy as subjects of morality. Here again the elicited acts of the will come first, with those concerning the end of human action preceding those concerning the means. Then come the acts imperated by the will: first those of the practical and speculative intellects, and finally those of the sensitive appetites.[12]

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[8] "(Sacra doctrina) magis tamen est speculativa quam practica: quia principalius agit de rebus divinis quam de actibus humanis; de quibus agit secundum quod per eos ordinatur homo ad perfectam Dei cognitionem, in qua aeterna beatitudo consistit."—*I*, 1, 4.

[9] "Cum (theologia) una existens sit practica et speculativa, ipsa ut considerat hic tractanda, scilicet hominem, scilicet propter beatitudinem agentem, est practica ex parte materiae consideratae, licet modus considerandi, et practicus, et speculativus sit: definiuntur enim virtutes, docetur quoque principaliter, ut homo bene agat, non enim minus morali philosophia intendit homines efficere bonos: Constat autem ex hoc, quod non est dicendum, quod scientia huius libri sit practica tantum, quia eadem est scientia huius libri, et omnium librorum theologicalium, quam apud principia Doctoris sancti patet esse speculativam principaliter; sed dicendum erit, quod hic liber continet materiam theologiae, ut est aliqualiter practica, sive, ut dictum est, theologia sit una unitate simplicitatis, sive unitate ordinis."—Köllin, *In prol. I-IIae*, (*ed. cit.*) p. 1 col. 2.

[10] This usage focuses attention on the ontological subject in which an accident inheres, as distinct from the logical subject of which an attribute can be predicated. Cf. *In I Sent.*, q. prol., a. 4, ad 1.

[11] It is also possible, theoretically, to consider the angels as subjects of a proper supernatural act, as is noted by Ramirez (I, 47), but they are not explicitly treated by St. Thomas in the *Secunda Pars*.

[12] Cf. Ramirez, I, 45-52.

Other subjects of consideration function more remotely in the production of the supernatural human act, and thus are more remote subjects of study in moral theology. In the order of efficient causality, for instance, God Himself moves and elevates human action through actual and habitual grace, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, through *gratiae gratis datae,* etc.[13] Less efficaciously, angels can assist man in moving towards his ultimate goal, while devils can impede him by placing temptations in his path. And finally, as objects of his cognitive and appetitive faculties, anything imaginable can influence man's activity: more remotely, all of being—real or rational, natural or supernatural, corporal or spiritual—and more proximately, all that is good and all that is evil in any way whatsoever, thereby come to be included in the subject of moral theology.[14]

Thus we arrive at the same conclusion about moral theology as we have seen in Chapter One about sacred theology in general. Just as the *ratio scibilis* is one and the same, so the *genus subiectum* is coextensive for the whole of theology and the integral part referred to as "moral." The difference therefore is not one of kind, but rather one of emphasis and specialization: moral theology considers some subjects more proximately than others because of its special interest in human action as leading to supernatural beatitude.[15]

2. SUPERNATURAL MORALITY

The formal aspect of this particular consideration of moral theology, paralleling the *ratio formalis* of theology in general, is precisely that of the human act as related to supernatural beatitude, and this as it is only knowable through divine revelation. To this formal consideration, again, corresponds a special aspect of the human act itself, analogous to the *ratio formalis obiecti,* which is its supernatural morality insofar as this is divinely revealable. From this then we gain a further insight as to why the *Secunda Pars* can be referred to as "moral theology": it is "moral" because con-

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[13] It is noteworthy, in view of the fact that some manuals of moral theology consider the sacraments as pertaining to their proper subject matter, that St. Thomas relegates the consideration of the sacraments to the *Tertia Pars.* The reason for this is to be found in the fact that the *Secunda Pars* is devoted to a study of man's activity precisely as originating within himself, together with other objects that influence that activity. The *Prima* and *Tertia Pars,* on the other hand, consider God and creatures as they are *effectus exclusivi Dei.* Since the sacraments are exclusively of divine origin, and are employed by man only as an instrumental cause, their consideration pertains more properly to the *Tertia Pars* than it does to the *Secunda Pars.* Cf. Ramirez, I, 51; also *Prol. in I-II, Prol. in III.*

[14] Cf. Ramirez, I, 52-53.

[15] "Theologus considerat actus humanos secundum quod per eos homo ad beatitudinem ordinatur."—*I-II,* 7, 2.

cerned with the morality of human action,[16] and "theology" because investigating this morality as supernatural, under the positive direction of faith, as one of the *divinitus revelabilia* knowable under the special light characteristic of sacred theology.

Because supernatural morality is itself an analogous concept, it will be found diversely participated in the various subjects we have already mentioned.[17] As an order or relation, or a proportion of conformity or lack thereof of the human act to its ultimate end, which is supernatural beatitude, its term will be God *sub ratione deitatis*, the Author and the End of divine grace. To this term, which is extrinsic to human activity as such, there corresponds the intrinsic perfection of man himself, consisting essentially in his complete union with God, both dynamically insofar as he shares fully the divine life, and statically insofar as he is completely conformed to the divine image. The activity by which such intrinsic perfection is attained is the beatific vision, and this therefore is the greatest good in the order of human operation. All other human action, in view of this supreme good, will participate in its goodness, and on that account have an intrinsic supernatural morality, insofar as it prepares man for, and leads him to, the direct vision of the divine essence.[18] Such human operation is referred to as meritorious action, and is found in acts that are elicited by the will under the influence of divine grace.[19] Because of charity's primacy, supernatural morality is thus best realized in the love of God as He is in Himself, because this most directly motivates in the supernatural order.[20]

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[16] Cf. *I-II*, 6, prol.; *I*, 83, 2, ad 3; *Quaest. Quod.*, VII, q. 6, a. 2 (a. 15), ad 2; *In Evangelium S. Ioannis*, prol. n. 9 (ed. Marietti); *In Evangelium S. Matthaei*, cap. 2, n. 201 (ed. Marietti).

[17] Cf. Ramirez, I, 53-55.

[18] Cf. *I-II*, 18, 1.

[19] While such acts intrinsically perfect man, and thus prepare him for his fullest completion of being in the beatific vision, they nonetheless presuppose the divine and gratuitous ordination of man to that perfection, and the efficacious movement towards it that is given by God's grace. Cf. *I-II*, 114, 1-4. For the role of the will in moral action: "Nullus autem motus ponitur in genere moris nisi habita comparitione ad voluntatem, quae principium est moralium, ut ex *VI Meta.* patet; et ideo ibi incipit genus moris ubi primo dominium voluntatis invenitur."—*In II Sent.*, d. 24, q. 3, a. 2. Cf. *In VI Meta.*, lect. 1, n. 1154.

[20] "Practicum morale, prout pertinet ad theologiam, habet considerari secundum attributionem ad obiectum speculabile. Et ex hoc sequitur ulterius quod ad unam scientiam pertinet speculabile et practicum morale speculabile theologiae, quia una est ratio considerandi alterum, scilicet speculabile est ratio considerandi practicum. In parte autem theologiae, quae est practica, quae considerat actum virtuosum ut est ad honorem Dei . . . , potissimum est dilectio Dei, non qua diligitur ut commodum nostrum sed qua diligitur secundum se amore amicitiae."—Hervaeus Natalis, *Defensa doctrinae S. Thomae*, a. 37, ed. Krebs, p. 110 (1912); cited by Ramirez, I, 68-69.

After this, it is participated by various meritorious and salvific acts of charity,[21] and then by acts of the other supernatural virtues insofar as they are informed by charity.[22] Finally, it is also found in a certain way in acts that are not meritorious *de condigno* because not informed by charity, but nevertheless do prepare for salvation, such as acts of faith and hope in the sinner.

The most formal consideration in which moral theology is interested, as a consequence, is the supernatural morality of human action, or the aspect of the human act under which it shares in the perfection and goodness of man's final beatifying activity. Because charity is itself the form and life of all the virtues and their acts, and most efficaciously moves and disposes man to this attainment, it can be seen from this why moral theology is sometimes called the *"scientia caritatis."*[23] In similar fashion, and with even greater reason, it can be seen why moral theology can also be referred to as the science of the divine life as participated by man.[24] Its preeminent concern is with the beginnings of supernatural beatitude in the present life, or with the perfecting of man not only by action but also by contemplation, so that he becomes most closely assimilated to the life of the Godhead while here on earth, and thereby directly prepares himself for the most intimate union with divinity awaiting him in the beatific vision.

3. THE IMAGE OF GOD IN ACTION

St. Thomas himself first delineates the subject of consideration in the *Secunda Pars* when he mentions, at the outset of the *Prima Pars*, that he will have to treat "of the rational creature's advance towards God."[25] He then makes this notion more precise in the Prologue to the *Secunda Pars* itself, where he states:

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[21] *De Caritate*, q. un., a. 3, ad 6; *I-II*, 19, 10; 114, 4, ad 1.

[22] "In quantum virtutes sunt operativae, per caritatem informantur."—*De Caritate*, q. un., a. 3, ad 11; *De Ver.*, q. 14, a. 6, ad 1; *I-II*, 114, 4.

[23] *Cf.* Ramirez, *I*, 6; also 58-62.

[24] "La théologie morale est et demeure, elle aussi, comme la théologie tout court, une science de la vie divine. Pour avoir comme objet propre cette vie en acte dans mes moeurs, elle ne perd rien de sa haute dignité; bien plus, elle ne cède point sous le dualisme de la théorie et de la pratique, auquel succombe toute philosophie: elle demeure une et unifiante, sous la lumière d'une foi qui, en communion quotidienne avec la vie de Dieu, est la vérité vivante de l'Evangile, tant dans mes oeuvres que dans ma pensée."—M. D. Chenu, *St. Thomas d'Aquin et la théologie*, (Paris: 1959), p. 156.

[25] "Quia igitur principalis intentio huius sacrae doctrinae est Dei cognitionem tradere, et non solum secundum quod in se est, sed etiam secundum quod est principium rerum et finis earum, et specialiter rationalis creaturae . . . tractabimus . . . de motu rationalis creaturae in Deum. . . ."—*I*, 2, prol.

> Since, as Damascene states, man is said to be made to God's image, in so far as the image implies 'an intelligent being endowed with free-will and self-movement': now that we have treated of the exemplar, i.e., God, and of those things which came forth from the power of God in accordance with His will; it remains for us to treat of His image, i.e., man, inasmuch as he too is the principle of his actions, as having free-will and control of his actions.[26]

Here, then, he establishes a special connection between man's motion to God and the fact that man is made in the divine image insofar as he has control over his own actions—a connection which sheds further light on the organic unity of moral theology and the other integral parts of sacred theology.

All of creation proceeds from God as from its first cause, and then tends back to God as to its ultimate final cause.[27] What distinguishes man from all other creatures is that he makes his *reditus* back to God in a special way, namely, by knowing Him and by loving Him.[28] It also happens, moreover, that it is precisely man's ability to know and to love which makes him an image of the most Holy Trinity. This divine image, again, can be seen in man in various ways, and according as it is realized in more perfect fashion, the more can man be said to be conformed to God. Thus Köllin, in his commentary on the prologue to the *Prima Secundae,* points out the fact that man is only an imperfect image of God at his creation, and that he becomes a more and more perfect image as he is re-created in the order of grace and ultimately in that of glory.[29] And the divine image is not seen in man most perfectly when he merely has habitual grace and the infused virtues *secundum habitus:* rather it is best realized when he *is* in act,[30] when he is operating according to the infused virtues, and particularly when the object of his consideration is God Himself. So St. Thomas observes:

> We refer the divine image in man to the verbal concept born of the knowledge of God, and to the love derived therefrom. Thus the image of God is found in the soul according as the soul turns to God, or possesses a nature that enables it to turn to God.[31]

Applying this insight to what we have already said about the subject of moral theology, we can now see in clearer fashion what is implied by saying that it is concerned with the human act as ordered to supernatural beatitude, and thus its consideration of the human act is *sub ratione Dei.* Man, the image of God, is studied in this part of sacred theology as he is a wayfarer, *homo viator,* making his way back to God by his own proper actions, especially those of knowledge and of love. The image of God is thus not a static one, in the order of being alone; rather it is a dynamic one, in the order of operation—the image of God in action. This operation, moreover, is not that of the natural order, as it might be studied in moral philosophy, but is properly that of the supernatural order. Again, it is an operation that proceeds from God's grace, but in such a way that it also comes voluntarily from the man himself, "as having free-will and control of his actions."[32] As a consequence, it is an operation that most perfectly mirrors its exemplary cause in the supernatural order, which is God as He is in Himself, as He exercises a regulative and terminative causality in bringing His human image to final perfection. Here, then, we have a study of the human act under the very aspect of its divinity, which is what is meant by saying that it is considered in sacred theology *sub ratione Dei,* the same as everything else that comes under the theologian's formal consideration.[33]

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[26] *I-II, prol.* (trans. English Dominicans)

[27] *In IV Sent.,* d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qla. 1 (ed. Vivès, Vol. XI, pp. 472-475).

[28] *I-II,* 1, 8; *C. Gent.,* III, 25.

[29] "Quia in homine consideratur imago Dei imperfecta, quam in sui creatione accepit: consideratur quoque imago perfectior, atque perfectissima, videlicet recreationis, et glorificationis; et de prima quidem imagine in prima parte satis tractatum est; ideo ut Doctor sanctus innueret, de qua imagine hominis consequenter tractaturus esset, subiunxit, 'Secundum quod et ipse suorum operum est principium'; et quod sit illud, exprimit subdens; quasi liberum arbitrium habens, etc. Nec enim de quibuscunque operibus hic agitur, sed de operibus virtutum infusarum, quae imaginem recreationis efficiunt, atque ad imaginem glorificationis perducunt: Esto enim in hac parte *Summae* de virtutibus acquisitis quandoque mentionem habeat, non tamen ibi sistit, sed in famulatum Divinarum virtutum adducit."—Köllin, *In prol. I-IIae.,* (*ed. cit.*) p. 1 col. 1.

[30] *I,* 93, 7, c. and ad 3.

[31] *I,* 93, 8 (trans. English Dominicans).

[32] *I-II,* prol.; *C. Gent.,* III, 70.

[33] Cf. Ramirez, I, 68. A more detailed study of the image concept in Thomistic moral theology, relating it to scriptural and patristic sources, will be found in T. J. Cunningham, *Moral Theology and the Concept of Man as the Image of God,* (unpublished lectorate dissertation, Dominican House of Studies) Washington, D. C.: 1959. See also P. M. Matthijs, *Quaestiones Speciales Theologiae Speculativae: De Imagine Dei in Homine,* Romae: 1952; J. Tonneau, "At the Threshold of the *Secunda Pars:* Morality and Theology," *Man and His Happiness* (ed. A. M. Henry), Chicago: 1956, pp. xvii-xxxix; R. Guindon, "Le caractère évangélique de la morale de saint Thomas d'Aquin," *RUO* 25 (1955), pp. 145*-167*; T. Camelot, "La théologie de l'image de Dieu," *RSPT* 40 (1956), pp. 443-471.

II. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MORAL THEOLOGY AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY

From this analysis of the subject of moral theology, one can see how markedly different it is from the subject of moral philosophy sketched in the previous Chapter. Yet there are some difficulties that have been proposed in comparatively recent times about the relationship of moral theology to moral philosophy which would question the validity of the analysis already given, and would even insist on the necessity of an intermediate discipline between moral theology and moral philosophy, referred to as "Christian moral philosophy," to supply for certain *lacunae* in traditional treatments. Because of the relevance of these difficulties to the methodologies which are our proper concern, we shall postpone momentarily the treatment of method in moral theology which should follow at this point, in order to clarify the distinctions implicit in the foregoing expositions and to answer the objections that are being proposed against traditional Thomistic doctrine. This can be done most expeditiously by first making explicit the differences of subject and formal consideration between moral philosophy and moral theology, then outlining the reasoning that has given rise to the proposal of a Christian moral philosophy, and finally giving a resolution in terms of the doctrine already presented.

1. DIFFERENCES OF SUBJECT AND PRINCIPLE

As contrasted with the subject of moral theology, that of moral philosophy is limited to a study of man as he exists in the order of nature,[34] as he acts humanly and naturally in order to attain the happiness of the active life, and ultimately to attain the life of contemplation insofar as this is possible to him through the use of his human faculties.[35] This entails that its primary subject of consideration is man himself, acting voluntarily and deliberately, for an end intended by and consonant with his rational nature. Because concerned with human action as such, moral philosophy thus studies man, not precisely as a being in the entitative or essential order, but rather as a being "in second act," in the operative or existential order. Its consideration is not that of the most perfect image of God in action, recreated and elevated to the supernatural order by divine grace,[36] but it is nonetheless concerned with the imperfect image of the Author of nature, mirroring the first Cause by its knowledge and its love, and by these, in all their existential actuality, attaining to its own natural perfection. The natural faculties from which such acts proceed, together with the virtues (and

[34] *C. Gent.*, II, 4.
[35] Cf. *I-II*, 7, 2, ad 3; *In II Sent.*, d. 24, q. 2, a. 2.
[36] *De Ver.*, q. 14, a. 6, ad 5.

vices) with which these faculties can be endowed, are also subjects of consideration in moral philosophy, but more remotely than the human act itself. In the case of the latter, there is a certain priority even among human acts as they are elicited from the will and imperate other acts, analogous to that we have already seen among the various subjects of moral theology.

The more formal consideration of the human act, corresponding to that of supernatural morality in sacred theology, is the aspect under which it is ordered to man's perfection in the natural order, and this as it is knowable through reason alone, without the assistance of divine revelation. This natural morality, moreover, will be diversely participated in the various subjects we have already mentioned. Its term will be the perfecting of man's action according to reason, which is the supreme good in the natural order.[37] The act which is most proportioned to this attainment, or that in which the notion of natural morality is most fully realized, is the *actus honestus*, or the act completely impregnated by reason and at the same time elicited by the will for the love of God as the Author of nature.[38] Such an action is at once a devout and intelligent submission to the order of nature instituted by God, and moves man most efficaciously to his own intrinsic perfection precisely as rational. After this come other human acts, which participate in natural morality insofar as they proceed from a right intention of the will and are informed by the virtue of prudence, which guarantees the reasonableness of the act in the natural order, in much the same way as the virtue of charity insures its meritorious character in the order of supernature.[39]

But the most important thing to note about moral philosophy is that its formal *ratio* always remains that which is knowable by the light of human reason alone. Thus it always searches its middle terms in the light of what is sometimes called the *ratio inferior*—reason, namely, as it is concerned with things which come under man's observation, and as expressed in common human opinion—without having recourse to the *ratio superior*, as would be the case, for example, if it consulted the precepts of divine law.[40] Moral philosophy can of course consider sin, but it never does this

[37] "Finis . . . proximus humanae vitae est bonum rationis in communi."—*In III Sent.*, d. 33, q. 2, a. 3.
[38] Cf. Ramírez, I, 55-56.
[39] "Caritas est forma aliarum virtutum omnium, sicut prudentia moralium."—*In III Sent.*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 4, qla. 3. For an extended comparison, see C. Williams, *De multiplici forma virtutum*, pp. 111-118.
[40] For the difference between *ratio superior* and *ratio inferior*, see *De Malo*, q. 7, a. 5; *De Ver.*, q. 15, a. 2, ad 3; *I-II*, 74, 7. Also R. W. Mulligan, "*Ratio*

precisely as an offense against God; rather, judging all in the light of reason, it sees sin as something which is contrary to human reason.[41] It would be premature to make an extended comment here on the consequences of this in complicating its method when compared with that of moral theology. Suffice it to mention, on the basis of what we have already seen about the difficulty of demonstrating in moral matters, that its process is not an easy one and it is exposed to error in many ways. It must start with creatures and work up to God, and therefore lacks the surety and confidence that moral theology can possess from its very outset.[42] But still it is a human science in the strict sense, and can attain truth and certitude about the humanly operable, if it proceeds carefully according to the method we have already indicated.

2. THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIAN MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Now it is precisely this last point that is called into question by some contemporary philosophers and theologians. The argument is advanced that a moral philosophy such as we have described is theoretically conceivable by a person ignorant of the truths of divine faith, but when revealed truth is taken into account, it is found to be seriously deficient and cannot be said to constitute a true science. Two truths, in particular, are signalized as being the motivating cause behind this rejection of a natural ethics. The first is that the latter lacks a knowledge of the true supernatural end towards which man is *de facto* ordered, the second that it lacks a knowledge of the state of fallen nature in which man actually exists, and from which he must work out his salvation.[43] The proponents of this position concede that human nature has not been changed by original sin, and therefore that in the abstract it is possible to have a moral philosophy based on man's nature, which they refer to as an "essentialist" moral philosophy. Their emphasis is rather on the fact that when human action is considered

Superior and *Ratio Inferior*: the Historical Background," *NS* 29 (1955), 1-32; M. D. Chenu, "Ratio superior et inferior," *LTP* 1 (1945), 119-123.

[41] *I-II*, 71, 6 ad 5; *In II Sent.*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 2.

[42] *C. Gent.*, II, 4.

[43] "Deux choses lui (scil., l'éthique naturelle) manquent pour cela; la connaissance de la vraie fin dernière à laquelle l'être humain est de fait ordonné, et celle de l'intégralité de ses conditions existentielles."—J. Maritain, *De la philosophie chrétienne*, p. 103. "La philosophie morale adéquatement prise est par excellence une philosophie 'existentielle'. Ce n'est pas sur la nature humaine abstraitement considérée, c'est sur la nature blessée, dont il reçoit du théologien, la notion scientifique, que, comme le théologien, le philosophe croyant parle son regard; mais il s'intéresse (ainsi que le romancier) à la nature blessée pour elle-même, ce que ne fait pas le théologien, et cette notion même des blessures de nature éveille dans sa sagesse d'autres résonances que dans celle du théologien. . . ."—J. Maritain, *Science et sagesse*, pp. 306-307.

in the concrete, in the existential order, such a moral philosophy is inadequate to direct man's operation.[44] On the other hand, they maintain, moral theology possesses this adequate knowledge of man's existential situation, but does not develop it to the fullest possible extent because of its preoccupation with the supernatural order.[45] Moral philosophy, as a consequence, can "borrow" certain truths from sacred theology, and use them to complete its consideration of its subject under its own proper light.[46] When it does so, it becomes adequate to direct human action in the concrete, should on that account be referred to as an "existentialist" moral philosophy, and is a practical science in the true sense.[47] Furthermore, it is not absorbed into moral theology because of the use it makes of revealed truth,[48] but is in fact subalternated to theology.[49] And this, finally, ex-

[44] "Une telle éthique naturelle, une telle philosophie morale, si précieuse et nécessaire qu'elle soit, ne peut en conséquence rejoindre suffisamment le concret pour constituer une science pratique de l'agir humain, elle est par nature inachevée et incomplète, car ce n'est pas l'essence de l'être humain qui agit, c'est l'être humain concret, placé dans tel état précis de nature déchue, ou de nature réparée. Cette éthique, cette philosophie morale n'est pas existentielle."—C. Journet, *Introduction à la théologie*, p. 283.

[45] "Il existe, et tous les catholiques l'accordent, une doctrine morale existentielle. C'est la théologie. . . . Elle touche à tout l'agir humain concret, pour autant qu'il est considéré comme procédant du premier Principe de la grâce, et comme ordonné à la dernière Fin d'un ordre transhumain, transpolitique, transculturel. Mais elle ne touche pas à l'agir humain concret, sous tous ses aspects. Elle ne touche pas, du moins directement, à l'agir humain concret, pour autant qu'il est ordonné à des fins humaines, politique, culturelles . . . elle laisse place à une doctrine morale existentielle pour ce qui trait aux choses de l'ordre humain."—C. Journet, *ibid.*, pp. 284-5.

[46] "Substantiellement, ces activités (de l'ordre humain) sont naturelles, humaines, et leur étude relèvera de la philosophie. Mais, dans l'état existentiel de la nature déchue et rachetée, elles offrent un aspect surnaturel que la philosophie morale, régulatrice de notre action, ne saurait prétériter sans erreur, et dont elle n'aura connaissance que par emprunt à la théologie."—C. Journet, *ibid.*, p. 291.

[47] ". . . une doctrine morale qui s'est complétée en empruntant à la théologie morale des données relatives à la nature profonde de son object, mais qui n'est pas la théologie morale, qui s'en distingue formellement, puisqu'elle considère le même object que la théologie morale sous une tout autre lumière formelle, à savoir non plus comme référé immédiatement aux choses du royaume de Dieu (cela, elle le présuppose), mais comme référé aux choses de ce monde en raison de sa surabondance intérieure et de son surcroît (et c'est à cela qu'elle s'intéresse). Telle est la philosophie morale existentielle."—C. Journet, *ibid.*, pp. 288-289.

[48] "La philosophie n'est pas néanmoins résorbée par la théologie. Si elle accepte le secours de la théologie, ce n'est point pour que la raison se mette à fonctionner à la manière d'une cause instrumentale, pour le compte des valeurs du royaume de Dieu; c'est pour qu'elle fonctionne comme une cause seconde, pour le compte de valeurs: proprement humaines, mais existentiellement dépendantes du royaume de Dieu."—C. Journet, *ibid.*, p. 293.

[49] "Mais alors il va de soi que la philosophie morale, dès qu'on en a reconnu

plains why it is also called "Christian moral philosophy": it is moral philosophy precisely as it treats of a natural subject under the light of reason, whereas it is Christian insofar as it invokes the assistance of truths knowable only through Christian faith.

When this line of thought is examined critically, it is found to be related to a methodological doctrine which we have exposed at length in Chapter Two: that, namely, of the modes of discourse proper to speculative and practical science. The argument is not directed against the speculative aspect of moral philosophy, because the resolutive process of the latter is said to lead to a valid "essentialist" ethics. What is called into question is the possibility of a natural ethics being a *practical* science in the strict sense of the term, and this insofar as it proceeds *modo compositivo*.[50] In the abstract order of speculation, it is maintained, the omission or ignorance of revealed truth does not falsify knowledge, and this is why a valid theodicy or natural theology can be arrived at even though the mystery of the most holy Trinity be ignored. But in the concrete, practical order, where reason must proceed in a compositive mode in order to direct the existential human act, the omission of any necessary element will automatically falsify the knowledge, and thus a moral philosophy which ignores the actual conditions of human existence and the sources of its spiritual regeneration is inadequate, incomplete, and incapable of guiding human operation in the existential order as it must be guided to attain its proper end.[51]

la validité comme science pratique, se trouve du fait même subalternée à la théologie: sans quoi elle ne pourrait pas juger valablement, sous l'aspect formel de l'ordination de l'homme à la vie temporelle et aux fins naturelles, l'agir d'un être qui n'est pas l'état de pure nature et qui n'ordonne efficacement sa vie à sa fin ultime naturelle que s'il ordonne efficacement à sa fin ultime surnaturelle."—J. Maritain, *Science et sagesse*, pp. 302-303. Cf. by the same author, *La philosophie chrétienne*, pp. 136-149.

50 "Entre la prudence et le savoir spéculativement pratique n'y a-t-il pas une zone de connaissance intermédiaire? Oui, répondrons-nous en explicitant les principes de saint Thomas, c'est la science pratique au sens étroit du mot, disons le savoir pratiquement pratique. . . . Elle procède . . . suivant un tout autre mode que l'éthique ou la théologie morale. . . . C'est en ce sens pleinement caractéristique que les thomistes enseignent que les sciences pratiques (pratiquement pratiques) procèdent *modo compositivo* comme l'art et la prudence. Et comme la prudence et l'art supposent une rectification de l'appetit. . . , elles aussi . . . impliquent et présupposent . . . les droites dispositions du vouloir et une certaine purification de l'appétit par rapport aux fins qu'elles concernent."—J. Maritain, *Les degrés du savoir*, pp. 624-625.

51 "A supposer après cela que l'homme prenne pour guide de sa vie une telle science pratique, une philosophie morale purement philosophique, il s'égarerait certainement; les omissions, concernant la relation de l'homme à l'ordre surnaturel, de cette philosophie morale purement philosophique fausseraient la direction de la vie humaine. A l'inverse en effet de ce qui produit dans le domaine spéculatif, où

3. A SAPIENTIAL FUNCTION OF MORAL THEOLOGY

The important thing to note about the arguments underlying the position just described is that they themselves proceed from principles that are in no way knowable by reason alone. The premises on which they are based are actually assented to by divine faith, and since this is one of the characteristics we have already seen to be proper to theological argument, the arguments themselves are essentially theological. This is the main reason why we have delayed their treatment until formally considering the subject of moral theology. They can best be answered by the theologian, precisely in his sapiential capacity of judging the human sciences and defending their autonomy against those who would deny the ability of human reason to attain truth about its proper object, even in the state of fallen nature and without the assistance of divine grace.[52]

The most important asset of the moral theologian in this task, as we have mentioned several times, is his own knowledge of the philosophical disciplines and the methods by which they must proceed in order to attain strict scientific knowledge. Significantly, it is when analyzed methodologically that the foregoing arguments are thus seen to be deficient, for they are based on a misunderstanding—when compared with the analysis we have already given—of the notions of resolution and composition as found in a practical science. Their fundamental presupposition is that the *modes*, viz., resolutory and compositive, make for a specific distinction in moral science, and therefore that what had formerly and traditionally been regarded as one science of moral philosophy, should now be regarded as *two* sciences: one which proceeds in a resolutive mode, to be known as speculatively practical science or "essentialist" moral philosophy; the other which proceeds in a compositive mode, to be known as practically practical science or "existentialist" moral philosophy. Thus, between the natural ethics of Aristotle and the virtue of prudence, which directly attains the singular operable as such, there is introduced an intermediate moral science which is said to be necessary not only to complete traditional moral philosophy, but also, through the use of truths borrowed from Christian faith,

ignorer une vérité ne fausse pas la connaissance (la théodicée n'est faussée en rien parce qu'elle ignore le mystère de la Trinité), dans le domaine pratique, qui consiste à diriger l'action, et où la raison procède *modo compositivo*, l'ignorance ou l'omission d'un élément nécessaire de la conduite fausse celle-ci. A son niveau de connaissance par les causes et les principes, une philosophie morale qui ignore les conditions réelles de l'existence humaine et certains des principes dont elle dépend (et un principe—la grâce divine—aussi important que la nature elle-même) est non seulement incomplète mais incapable de diriger cette existence comme il faut."—J. Maritain, *Science et sagesse*, pp. 272-3.

52 Cf. *I-II*, 109, 1.

to save it from being "falsified" by man's actual situation in the supernatural order.

We have already indicated the difficulty that surrounds the interpretation of the diptychs "speculative-practical" and "resolution-composition" as applied by St. Thomas to moral science, and it is not our intention to reject all interpretations other than our own as being utterly lacking in textual support and completely opposed to the mind of the Angelic Doctor.[53] Our point would rather be to insist on the simplest understanding possible based on a faithful analysis of the relevant texts, without introducing any radical changes in other aspects of Thomistic doctrine, particularly in view of the adage: *"entia non sunt multiplicanda sine necessitate."* Consistent with this viewpoint, we have already explained at sufficient length the sense in which moral science, specified by its proper subject—the human act precisely as an operable—is at once both speculative and practical, and must proceed in both a resolutive and a compositive mode in order to attain scientific knowledge of its subject.

Applying this analysis to the question at hand, we would merely point out that the speculative mode starts with a consideration of human action as it is found, *de facto*, in the existential order, and that it resolves its subject to its proper principles and causes, which in turn function as middle terms in the demonstrations proper to it as a science. Further, that the *same* speculative truth is applied, in the compositive mode, initially with the aid of synderesis and terminatively through the act of prudence, to the singular operable in which the consideration of moral science, precisely as practical, comes to an end, again in the existential order. Thus there is no basis for the "essentialist" designation being applied to natural ethics. Its discourse is "existentialist" from start to finish, "essences" being involved only in the way in which they function in all scientific knowledge, as the universal and essential species through which the human mind attains the singular existent in its knowing act.[54] As a consequence, the intermediate moral science proposed as necessary to attain the existential

[53] It is noteworthy, in this connection, that Maritain admits that his doctrine is not to be found directly in St. Thomas, but is rather his own construction, which he regards as being in conformity with Thomistic principles: "Loin d'attribuer à saint Thomas lui-même la distinction proposée par nous entre savoir spéculativement pratique et savoir pratiquement pratique, nous avons pris soin de marquer qu'il s'agissait là pour nous d'expliciter les principes de Saint Thomas . . . , et la longue discussion . . . , tout en montrant que 'cette explicitation est tout à fait conforme aux principes et à l'esprit de sa doctrine,' signalait expressément qu'elle n'avait pas été faite par les anciens. . . ."—J. Maritain, *Science et sagesse*, p. 370.

[54] Cf. *I*, 85, 1; 85, 2; 86, 1.

order is quite superfluous, and is merely another term for the practical phase of moral philosophy as it has already been described.[55]

Seen now from the higher, sapiential level of moral theology, the so-called falsification of natural ethics in the light of revealed truths is likewise to be rejected. As to the first truth of divine faith, namely, that man exists in a state of fallen nature, this in no way affects the validity of the philosopher's analysis. In fact, the *de facto* subject of his consideration is man in this state of fallen nature, although he has no way of knowing that precisely as such, and therefore cannot speak of "pure" nature, or "fallen" nature, or "integral" nature, but only of the human nature that he finds in existential reality. The moral theologian, on the other hand, can make all these precisions in the light of revealed truth, and this gives him a wonderful sapiential view of moral philosophy, and particularly *why* it is so difficult to have a purely natural science of human action, why so much dialectics is involved, why the appetites are not so easily brought under reason's control, etc. The same considerations also apply to the second revealed truth, namely, that man's ultimate end is not God as the Author of nature, but rather God as He is in Himself, to be attained supernaturally in the beatific vision. Again the moral philosopher, by the intrinsic limitations of his science, can only speak of God as the source of natural beatitude, and he directs man towards that end. The moral theologian, however, from his vastly superior source of knowledge, knows that the God who is the source of natural beatitude, in the moral philosopher's consideration, is the same God who will be attained in the beatific vision, just as the one God of natural theology is the same as the triune God of sacred theology.[56]

[55] "Il semble donc que cette zone moyenne de la morale pratique (scil., de M. Maritain) se résorbe dans la morale scientifique spéculative à titre de conclusion ou dans la prudence à titre de principe."—J. Ramirez, "Sur l'organisation du savoir moral," *BT* 12 (1935), p. 425.

[56] "That which is proper to one nature cannot be proper to another naturally; what belongs exclusively to a superior being as an essential property, cannot belong to an inferior naturally. 'Illud quod ad proprietatem naturae superioris pertinent non potest communicari inferiori naturae ut illud *naturaliter* habeat, nisi transferatur in superiorem naturam.' (*IV Sent.* 49, 2, 6, ad 7) That which is natural to the superior is consequently *super-natural* to the inferior. And should the superior in question be absolutely supernatural then what is natural to him must be *absolutely supernatural* to the inferior. 'Visio divinae essentiae est quoddam bonum omnino supernaturale' (*De Malo*, 5, 1, ad 3). This visio *divinae essentiae* is indeed the same reality as the beatific vision. And for that precise reason St. Thomas never distinguished formally between the two. For him the vision of the essence of the First Cause is the same thing, the same operation, as the beatific vision."—C. Williams, "The Argument from Natural Desire in St. Thomas's Treatise on Beatitude," *ITQ* 23 (1956), p. 376. For an extended analysis of the different ways in which the philosopher and the theologian attain to a knowledge of beatitude, see Ramirez, II, 291-309.

Here too, this added knowledge throws new light on the difficulty of moral philosophy, but it also shows that the ignorance of revealed truth does not falsify the direction given by the moral philosopher to human action.[57] He directs it to its proper goal, despite the fact that he does not know that goal as such, in the way in which it is knowable to the moral theologian. He makes abstraction—and a negative abstraction, at that—from the supernatural end of man and from his state of fallen nature, and thus his knowledge is not as perfect as that of the moral theologian; but what he does know is true nonetheless, and adequate to construct a valid human science governing man's action.[58]

A final observation is warranted about the proposal of moral philosophy "borrowing" truths from sacred theology and still remaining properly a philosophy. Here what we have already said in Chapter One about the relationship of theology to philosophy can have very fruitful applications. It is true that there are many arguments in the *Summa,* and particularly in the *Secunda Pars,* which on face value are comprehensible by reason alone, which appear to be concerned with purely human affairs, and which on this account seem to be philosophical. The fact that is normally overlooked is that such arguments are philosophical only in a material sense of the term. They all come under the positive direction of faith, are all influenced by the revealed truth they assist in explaining, are all subsumed by sacred theology in its sapiential capacity, and hence are all formally theological, as we have already indicated. What is said of such arguments, therefore, applies *a fortiori* to any arguments that would proceed directly from the revealed truths of man's fallen nature, or of his supernatural end and the means God has given him to attain it. Such arguments, and any science

[57] "From what has been said it should now be clear that the following reasoning is altogether valid: 'There is a natural desire for the vision of God. Therefore it is possible for man to see God.' There is no need, in order to safeguard the supernatural character of the beatific vision, to distinguish between the vision of the First Cause and the beatific vision. One is as supernatural as the other, and one is as much beyond the knowledge and the desires of man as the other. And this process of reasoning is all the more valid when used by the philosopher, who is, at the same time, a theologian. For he knows by faith that this natural desire can in fact be fulfilled in the beatific vision, which is man's supernatural perfection, conceded to him altogether gratuitously by God."—C. Williams, "The Argument from Natural Desire," p. 377.

[58] "La philosophie morale, sans ce complément et sans cette subalternation à la théologie,—par exemple, l'Ethique d'Aristote—, est une véritable science morale spéculative et pratique, bien qu'elle se ressente des imperfections de la nature tombée. Elle fait abstraction de la fin surnaturelle et de l'état de nature déchue et restaurée, mais elle ne déforme ni ne corrompt le vraie notion de la science morale, ni de la nature humaine, ni de sa vraie fin. . . ."—J. Ramirez, "Sur l'organisation. . . . ," *BT* 12 (1935), p. 432.

that they would be said to constitute, are nothing more than theological, no matter what other term be used to designate them.[59] The formal light of sacred theology is that of human reason under the positive direction of faith: there is no way in which the moral philosopher can utilize that light, even to illuminate the most temporal of temporalities, without becoming, in the very process, a moral theologian.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Thus we see that the problem of the relationship between moral theology and moral philosophy reduces to one of the specification of the sciences, which we have already treated at greater length in Chapter One. Moral philosophy is not the same as moral theology because it treats of a different subject, and considers it under a different *ratio formalis.* Yet the material differences are not so great that the moral theologian can afford to be completely disinterested in moral philosophy. He, in fact, makes considerable use of the latter, employing it in an eminent way at the service of moral theology. One could say, in view of this usage, that he "borrows" truths from moral philosophy to elaborate his own science, but the very structure of theological science is such that he has an incontestable right to do so, and the "borrowing" is not the violation or suspension of any right, but follows the proper order of development for a science that is at once human and divine.

When, on the other hand, the proposal is made of a "Christian moral philosophy" that can "borrow" truths from Christian faith and still remain a philosophical discipline, the situation is quite different. A philosopher as such proceeds under the light of reason alone. Should he go outside his proper method and attempt to argue from revealed principles, as the expression "Christian philosopher" directly implies, he ceases to be a philosopher by that very fact. He may "borrow" the truths of Christian faith for his own personal use—and let it be hoped that he will do so—but he has no title to them as a philosopher, and if he wishes to use them in the formal elaboration of moral science, he must pass to the level of a higher science, which alone has access to principles taken jointly from faith and reason, and the right to apply them in the direction of man towards his supernatural goal.

Having established, then, this basic distinction of subject and formal

[59] "Telle que la conçoit M. Maritain . . . elle (scil., la philosophie morale) se ramène à la théologie morale. Une science qui n'est pas purement philosophique, qui use de principes appartenant à l'ordre de la révélation, et qui entre dans le monde de la spiritualité, de la grâce et de la sainteté, est pure théologie, même si on veut le travestir d'un autre nom."—J. Ramirez, *ibid.,* pp. 429-430.

consideration, we turn now to a study of the demonstrative process which characterizes moral theology as such, during which we shall have the opportunity further to contrast the methodological approaches of the moral philosopher and the moral theologian, as well as to note certain similarities to be found between them.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DEMONSTRATIVE PROCESS IN MORAL THEOLOGY

The discussion of Christian moral philosophy in the preceding Chapter has re-emphasized the importance of a proper understanding of resolution and composition for the development of moral science at the philosophical level. Even more important is the understanding of these modes as they are also found in moral theology, for these are what ultimately insure that this part of sacred theology be practical, and at the same time retain its speculative character in common with the remaining tracts of dogmatic theology. Again, just as in Chapter Three we saw that the problem of the certitude of conclusions in moral philosophy could most easily be solved in terms of the procedures associated with these two modes, so in moral theology we shall find an analogous situation. Practically all of the questions asked in the Introduction about the certitude of conclusions in moral theology will find an answer once we have explained how the demonstrative process functions in their attainment, and how it is related to the speculative and practical methods employed by the moral theologian. Thus, for the completion of what we have already said about the proximate subject of moral theology—the image of God in action—we shall turn now to an investigation of the two methods which are used in its study and direction, and the certitudes which result from their application to this particular subject matter.

Following the results of our analysis of moral philosophy, where the resolutive mode—or speculative method—was found to be prior and preparatory to the use of the compositive mode—or practical method—we shall take up first the exposition of speculative method, both in general and in sufficient detail to give some idea of the procedures actually used by the moral theologian. After this we shall give a similar treatment of practical method, with some applications in the direction of souls and the teaching of moral theology. This will finally lead to a detailed study of the certitude of conclusions reached by the two methods, particularly as compared with other certitudes of the supernatural order and those of moral philosophy.

I. SPECULATIVE METHOD IN MORAL THEOLOGY

What has been said thus far about the use of the terms "speculative" and "practical" has been primarily concerned with human knowledge and

human habits as such, and cannot be applied to divine science and supernatural habits without appropriate reservations and distinctions. In order, therefore, to safeguard the propriety of our usage of these terms, we shall first sketch some of the Thomistic background surrounding their application to the subject matter of sacred theology in general, preparatory to detailing the speculative character—and also, in what is to follow, the practical character—of moral theology.

St. Thomas himself usually speaks of the distinction between "speculative" and "practical" in asking whether a particular type of supernatural knowledge pertains to the speculative or the practical intellect, as in the case of divine faith, the gifts of understanding, science and wisdom, the contemplative life, formal beatitude, and even the uncreated knowledge of God Himself.[1] In so doing, he is following the tradition of the schools, partly deriving from Aristotle and partly from Augustinian sources. In his employment of these terms, as Ramirez has pointed out, there is an evolution of his thought, and thus one has to be careful in the use made of his earlier writings.[2] Notwithstanding this, however, two general themes emerge from the treatment of these questions: the first, that the higher and the more God-like a particular type of knowledge, the more it approaches the unity of God's knowledge, and is at once speculative and practical;[3] the second, that those habits and gifts which he places in the speculative intellect he will speak of as being primarily or principally speculative, and only secondarily practical.[4]

Sacred theology, then, in the light of these principles, is said in the commentary on the *Sentences* to be one science that is both practical and speculative: it is principally speculative because its ultimate end is the contemplation of eternal Truth in the next life, and is not principally practical, because the human operable of this life is not its ultimate goal.[5] And in the *Summa*, theology is said to combine in one science what would correspond to speculative and practical sciences among the philosophical disciplines, but to be more speculative than practical, because more principally concerned with divine things than with human ones, only considering the latter insofar as they lead to perfect, or speculative, knowledge of God.[6]

Cajetan, in commenting on the *Summa*, thereupon interprets St. Thomas as meaning that sacred theology is neither speculative nor practical, but rather a third type of science which eminently contains the perfections of both.[7] Bañez, on the other hand, taking a different interpretation on the basis of St. Thomas' statement that theology is *"magis speculativa quam practica,"* holds that both speculative and practical can be said of it *per se*, but in a certain order; he thus maintains that not only sacred theology, but also faith and the gifts of understanding, science and wisdom, *"per se primo sunt speculativa et per se secundo practica."*[8] And finally, John of St. Thomas follows the latter view and teaches that theology is *formaliter* both speculative and practical,[9] although he agrees with Cajetan that it cannot be placed directly in either genus after the manner of the human sciences.[10] He also makes the interesting observation that it need not be speculative only with respect to its primary object, God, and practical only with respect to its secondary object, human operation, but that it can be both speculative and practical while treating of either, and that even one and the same act of the theologian, precisely as such, can be both speculative and practical at the same time, although this may not actually be the case because of the latter's human limitations.[11]

Following the interpretation of Bañez and John of St. Thomas, we shall therefore hold that moral theology, as an integral part of sacred theology, can be said to be formally and *per se* both a speculative and a practical science, primarily the former because its ultimate goal is truth about God, secondarily the latter because it must direct human action to the most perfect attainment of that goal in the beatific vision. Because of this double function, then, it will have the two-fold character we have already assigned to it, and as a consequence a twofold method of proceeding: one the speculative or resolutive mode of attaining truth in scientific fashion, the other the practical or compositive mode necessary for the use of that truth in the direction of human action. According to the order of exposition we have already indicated, we shall now turn to a detailed consideration of the first mode, or how the speculative end of moral theology is attained, and particularly with respect to its principal subject, the image of God in action.

A. RESOLUTION TO A THEOLOGICAL MIDDLE TERM

Anyone reading attentively the *Secunda Pars* in the general context of the *Summa* cannot help but be struck by the homogeneity of its method of

[1] Cf. Ramirez, III, 189-190.
[2] Ramirez, III, 192-193.
[3] *II-II*, 45, 3, ad 1.
[4] *II-II*, 9, 3; 52, 2, ad 2.
[5] *In I Sent.*, prol. q. 1, a. 3, qla. 1, c. and ad 1.
[6] *I*, I, 4.
[7] *In I*, I, 4, n. 3 and n. 8.
[8] *In II-II*, 4, 2, ad 3.
[9] *Curs. Theol.*, In I, I, disp. 2, a. 10, n. 12.
[10] *Ibid.*, n. 21.
[11] *Ibid.*, n. 18.

treatment when compared with the *Prima* and *Tertia Pars*. There is here the same rigid, scientific structure of thought, the same depth of analysis, the same demonstrative force with which conclusions are established.[12] The reason for this may escape the casual reader, but it will be seen by anyone who is well versed in the Aristotelian methodology which St. Thomas made his own. The latter is continually asking one or other of the four scientific questions about his subject matter which we have seen to figure prominently in the *Posterior Analytics*, and then searches for one or more middle terms which will enable the reader to see the proper answer with a clarity and certitude that only strict science can give. What therefore accounts for the homogeneity of St. Thomas' treatment here when compared with tracts that are conceded by all to be speculative, is the fact that he is following the same speculative method, that he is resolving to a theological middle term which will reveal the scientific truth of his conclusion.

Impressed by this fact, Ramirez has not hesitated to state that the entire speculative method of moral theology can be expressed most simply as the search for a middle term which can function in a theological demonstrative syllogism:

> The whole method of moral theology from the part of its *formale quo* object is reducible to the process or method of finding the middle term of a theological demonstrative syllogism.[13]

This statement, taken with what we have already said about theological method in general in Chapter One, supplies the key to the understanding of St. Thomas' procedure throughout the whole *Secunda Pars*, as well as in each one of the separate tracts which he there considers. Yet one should be careful not to interpret it too naively, as though each article in each tract will contain a demonstrative syllogism that is properly theological. Many articles—in fact, one might say a major portion of the articles—prove conclusions that are *praenotamina* for the student, that are materially philosophical and ancillary to the proper work of the moral theologian. They thus fulfill one of the sapiential functions of which we have already spoken, and as a consequence do not themselves contain a middle term that

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[12] "De la matière morale, saint Thomas a pareillement prétendu faire l'object d'une connaissance certaine et nécessaire. . . . La structure scientifique propre à la théologie garde en morale sa rigueur. A qui fréquente la *IIa Pars*, il n'est pas possible de n'être pas frappé de la qualité intellectuelle de la doctrine et de la force démonstrative avec laquelle sont établie les conclusions."—T. Deman, *Aux origines de la théologie morale*, pp. 106-107.

[13] Ramirez, I, 75.

is seen conjointly under the light of faith and of reason. Still they will be ordered to the proper understanding of an argument that does include such a middle term, which on that very account becomes central and of pivotal importance in the logical structure of the tract.

In such a demonstration, since one of the premises will normally be of faith and the other of reason, the middle term will be taken from a double source and will reflect the character of the entire argument as "moral" and as "theological." What makes it theological, in the final analysis, is that it occurs in a premise that is knowable only through divine revelation, and therefore it will have its origin either in sacred Scripture or tradition or in the doctrine of the Church.[14] What makes it moral, on the other hand, is its concern with human action, which is humanly knowable through moral philosophy or from ordinary experience, and has its origin in reason.[15] Of these two sources, the first is obviously primary and confers the distinctive character on theological demonstration as such.[16] Because of this, premises taken from natural ethics will have to be transposed to the supernatural order, and as a consequence must be understood by way of analogy to what is found in the order of nature.[17] And although both faith and reason thus function in the search for the theological middle, the latter is itself seen under the distinctive light of sacred theology, which is the habit of mind through which assent is given to the conclusion.[18]

The moral theologian, as a consequence, will have to treat of grace, of faith, hope, and charity, and of all the supernatural helps to human action that are only knowable through divine revelation. This poses a methodological problem in view of the fact that two of the scientific questions to which we have already alluded are concerned with the *quid sit* and the *propter quid*, and thus one may ask whether it is possible to know the quiddity of such supernatural entities. St. Thomas' answer to this question is in the affirmative;[19] his only restriction on quidditative knowledge of the supernatural, in general, is one relating to knowledge of divine substance in this life, as we have already mentioned.[20] The theologian's method of inquiring into such quiddities will parallel that of finding defi-

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[14] *Ibid.*

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *Ibid.*, 76. Cf. *I*, 5, ad 2.

[17] Ramirez, I, 79.

[18] *Ibid.*, 76.

[19] *Quaest. Quod.* VIII, 2, a. 2 (a. 4); text *infra*, pp. 180-181.

[20] Cf. *In Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1, sol. 3, ad 2; text *supra*, p. 42.

nitions of habits and virtues in the natural order,[21] and demands only that he have revealed knowledge adequate to manifest the nature of the entity involved, from which he can further investigate its properties.[22] The precise way in which natural knowledge functions together with revealed truth in this process is somewhat involved, however, and will be left for a later section, which will be devoted to more details of the speculative method we are here describing in a general way.

B. THE ORDER OF SCIENTIFIC QUESTIONS

One of the paradoxical aspects of methodology in moral theology is the fact that, although concerned with the study of man's progress in the supernatural order through the help of God's grace, which perfects man's nature in such a subtle way as to be humanly undetectable,[23] theology receives so much help from the sources of revelation that its scientific task is considerably easier than that of moral philosophy. Precisely because of this help, St. Thomas was able to apply Aristotle's scientific questions to the matter of the *Secunda Pars* in a much more forthright way than is done in the *Nichomachean Ethics*. And because of the importance of the final cause in moral matters, the principal factor thereby facilitating the moral theologian's work is that he begins with a knowledge of man's ultimate end, and this in a very scientific way, without having to work up to such knowledge by a long and involved dialectical process. Because of this initial advantage, his entire development possesses a clarity, a unity and simplicity that is without parallel in a purely human science of ethics.

The superior starting point thus available to the moral theologian makes his first methodological task that of applying the questions *an sit, an sit talis,* and *quid sit* to man's supernatural beatitude, and then inquiring for the *propter quid* of the various properties that follow from this determination. Such beatitude being objectively realized in God under the aspect of His divinity, this is equivalent to starting with the most principal subject of consideration in moral theology. After that, a transition is made to the various other subjects that we have already indicated, and in the precise order of their proximity to the most principal: for instance, the human

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[21] Cf. *ibid.*, a. 3: "Quaedam invisibilia sunt, quorum quiditas et natura perfecte exprimitur ex quiditatibus rerum sensibilium notis. Et de his etiam intelligibilibus possumus scire quid est, sed mediate, sicut ex hoc quod scitur quid est homo et quid est animal, sufficienter innotescit habitudo unius ad alterum et ex hoc scitur, quid est genus et quid est species."

[22] "Si quidem effectus sit adaequans causam, ipsa quiditas effectus accipitur ut principium ad demonstrandum causam esse et ad investigandum quiditatem eius, ex qua iterum proprietates eius ostenduntur."—*Ibid.*, a. 4, ad 2.

[23] Cf. *Quaest. Quod. VIII*, q. 2, a. 2, (a. 4); text *infra*, p. 182; cf. fn. 63.

act, the faculties from which it proceeds, the virtues with which the faculties can be endowed, the extrinsic helps, etc., following the order of the questions of the *Secunda Pars*. Exactly how the four scientific questions of the *Posterior Analytics* are applicable to these matters, and particularly how a demonstrative process can be used in finding definitions of the entities involved, is not immediately obvious, nor is it treated explicitly by St. Thomas. For this reason, we shall sketch at this point some of the methodological presuppositions underlying the treatment in the *Summa*. The point we would make, in so doing, is that the scientific order of questions —and, as a consequence, the order found in the *Summa*—is already determined by the subject matter, and follows automatically once man's final end in the supernatural order is determined, and then the means of attaining it sought along the various lines of causality.

I. GENERAL METHODOLOGY

Two general methodological principles function throughout the entire development of the *Secunda Pars*. The first focusses attention on the fact that the more proximate subjects of investigation, the human act itself and the faculties from which it proceeds, are in the order of predicamental accident, and therefore are defined differently from substances. The latter can be defined through intrinsic principles alone, while the former can only be defined by the inclusion of something which is extrinsic to the accident itself, namely, the subject in which it is found.[24] The second is really only a more detailed application of this first principle, and follows also from a point we have already mentioned in Chapters Two and Three, that the resolutive mode of a science of the human act will parallel that of a science of the human soul, and therefore that there will be a necessary subalternation between the two types of knowledge.[25] It can be stated simply that the definitions of all the parts of the soul and its activities—which include of course the human virtues[26]—are already included im-

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[24] "Haec est differentia inter definitionem substantiae et accidentis, quod in definitione substantiae nihil ponitur quod sit extra substantiam definiti: definitur enim unaquaeque substantia per sua principia materialia et formalia. In definitione autem accidentis ponitur aliquid quod est extra essentiam definiti, scilicet subiectum, oportet enim subiectum poni in definitione accidentis. Sicut cum dicitur 'simitas est curvitas nasi.' Et hoc ideo est, quia definitio significat quod quid est res; substantia autem est quid completum in suo esse et in sua specie; accidens autem non habet esse completum, sed dependens a substantia."—*In II de Anima*, lect. 1, n. 213.

[25] Cf. *In I de Anima*, lect. 1, n. 7.

[26] "Virtus autem quae est proprie humana, non est ea quae est corporis, in qua communicat cum aliis rebus; sed ea quae est animae, quae est propria sibi."—*In I Ethic.*, lect. 19, n. 226.

plicitly in the definition of the human soul;[27] thus the proper procedure for arriving at proper definitions of these entities is to examine more particularly everything that is implied in the former definition.[28] And, as a corollary of this, it also follows that the same general methodological procedure that is involved in finding the definition of the soul, will be used in defining the entities with which moral theology is principally concerned.

Examining, then, the Aristotelian-Thomistic method of arriving at the definition of the soul, we find there an application of demonstrative method in the work of defining as described in the *Posterior Analytics,* and consequently the general answer to our question about the use of demonstrative method in the *Secunda Pars.* The use of a demonstrative procedure in the defining process itself is dictated by the fact that the effects of the soul, and of its faculties and habits of action, are all more known than these entities themselves,[29] and thus it is necessary to start with these effects and demonstrate *a posteriori* the *an sit* and *an sit talis* (or *quia*) of their proper causes.[30] From such a beginning, it is further possible to detect an order of priority among the various causes, and to construct one or more demonstrations *propter quid,*[31] the middle terms of which will express the

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[27] "Manifestum est igitur quod de unaquaque parte animae propriisime dicitur haec definitio, quae assignata est de anima."—*In II de Anima,* lect. 6, n. 302; cf. also lect. 4, n. 272.

[28] "Sicut non est quaerenda talis definitio communis animae, quae nulli animae partium conveniat, ita non debemus esse contenti definitione communi, sed oportet propriam definitionem cuiuslibet partis animae inquirere."—*Ibid.,* lect. 6, n. 299.

[29] "In quibusdam vero non sunt eadem magis nota simpliciter et quoad nos, scilicet in naturalibus, in quibus plerumque effectus sensibiles sunt magis noti suis causis; et ideo in naturalibus, ut in pluribus proceditur ab his quae sunt minus nota secundum naturam et magis nota quoad nos, ut dicitur in primo *Physicorum.* Et hoc modo demonstrationis intendit hic uti. Et hoc est quod dicit, quod quia illud quod est certum secundum naturam, et quod est secundum rationem notius, fit certius quoad nos ex his quae sunt incerta secundum naturam, certiora autem quoad nos, per istum modum tentandum est iterum aggredi de anima, demonstrando definitionem. . . ."—*Ibid.,* lect. 3, nn. 245-246.

[30] "Incipit demonstrare definitionem animae superius positam, modo praedicto, scilicet per effectum. Et utitur tali demonstratrione. Illud quod est primum principium vivendi est viventium corporum actus et forma; sed anima est primum principium vivendi his quae vivunt; ergo est corporis viventis actus et forma. Manifestum est autem, quod haec demonstratio est ex posteriori. Ex eo enim quod anima est forma corporis viventis, est principium operum vitae, et non e converso."—*Ibid.,* n. 253.

[31] "Assignat rationem praedictae intentionis, ostendendo quod aliquae definitiones sunt demonstrabiles. Et hoc est quod dicit, quod ideo oportet iterum aggredi de anima, quia oportet quod ratio definitiva non solum dicat hoc quod est *quia,* sicut plures terminorum idest definitionum dicunt; sed oportet etiam quod in definitione tangatur causa, et quod per definitionem dicentem *propter quid,* demonstretur definitio quae dicit solum *quia.*"—*Ibid.,* n. 247.

quid or quiddity of the entity being investigated,[32] as we have already explained in Chapter One.

Exactly how this methodological procedure applies to the definition of the soul has been examined with some care by Cajetan, in an attempt to resolve a difficulty in the Aristotelian text.[33] His study shows that although St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas interpret Aristotle slightly differently,[34] their solutions are quite complementary and throw considerable light on the demonstrative process itself. St. Thomas stresses the first part of the process, and therefore emphasizes the *a posteriori* character of the demonstration,[35] while St. Albert, presupposing the latter, insists more on

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[32] Cf. *ibid.*, lect. 4, n. 271: "Ostenso quod anima est primum vivendi principium, concludit ex hoc definitionem prius assignatam. . . . Ponit talem demonstrationem. Duorum, quorum utroque dicimur esse aliquid aut operari, unum, scilicet quod primum est, est quasi forma, et aliud quasi materia. Sed anima est primum quo vivimus, cum tamen vivamus anima et corpore; ergo anima est forma corporis viventis. Et haec est definitio superius de anima posita, quod anima est actus primus physici corporis potentia vitam habentis. Manifestum est autem, quod medium huius demonstrationis est quaedam definitio animae, scilicet anima est quo vivimus primum."

[33] "Circa propositum huius capituli, quia ardua valde tractanda sunt, dubium subtiliter discutiendum occurrit duplex. *Primum* quia Aristoteles videtur contraria proponere: proponit enim in principio capituli quod aggrediendum est de anima sic, id est ex incertioribus naturae in certiora naturae tendendo; et subdit statim rationem non solum quia, sed propter quid dicere. Haec enim duo repugnantia invicem videntur: quoniam si ex incertioribus naturae procedendum est, ergo non procedetur a definitione dicente propter quid, quoniam propter quid est certius naturae; et si procedatur a definitione dicente propter quid, ergo non ex incertioribus naturae ad certiora naturae procedetur, sed e converso, ut patet *Secundo* dubitatur an definitio hic investiganda comparata ad definitionem prius assignatam habet rationem prioris aut posteriotis secundum naturam. Et ratio dubitandi est quia et in principio huius dicitur, textu commenti 12, quod oportet iterum aggredi quia definitio debet non solum dicere quia, sed propter quid; et Albertus Magnus vult hoc in loco definitionem investigandam explicare causam secundum esse, divus vero Thomas sentit quod definitio investiganda sit per posteriora secundum naturae ordinem."—Cajetan, *In II de Anima*, c. 2, ed. Coquelle, pp. 77-78.

[34] "Ad *primum* horum dicitur quod, secundum omnes, illa duo dicta Aristotelis ad diversa insinuenda proposita sunt, quamvis secundum diversas expositiones diversimode intelligantur. . . . *Secundi* autem dicti ratio, apud omnes, respicit definitiones ipsas animae, scilicet datam et dandam inter se. Sed Albertus vult litteram ut iacet intelligi et quod definitio assignanda dicat causam et propter quid definitionis assignatae. Sanctus Thomas vero distinguit inter demonstrationem et demonstrationis modum, scilicet quia aut propter quid, et vult quod Aristoteles licet de utroque mentionem faciat, non tamen intendit concludere nisi alterum, scilicet quod prior definitio sit demonstrabilis per sequentem definitionem, et non intendit quod sit demonstrabilis tali modo, scilicet demonstratione propter quid. . ." —*Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

[35] "Quoad . . . qualitatem . . . huius demonstrationis, oportet videre qualis connexio medii cum conclusione. Ubi scito quod si ly *quo vivimus* etc., intelligitur secundum actuale exercitium, tunc manifeste demonstratio ista est a posteriori; nam prius naturae ordine est animam esse actum corporis quam ipsam esse

the final and formal aspects of the causality involved with respect to its proper matter, and therefore accents the *propter quid* nature of the demonstration.[36] This difference in interpretation serves to highlight the fact that the order of investigation, or invention, is actually the reverse of the order of resolution, and that there need be no contradiction in saying that the one proceeds *a posteriori* and the other *a priori* (or *propter quid*), as long as the difference between the two orders is properly understood.[37]

It is this basic method, therefore, which is used for finding definitions of the faculties and habits of the soul itself. The acts which proceed from such entities are used *a posteriori*, in the order of actual exercise, to understand the entities themselves, while in the order of finality, the objects of the acts, and the acts themselves, can be used *a priori* to yield quidditative definitions of the faculties and habits.[38] This is why the general procedure

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ex qua actualiter oritur vivere et sentire nostrum. Et quoniam hunc sensum secutus est divus Thomas, ideo dixit ipsam esse a posteriori. . . ."—*Ibid.*, p. 101.

[36] "Si autem ly quo *vivimus* intelligatur abstrahendo, ut exposuimus, tunc medium est prius natura conclusione: quoniam ideo anima, non solum actualiter, sed etiam in seipa essentialiter, est actus et perfectio corporis susceptivi vitae quia in seipsa essentialiter est res cui debetur primo quod sit ratio nostrae vitae et non e converso. . . . Ex hoc igitur anima primo ab aliis distinguetur et constituetur in se quod est prima ratio vitae animatorum seu, quod idem est, quia est cui debetur quod sit primo ratio vitae animatorum corporum. Inter istas igitur duas animae definitiones, scilicet quo *primo vivimus* et *actus corporis talis*, hoc interest quod illa ipsam naturam animae primo locat inter universi partes, ista vero indicat quod anima est perfectiva materiae. Et ideo illa dicit causam et esse seu quia et propter quid: ex illa enim habemus et quod est perfectiva materiae et propter quid est perfectiva materiae, quia enim est prima ratio nostrae vitae, est corporis talis perfectiva, ut dictum est. Ex ista autem tantum habemus quia est, quod scilicet anima est perfectiva materiae. Et iuxta hunc sensum magnus et vere magnus Albertus dixit demonstrationem hanc dare causam quare anima sit actus corporis; et hoc valde consonat principio huius capituli ubi Aristoteles secundum planum sensum litterae prae se fert velle se investigare definitionem animae quae dicat causam, quoniam prior tantum dixit quia, quemadmodum in mathematicis, etc. . . ."—*Ibid.*, pp. 102-103. For an elaboration of this passage, see Aquinas Farren, O.P., *Cajetan's Explanation of the Methodology of the 'De Anima,'* (unpublished M.A. dissertation, Dominican House of Philosophy) Dover, Mass.: 1961.

[37] Cf. *In II de Anima*, lect. 6, n. 308: "Oportet quod in cognitionem animae procedamus ab his quae sunt magis extrinseca, a quibus abstrahuntur species intelligibiles, per quas intellectus intelligit seipsum; ut scilicet per obiecta cognoscamus actus, et per actus potentias, et per potentias essentiam animae. Si autem directe essentiam suam cognosceret anima per seipsam, esset contrarius ordo servandus in animae cognitione; quia quanto aliquid esse propinquius essentiae animae, tanto prius cognosceretur ab ea."

[38] "Si oportet de aliqua parte animae dicere *quid est*, scilicet quid est intellectivum, aut sensitivum, aut vegetativum, prius oportet dicere de actibus, scilicet quid sit intelligere, et quid sentire. Et hoc ideo, quia secundum rationem definitivam, actus et operationes sunt priores potentiis. Potentia enim, secundum hoc ipsum quod est, importat habitudinem quamdam ad actum: est enim principium quoddam agendi vel patiendi: unde oportet quod actus ponantur in definitionibus potenti-

in *De Anima* is first to consider the object, then the act, in order to define the potency.[39] Exactly the same method is carried over into the *Ethics* when seeking the definition of moral virtue, with a few refinements dictated by the special character of the subject being treated. Thus it is first necessary to locate moral virtue in the genus of habit,[40] and then to seek its specification through the matter with which it is concerned, which is equivalent to determining the object of its proper act.[41] Such a process may become quite involved when there are remote and proximate matters that require distinction,[42] and particularly when several virtues seem to be concerned with the same matter and it is necessary to separate the formal

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arum. Et sic ita se habet circa ordinem actus et potentiae, et actibus adhuc sunt priora opposita, idest objecta."—*Ibid.*, n. 304. "Species enim actuum et operationum sumuntur secundum ordinem ad objecta. Omnis enim animae operatio, vel est actus potentiae activae, vel passivae. Objecta quidem potentiarum passivarum comparantur ad operationes earum ut activa, quia reducunt potentias in actum, sicut visibile visum, et omne sensibile sensum. Objecta vero potentiarum activarum comparantur ad operationes ipsarum ut fines. Objecta enim potentiarum activarum, sunt operata ipsarum. Manifestum est autem, quod in quibuscumque praeter operationes sunt aliqua operata, quod operata sunt fines operationum, ut dicitur in primo *Ethicorum:* sicut domus quae aedificatur, est finis aedificationis. Manifestum est igitur, quod omne objectum comparatur ad operationem animae, vel ut activum, vel ut finis. . . . Sic igitur objecta sunt priora operationibus animae *in via definiendi.*"—*Ibid.*, n. 305.

[39] "Unde et prius oportebit determinare de objectis quam de actibus, propter eamdem causam, propter quam et de actibus prius determinatur quam de potentiis. Objecta autem sunt sicut alimentum respectu vegetativi, et sensibile respectu sensus, et intelligibile respectu intellectus."—*Ibid.*, n. 306.

[40] "Ad perscrutandum quid est virtus, oportet assumere quod tria sunt in anima, scilicet passiones, potentiae et habitus. Quorum alterum necesse est esse virtutem. Dixit enim supra quod virtus est principium quarumdam operationum animae. Nihil autem est in anima, quod sit operationis principium, nisi aliquod horum trium. Videtur enim homo aliquando agere ex passione, puta ex ira. Quandoque vero ex habitu, sicut ille qui operatur ex arte. Quandoque vero ex nuda potentia, sicut quando homo incipit primo operari. Ex quo patet quod sub hac divisione, non comprehenduntur absolute omnia quae sunt *in anima*; quia essentia animae nihil horum est, nec etiam operatio intelligibilis; sed solum hic tangitur illa quae sunt principia alicuius actionis."—*In II Ethic.*, lect. 5, n. 290. Cf. also nn. 291-305.

[41] "Convenientius Aristoteles virtutes distinxit secundum objecta sive secundum materias. Et sic praedictae virtutes quatuor, non dicuntur principales quia sunt generales, sed quia species earum accipiuntur secundum quaedam principalia; sicut prudentia, quae non est circa omnem cognitionem veri, sed specialiter circa actum rationis qui est praecipere. Justitia autem non est circa omnem aequalitatem actionum, sed solum in his quae sunt ad alterum, ubi melius est aequalitatem constituere. Fortitudo non est circa quamlibet firmitatem, sed solum in timoribus periculorum mortis. Temperantia non est circa omnem refrenationem, sed solum in concupiscentiis et delectationibus tactus. Aliae vero virtutes sunt quaedam secundaria. Et ideo possunt reduci ad praedictas, non sicut species ad genera, sed ut secundariae ad principales."—*Ibid.*, lect. 8, n. 339.

[42] *In IV Ethic.*, lect. 1, n. 652.

ratios of each.[43] The result of the process, however, yields the proximate final cause of the virtue—the ultimate final cause being the perfection of man himself—which can be used to give a *propter quid* demonstration of its formal cause, and even of its material cause, or the subject in which it is found.[44] It is noteworthy, in this connection, that the entire demonstrative process through which the complete definition is attained is made *ex suppositione finis*, and ultimately *ex effectibus* or *a posteriori*, both of which we have pointed out in Chapter One as being characteristic of physical demonstration, which again shows the methodological similarity of moral science to psychology or natural philosophy.

2. THE ORDER OF THE *SUMMA*

A demonstrative analysis of the supernatural human act will thus be a causal analysis paralleling that of the *Nichomachean Ethics*, although it will be assisted immeasurably by the data of divine revelation, and on that account can investigate the divine as well as the human causality involved in its production. The starting point is God as the ultimate final cause of such action, after which comes a study of the human act in general, but under the formal aspect of its supernatural morality, and finally a detailed consideration of all the matters in which it can be exercised.[45] The moral act itself, when studied in general, is investigated first in itself and then in its principles, since it is only through the act that the principles can be known. And since supernatural morality is the more formal consideration, a preliminary study must be made of the proper matter required for morality, or voluntary action and the component acts involved in its production. From this, the essential constitutives of morality itself can be demonstrated, then its properties, and finally the way in which it is participated in the acts of the sensitive appetites.[46] All of this then leads to a study of the principles of the supernaturally moral act, insofar as these are superadded to man's natural faculties, either intrinsically after the manner of virtues, or extrinsically after the manner of law and grace.[47]

This entire development, which makes up the whole of the *Prima Secundae*, is carried out at a most general level, and as such does not descend to the particular matters with which supernatural human action is

[43] *Cf. In VII Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 1329.

[44] For an explicit identification by St. Thomas of the four causes of virtue, as well as the distinction between *"materia circa quam"* and *"materia in qua"* see *I-II*, 55, 4. The material cause of which we speak here is the *materia in qua*.

[45] Cf. John of St. Thomas, *Isagoge ad D. Thomae Theologiam*, (ed. Solesmnes), Vol. I, pp. 147b-148a.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 148.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

concerned. It should be noted, therefore, that there is no thorough-going application in these tracts of the demonstrative methodology we have just sketched, because the matter is not studied in sufficient detail to ascertain the specific quiddities of the various virtues, although their *an sit*, their *quid sit* in general, and certain *quia* aspects of their distinction are there established.

For the more detailed consideration of the *Secunda Secundae*, which proposes to take up systematically all the matter in which supernaturally moral acts can be realized, a division is first made into those matters which are the common concern of all men, and those which pertain to special states and offices within the Church.[48] The former treatment is the one in which the demonstrative method of defining reaches its highest state of development, for it is there applied to the theological, cardinal and adjoined virtues, the corresponding gifts, and the opposed vices, to yield quidditative definitions and properties following therefrom.[49] The concluding tract, on the other hand, shows more the practical character of Aristotle's *Politics*, but transposed to the order of supernatural society, to analyze the special states within the divine organization established by God to bring about His kingdom on earth.[50]

The order of the *Secunda Pars* as a whole, therefore, follows the resolutive mode of a practical science designed to give direction to human living at a supernatural level. The general lines of its development are dictated by the causal analysis of its proper subject matter, in turn traceable to the basic scientific questions of the *Posterior Analytics*. The working out of this development, because of the complexity and variability of this subject matter, involves a highly detailed treatise composed of over three hundred questions and over fifteen hundred articles. Obviously just as one should not expect to find a theological demonstration in each article, so one will not find the answer to one of the four scientific questions in each article. Many are merely preparatory, supplying a necessary distinction, adapting philosophical analyses to the understanding of revealed truth, comparing opinions—in a word, furnishing *præmotamina* that can be used later for a scientific resolution.[51] But the motivating spirit behind the whole, and that whose understanding alone gives meaning to all the articulated elements, is an Aristotelian demonstrative methodology directed

[48] *Ibid.*, pp. 148-149a.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 149a.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 149.

[51] M. D. Chenu has a very good summary of this aspect of St. Thomas' analytical discourse in his: *Introduction à l'étude de saint Thomas d'Aquin*. (Montréal/Paris, 1950), pp. 151-153.

towards analyzing the human soul under the special aspect of its supernatural activity, by which man—the wayfarer made in the divine image—can ultimately attain to his own intrinsic perfection and to his eternal salvation.

C. DETAILS OF SPECULATIVE ANALYSIS

To enter into more detail on the resolutive method involved would require an investigation of the particular tracts making up the *Secunda Pars*. The specific details of any methodological elaboration are always dependent on the matter being treated, and in the case of moral theology, this is further accentuated by the extreme variability of the matter itself. Since it would be obviously impossible within the limits of this study to enter into such a material investigation, we shall restrict ourselves to some methodological observations about one particular tract in the *Prima Secundae* and one particular tract in the *Secunda Secundae*. Our aim in so doing is not to furnish an exhaustive analysis of the matter in these tracts, but rather to give some general indications of how the demonstrative method which characterizes the speculative mode, already described in Chapter One, is applied to moral matters under the special influx of divine faith. The tracts we have selected as being adapted to such illustration are that dealing with man's ultimate end and that dealing with the nature of charity. Their choice has been influenced not only by their suitability for this purpose, but also by the fact that our treatment of the former can be supplemented by Ramirez's many methodological observations in the three volumes of his *De hominis beatitudine*, while in the case of the latter, St. Thomas himself has given some valuable indications of the method to be followed in determining the quiddity of charity in one of his *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*.

1. MAN'S ULTIMATE END

The five questions which make up the tract *De beatitudine* are described by St. Thomas as being concerned respectively with *"de ultimo fine in communi"* (q. 1), *"in quibus sit"* (q. 2), *"quid sit"* (q. 3), *"quae requirantur ad ipsam"* or *"quae exiguntur ad beatitudinem"* (q. 4), and *"qualiter eam consequi possumus"* or *"de ipsa adeptione beatitudinis"* (q. 5).[52] Of these, the *"quid sit"* of q. 3 is most helpful for locating the order of development with respect to the four scientific questions, for if q. 3 is concerned with the *quid sit*, the preceding questions can only be concerned with the *an sit* and the *an sit talis*, while the *propter quid* can only be found in subsequent questions. Following this indication, we would say that the *an sit* in general is established in the first four articles

[52] Cf. *I-II*, 1, prol.; 3, prol.; 4, prol.; and 5, prol.

of q. 1, after which the *an sit talis* (whether or not and in what way, the ultimate end is one) is taken up in the last four articles of the same question. After this general inquiry, a more precise investigation is made into the *quid sit* of beatitude, but for this it is first necessary to establish, by a series of negative demonstrations, the matter with which beatitude is concerned, and this is the burden of q. 2. From this, it is then possible to argue to the *quid sit* in q. 3, and also, from the latter, to the properties which will necessarily have to accompany it, *propter quid*, in q. 4. Finally, because of the practical nature of the subject of consideration, it is not merely sufficient to indicate the formal and integral constituents of beatitude, but also precisely how it can be attained (*"qualiter eam consequi possumus"*), and this is treated in q. 5.

Throughout this development there occurs a wide variety of demonstrations, either explicit or at least implied, many of which are materially philosophical, but all of which are formally theological. Some involve analogical middles, others univocal middles; some are indirect, others direct; of the latter, some are *a posteriori*, others *a priori*; again, some are *quia*, others are *propter quid*, and within the latter category, some are negative, while others are positive and possess the full perfection of demonstrative argument. Referring the reader to Ramirez's work for the specific identification of various arguments,[53] we shall content ourselves with the following general remarks on the underlying procedure.

Because the *an sit* of man's supernatural end is divinely revealed and of itself is in no way knowable by unaided reason, all demonstrations in the first part of q. 1 illustrate the explicative or sapiential function of moral theology. St. Thomas himself concentrates in these articles on the rational foundation for his later development, and thus uses arguments drawn mainly from psychology and ethics.[54] (We may note here that he could have used these same arguments in an analogous way to demonstrate, *a posteriori*, the existence of a supernatural end from the revealed fact that man can place salvific and meritorious acts in the supernatural order, and this would have been an example of the type of sapiential function where

[53] For example, arguments involving analogical middle terms are given in I, 177; I, 289; I, 351; I, 387; II, 166; III, 132. Similarly, for indirect arguments, see: I, 221; I, 385; II, 57; III, 70; III, 128. Some samples of *a posteriori* demonstration will be seen in I, 175; I, 369; II, 154; II, 257; II, 272; III, 108. Again, for *quia* arguments, see: I, 257; II, 51-57; II, 84; II, 95; II, 109; II, 126. Negative *propter quid* demonstrations are given in II, 50; II, 61; II, 83; II, 93; II, 108; II, 124; III, 323. Likewise, positive *propter quid* demonstrations can be seen in I, 180; I, 225; I, 256; II, 256; II, 268; III, 84-85.

[54] A further development of this point as it relates to the structure of the *Secunda Pars* is given by J. Cahill, "The Sapiential Character of Moral Theology," *ITQ* 27 (1960), 132-145.

one revealed truth is demonstrated through another revealed truth, but such an argument is not explicit in this section of the *Summa*.[55] The remaining articles of q. 1 are likewise explicative, applying additional rational arguments to establish the unity of man's ultimate end (*an sit talis*), in the course of which it becomes necessary to draw the important distinction between the *ratio* of the ultimate end itself and the object in which (*in quo*) it is to be found (a. 7), which thereupon governs the development of the remainder of the tract.

The demonstrations in q. 2, which is devoted to a detailed examination of the latter aspect of beatitude, or *"in quibus sit,"* are again explicative at the rational level, but their character is quite different from the *a posteriori* type of reasoning found in q. 1. They form an excellent example of indirect demonstration based on the successive elimination of a complete series of disjunctive alternatives. Because excluding various possibilities, they are all negative arguments, and they all proceed *a priori* in the sense that they use the notion of man's complete intrinsic perfection, as a final cause to be attained, to eliminate various matters which cannot be the ultimate object of his beatifying act. Thus their predominant character is that of negative *propter quid* demonstration, although ultimately they are based on a premise which has been established *a posteriori* in the first question.

The positive development of the line of inquiry initiated in q. 2 is completed in q. 3 with the determination of the *"quid sit"* or formal *ratio* of beatitude itself. Here the indirect conclusion at which q. 2 terminates, that the object of man's beatifying act can be God alone (a. 8), is applied directly to demonstrate the formal cause of such beatitude as it exists in the human subject. This, then, is an adaptation of the demonstrative method of finding a quidditative definition, proceeding from the final cause to the formal cause, and from this in turn to the material cause, here the particular faculty which elicits the beatifying act itself. The conclusion of the entire process, that man's formal supernatural beatitude consists in the intellectual vision of the divine essence, thus completes the explicative process begun in q. 1, and furnishes a fully developed theological insight into the revealed truth that man's ultimate happiness in heaven will consist in seeing God as He is in Himself. The concluding part of this process may be regarded as a positive *propter quid* demonstration from final causality, but —like the analogous case of the demonstration of the quiddity of the human soul—this is merely the final resolution of a line of reasoning that is ultimately *a posteriori*. Thus the process remains throughout its develop-

[55] Ramirez gives this demonstration explicitly in I, 312.

ment at the level of rational explication which is ordered to the understanding of revealed truth.

With the insight thereby attained into the nature of man's supernatural end, it becomes possible to deduce further conclusions in q. 4 and q. 5 which are properly theological demonstrations. In these, the fundamental revealed premise is the now theologically explicated truth that man's supernatural end is the intellectual vision of God's essence, under which various rational premises can be subsumed to show, *propter quid,* the antecedent and concomitant requirements for such perfect happiness (q. 4), as well as the efficiency involved in its attainment (q. 5). Thus, whereas the demonstrations in the first three questions show forth the sapiential functions of moral theology, the latter two questions are more illustrative of the scientific functions, although they too can be regarded as explicating the truths that are divinely revealed about the joys awaiting, in the next life, those who serve God well in the present one, and therefore as also playing a sapiential role.

From this general appraisal of the demonstrative methodology employed in the study of man's ultimate end, it can be seen that practically every type of usage indicated in the summary at the end of Chapter One is applied in the very first tract of moral theology. And notwithstanding the fact that, materially speaking, the vast majority of demonstrations seem to be comprehensible to reason alone, unaided by faith, each and every one is made under the positive direction of faith, and as a consequence is formally theological. The central proposition in the tract is that which expresses the nature or quiddity of the beatific vision, and it is here that the mind of man encounters mystery, and—short of God's express revelation —uncertainty as to whether such an exalted goal could ever be attainable by man. It is the theologian's faith which illuminates this proposition, and through it, the entire tract which is ordered to its rational explication, as well as to the deduction of other truths which it necessarily entails.

2. THE NATURE OF CHARITY

The other example which we would discuss briefly is the analysis of the theological virtue of charity in the *Secunda Secundae,* in order to again show the direct influx of divine faith in the demonstrative process, and how this modifies the theologian's procedure when compared with that of the philosopher who is analyzing a moral virtue. Before discussing the procedure in the *Summa,* however, it will be well first to expose St. Thomas' thought in one of the *Quodlibeta,*[56] where he gives a summary of

[56] *Quaest. Quodlib. VIII,* q. 2, a. 2 (a. 4); (ed. Marietti, 1949), p. 162.

the methodology by which one can arrive at a knowledge of the quiddity of charity, insofar as this will be helpful for understanding the more concise exposition in the *Summa*.

St. Thomas' starting point here is the proposition that man's intellect, by its very nature, is ordered to a comprehension of the quiddities of things, and that it is further endowed with naturally known principles and concepts which assist him in attaining such quidditative knowledge. These first principles and primary concepts are not of themselves sufficient to comprehend quiddities, however, and must be supplemented either by personal investigation, or by what is learned from others, or even by what is divinely revealed, through all of which the potential content of man's initial intellectual endowment is actualized and brought to its proper perfection.[57] For the normal entities of the material universe which man encounters, his own sense knowledge suffices to generate quidditative concepts, while for certain other things, what he hears from others is the occasion of his grasping a quiddity; and in the supernatural order, he is dependent on faith, or on what is divinely revealed, to arrive at the natures of entities which transcend his unaided knowing capabilities.[58] Naturally known first principles function through all three processes, but whereas in the first two they are sufficient of themselves, with the aid of the senses and the imagination, in the last they merely direct the search for quiddities, and this mainly by showing the non-repugnance of what is learned when compared with first principles that are known with rational certitude.[59]

Using this as a basis, St. Thomas then describes the process by which man arrives at the quiddity of a supernatural entity like charity as follows:

When we believe that there is in us something divinely given by

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[57] *Ibid.* Cf. I-II, 3, 8.

[58] "In intellectu insunt nobis etiam naturaliter quaedam conceptiones omnibus notae, ut entis, unius, boni, et huiusmodi, a quibus eodem modo procedit intellectus ad cognoscendum quidditatem uniuscuiusque rei, per quem procedit a principiis per se notis ad cognoscendas conclusiones: et hoc *vel* per ea quae quis sensu percipit, sicut cum per sensibiles proprietates alicuius rei concipio illius rei quidditatem; *vel* per ea quae ab aliis quis audit, ut cum laicus qui nescit quid sit musica, cum audit aliquam artem esse per quam discit canere vel psallere, concipit quidditatem musicae, cum ipse praesciat quid sit ars, et quid sit canere; *aut etiam* per ea quae ex revelatione habentur, ut est in his quae fidei sunt."—*Ibid.*

[59] "In quibus omnibus modis cognoscendis homo iuvatur ex principiis naturaliter cognitis; *vel* ita quod ipsa principia cognita ad cognitionem acquirendam sufficiant administrantibus sensu et imaginatione, sicut cum aliquam cognitionem acquirimus per inventionem vel doctrinam; *vel* ita quod principia praedicta ad cognitionem acquirendam non sufficiant: nihilominus tamen in huiusmodi cognoscendis principia dirigunt, in quantum inveniuntur non repugnare principiis naturaliter cognitis: quod si esset, intellectus nullo modo eis assentiret, sicut non potest dissentire principiis."—*Ibid.*

> which our will is united to God, we conceive the quiddity of charity, understanding charity to be a gift of God by which the will is united to Him, and knowing beforehand what a gift is, and what the will is, and what union is. And we cannot know in turn what these things are except by resolving to other concepts that are more known; so we proceed until we come to the first conceptions of human understanding, which are naturally known to all.[60]

Here he is explicit on the fact that the analysis of a supernatural virtue must begin with data accepted on faith, and that it must resolve these data to concepts whose quiddities are already known, and which in turn are resolvable to the primary concepts of the human mind which are universally knowable by reason alone. The term of such a process is the possession of the quiddity of charity "in an intentional way, not in a physical way," because obviously such an analysis does not generate charity itself in a person, but merely enables him to know what charity is.[61]

The problem of knowing whether or not an individual actually possesses charity as a virtue, apart from the knowledge of what it is, is viewed by St. Thomas as considerably more difficult. Theoretically, he notes, it is possible to demonstrate the existence of the habit from the exercise of its interior act within the subject possessing it, or it is possible to have conjectural knowledge of charity's possession by another from a study of his exterior acts.[62] But in the actual case, he himself thinks that certain knowledge of the existence of charity in a human subject is impossible:

> I say this, however, presupposing that one can know that he

[60] *Ibid.*

[61] "Species intelligibilis est similitudo ipsius essentiae rei, et est quodammodo ipsa quidditas et natura rei secundum esse intelligibile, non secundum esse naturale, prout est in rebus. Et ideo omnia quae non cadunt sub sensu et imaginatione, sed sub solo intellectu, cognoscuntur per hoc quod essentiae vel quidditates eorum sunt aliquo modo in intellectu. Et hic est modus quo caritas cognoscitur cognitione prima tam ab habente caritatem quam a non habente."—*Ibid.*

[62] "Secundum alium modum cognoscendi caritatem neque caritas neque aliquis habitus sive potentia percipitur a nostro intellectu, nisi per hoc quod actus percipiuntur, ut patet per Philosophum X *Ethic.* Actus autem caritatis vel alterius habitus eliciuntur ab ipsa caritate vel ab alio habitu per propriam essentiam caritatis vel alterius habitus: et per hunc modum dicitur aliquis se cognoscere habere caritatem vel alium habitum per ipsam essentiam habitus secundum esse naturale quod habet in rerum natura, et non solum in intellectu. Sic autem nullus potest cognoscere caritatem nisi caritatem habens; quia actus caritatis et aliarum virtutum praecipue consistunt in motibus interioribus, qui non possunt esse cogniti nisi operanti, nisi quatenus manifestantur ex actibus exterioribus; et sic per quamdam coniecturam aliquis non habens caritatem potest percipere alium caritatem habere." —*Ibid.*

> possesses charity; I do not think this is truly the case, because in the acts of charity itself we are unable to perceive that they are elicited by charity, because of the similarity between natural love and gratuitous love.[63]

This statement is of more than usual importance because, being made with respect to charity, it can also be seen as applying to *all* the infused virtues, and therefore as placing a limitation on knowledge of their actual existence in a particular individual.[64]

The methodological consequences of St. Thomas' teaching in this *Quaestio Quodlibetalis* are considerable, for they dictate a distinct change of method when one moves from the investigation of natural moral virtue to supernatural virtue. In the former case, man comes to know the virtue itself from its actual exercise in particular subjects, for starting with a dialectical inquiry—the study of just men, for instance, to arrive at a definition of justice—he demonstrates the quiddity from the act of the virtue and the proper object which it attains. In the supernatural order, however, so subtle is nature's perfection by grace that one cannot detect the actual exercise of the supernatural virtue. Thus man is limited from the outset to a general knowledge of its *an sit* from an analysis of revealed truth, which in turn can lead to a knowledge of its *quid sit* through a resolution to corresponding concepts in the natural order. Only after this is attained can he speculate about the *an sit* of the virtue in the existential order, and such speculation will be largely a matter of conjecture. Thus, properly speaking, there is no *a posteriori* demonstration based on actual exercise when seeking a definition of a supernatural virtue. The whole process has an *a priori* character deriving from revealed truth, although it will ultimately resolve into concepts that correspond analogously to entities in the natural order, which in turn can only be known quidditatively from an *a posteriori* process which is fundamentally that used in all studies of the human soul.

The more detailed consequences of this difference are immediately apparent in St. Thomas' treatment of charity in the *Summa.* In the *Secunda Secundae* he does not even raise the question of the *an sit,* but immediately launches into a study of the *quid sit* of this virtue. The reason for this, as John of St. Thomas observes, is that he has already ascertained the *an sit*

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[63] *Ibid.* Cf. also *I-II,* 112, 5; *De Ver.,* q. 10, a. 10; *In I Sent.,* d. 17, a. 4; *In III Sent.,* d. 23, q. 1, a. 2, ad 1; *In IV Sent.,* d. 9, q. 1, a. 3, qla. 2; d. 21, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2.

[64] On the other hand, it is possible for a person to be certain that he has faith, and therefore to be certain of the existence of entities described in the content of revelation. Cf. *I-II,* 112, 5, ad 2.

in general when treating of the theological virtues in the *Prima Secundae*.[65] And when the argument which he gives there (q. 62, a. 1) is examined, it is seen to be completely consistent with what we have already said: a demonstration is constructed through final causality and by analogy with what obtains in the natural order, to show that just as moral virtues are necessary for man to attain natural beatitude, so theological virtues are necessary for him to attain supernatural beatitude. This, it should be noted, concludes not only to the *an sit*, but also to the *an sit talis*, that charity is a theological virtue, and furnishes a basic resolution into naturally knowable concepts which prepares for the further quidditative study in the *Secunda Secundae*.

The complete treatment in the latter *locus* extends through twenty-four questions, but we shall only be interested in the first two (qq. 23 and 24) where St. Thomas treats of charity *"secundum se"* and *"per comparationem ad subiectum."*[66] In q. 23, the very first article elaborates the argument already begun in the *Prima Secundae* by determining the formal cause from the specifying object of the virtue, in this case really identified with the ultimate final cause, or God Himself.[67] The remaining articles then further explicate this resolution, and also demonstrate *propter quid* certain conditions and perfections of charity which follow from its definition in the orders of final and formal causality. Then, in the first article of q. 24, the material cause or proper subject of charity is demonstrated from the formal cause (or formal specifying object). This being determined, finally, the quidditative analysis is supplemented—in the manner proper to a practical science—by a study of the efficiency involved in the production of charity, as well as in its increase and its diminution, in its proper subject.[68]

It can be seen immediately from this brief indication of St. Thomas' analytical procedure that he is following the demonstrative method of defining through a series of prior causes to which we have frequently referred in this study. The net result is a completely elaborated technical definition of charity in terms of its proper causes, insofar as these are intelligible through concepts known analogously in the order of nature. This may be

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[65] *Curs. Theol.*, De Caritate (ed. Laval), nn. 2-3.

[66] *II-II*, 23, prol.

[67] Cf. John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.*, De Caritate, (ed. Laval), nn. 5-6.

[68] John of St. Thomas notes that the material and efficient causes are treated together because of the mutual difficulties that arise from each: "Exinde explicata causa formali specificante, quae cum finali coincidit, procedit S. Thomas, quaestione 24, ad alias duas causas caritatis, scilicet materialem et efficientem, et conjungit S. Thomas considerationem istarum causarum eo quod difficultates circa unam dependent ex altera."—*Ibid.*, n. 8.

regarded as a theological explication of what is divinely revealed about charity itself, and thus as exemplifying one of the sapiential functions of the moral theologian by which he explicates through natural similitudes. Alternatively, in view of the dependence of the whole process on the divinely revealed truth of man's supernatural end, it may be regarded as another type of sapiential discourse in which one divinely revealed truth, the existence of charity itself, is seen as following demonstratively from another divinely revealed truth, the ordination of man to the personal vision of God. And apart from these sapiential functions, there are also numerous demonstrations in St. Thomas' elaboration which are more properly scientific in the sense that they deduce truths about charity that are not formally revealed, but which follow rigorously from the theological analysis involved in the rational explication of revealed truth.

A final observation suggests itself about the practical aspect of St. Thomas' development of this tract. In discussing the material objects to which the virtue of charity extends, and in taking up the question of the order to be observed in charity, he makes the transition from a purely speculative resolution to a composition in the order of practical truth. As a consequence he is able to conclude to a series of rules which can govern human action, such as the way in which man should love his own body, should love his enemies, should love his wife more than his parents, etc.[69] Apart from being an immediate practical application of the doctrine arrived at in the speculative mode, these also illustrate a sapiential function of the moral theologian by which he explicates the *practical* content of divine faith, and thereby systematizes the wide variety of precepts given in the sacred Scriptures into a consistent whole.[70] We shall have occasion to elaborate this application of speculative knowledge at greater length later when discussing practical method in moral theology, and merely note it here in passing because of its immediate connection with the sapiential demonstrative functions of the moral theologian.

D. THE LIMITS OF SPECULATIVE ANALYSIS

As should be apparent from our discussion of the speculative-practical aspects of moral science in the previous Chapters, the resolutive mode of

[69] Cf. *II-II*, 25, 1-12; 26, 1-13.

[70] For example: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you," (Matt. 5, 44) and "I have hated the unjust, and have loved thy law" (Ps. 118, 113). Or: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother and wife . . . he cannot be my disciple" (Lk. 14, 26), and "Honor thy father and thy mother" (Exod. 20, 12), "Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife" (Gen. 2, 24), and "Let every one of you in particular love for his wife as himself" (Eph. 5, 33). Cf. *II-II*, 25, 6 and 8; 26, 2 and 11.

moral theology is itself ordered to use in the compositive mode, and thus there are practical limits to the speculative analysis which will be undertaken by the moral theologian. Apart from these practical limits, however, the question can also arise as to whether there are any intrinsic limitations in the subject matter which would render further progress impossible through the use of speculative analysis. For instance, does St. Thomas' treatment of the virtues in particular in the *Secunda Secundae* exhaust all the possibilities for detailed analysis of the habits of action which constitute man's intrinsic perfection, or is this merely a summary of the principal elements which should be taught to beginners, without making any pretext at being an exhaustive analysis of the subject matter? And, if the latter, has there been any significant evolution or development in the speculative aspects of moral theology since the writing of the *Summa*, which would take modern moralists to the frontiers of knowledge, as it were, beyond which it is impossible to proceed with certitude, using the analytical method applied with such fruit in the *Summa* itself?

By way of answer to the first question, it would seem that St. Thomas himself was satisfied to delineate the virtues and vices which function most significantly in fostering or retarding man's progress towards his ultimate perfection, without thereby making any claims that he had reached the limits of speculative analysis. Like Aristotle before him, he does indicate that there are virtues of the human soul which remain unnamed, but which are associated in one way or another with the more principal virtues which he treats in detailed fashion.[71] And certainly the very detailed elaborations of various tracts that have been made by the great commentators in the Thomistic tradition show that, even in the matters treated explicitly by St. Thomas, the last word has not been said in the *Summa* itself, and that almost unlimited analyses can further be made to clarify the notions of particular virtues, as well as the relations which exist between them when considering man's operation as an organic whole. To this may be added the fact that, as one descends into the myriad details of human living, special difficulties multiply on all sides and it is theoretically possible to find a special *ratio bonitatis* which will perfect man's operation in overcoming such and such a type of difficulty, almost *ad infinitum*. The limit here thus becomes one of feasibility rather than one of theoretical possibility, and St. Thomas himself would seem to have been guided by the methodological principle set down in the *Nichomachean Ethics*, namely, that in a science which is ordered to the direction of human action, the entities studied possess little dignity in themselves, but derive their interest

[71] Cf. *II-II*, 129, 2; also *I-II*, 61, 3; *In IV Ethic.*, lect. 12, n. 792.

only from their utility in perfecting man's operation.[72] This is the sense in which it would become *vitiosum* for the moralist to spend too much time and effort on the speculative study of entities that have little bearing on man's integral moral perfection, in the measure that this might distract him from the principal end of his science, which is the actual direction of human activity to its ultimate goal.

As to the further problem of speculative progress in moral theology up to the present day, this would appear to resolve itself into the question of the speculative analysis of moral difficulties of contemporary interest, and the more fundamental question of progress made in the study of the human soul and body-soul relationships, insofar as these have special significance for the moralist. With reference to the latter, we would merely note that the entire development of modern "depth" psychology has resulted from the application of so-called "scientific method" to the study of human activity, and as such, rather than attaining the level of strict demonstration of Aristotelian science, can more properly be described as a dialectical extension of traditional rational psychology.[73] Since the moral problems connected with this development are subalternated to the psychological findings themselves, this would mean that strict demonstrative certitude would be lacking in this area, and that the moral theologian can at best make probable statements about the morality thereby implied, remaining at a dialectical level and without a demonstrative resolution to proper causes.[74]

A somewhat analogous situation would also seem to obtain with regard to special moral difficulties which have arisen in contemporary civilization. A striking example may be taken from present-day discussions about the morality of nuclear warfare. Here an answer obviously cannot be found in the *Summa*, and yet it is hard to believe that, if St. Thomas were living today, he would not have devoted himself to a detailed speculative analysis of this problem and all of its moral ramifications. When attempt-

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[72] Cf. *In II Ethic.*, lect. 2, n. 256; *In III Ethic.*, lect. 6, n. 452; *In I Ethic.*, lect. 11, n. 136; lect. 17, n. 212.

[73] For a general evaluation of modern developments in experimental science, including psychology, as related to Aristotelian demonstrative science, see: W. H. Kane, J. D. Corcoran, B. M. Ashley, R. J. Nogar, *Science in Synthesis*, (River Forest, Ill.: 1953.) Also: J. M. Marling, "The Dialectical Character of Scientific Knowledge," *Philosophical Studies in honor of the Very Rev. Ignatius Smith, O.P.* (Westminster, Md.: 1952). In this connection, it would be interesting to analyze some of St. Thomas' "psycho-somatic" arguments in the light of modern research, e.g., *II-II*, 147, 8, c. and ad 1 (cf. *In IV Sent.*, d. 15, q. 3, a. 4, sol. 2, c. and ad 1); *II-II*, 149, 4; *In IV Ethic.*, lect. 17, n. 872.

[74] Cf. M. E. Stock, "Some Moral Issues in Psychoanalysis," *Thom.* 23 (1960), pp. 143-188.

ing, however, to supply such an analysis following the method of St. Thomas, difficulties are encountered in locating the moral species of an atomic weapon because of the lack of demonstrative knowledge of the effects of radiation and other details of a purely technical nature. Again this reduces to the fact that the modern scientific development in this area lacks the certitude of Aristotelian science, and that only dialectical conclusions are possible at the moment, even though later research may yield definitive answers. As in the previous case of "depth" psychology the moralist is limited by the nature of the information given him by the psychologist, so here the moralist is limited by the information available from the physicist. Thus his speculative analysis must, in turn, terminate in a dialectical inquiry furnishing tentative or probable conclusions, which --in defect of more certain knowledge -- is of some assistance in complementing the political and military prudence of those entrusted with making a decision in the practical order.[75]

Thus it should be apparent that there are limits to which analysis in the resolutive mode can be carried, dictated on the one hand by the fact that one comes sooner or later to moral entities of secondary or tertiary importance in the attainment of man's integral perfection, and on the other hand by the fact that in areas where studies are now being carried on with great vigor, most of the resulting knowledge remains at a dialectical level and as such lacks the certitude that would be necessary for its incorporation into the demonstrative process we have been describing. The causal analysis which we have seen to be central in St. Thomas' resolutive or speculative method demands a fairly high degree of intelligibility in the subject matter itself, as well as intelligence in the one who would apply it, and as a consequence it should not be expected that it will yield significant results when applied, for example, to a study of the morality of bodily dispositions which themselves are refractory to such causal analysis. But, quite to the contrary, when applied to an analysis of the most important truths guiding man to his eternal destiny, as revealed by God Himself, this same method yields results of incomparable value for the intelligent direction of human action, and this is the principal aim of the moral theologian, and the reason why he uses such a mode of investigation in the first place.

In order the better to appreciate the nature of Thomistic speculative method and to complete the brief sketch we have here given, two final observations may be made about methodological statements that are not quite accurate descriptions of the resolutive mode treated above. The first

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[75] For a pertinent study of this type, see: H. Stirnimann, *Atomare Bewaffnung und katholische Moral*, (Freiburg/Schweiz: 1958).

concerns the assertion sometimes made that the method of moral theology is essentially a deductive one, as opposed to that of moral philosophy, whose method is said to be inductive.[76] While granting that the terms "deductive" and "inductive" can be used in a great variety of ways, and that according to some understandings there is an element of truth in this assertion,[77] we do not favor its use for the following reason. There is no way in which the whole of moral theology can be deduced from the simple fact of man's ordination to supernatural beatitude, without at the same time requiring an enormous amount of specific determination, analysis, and use of inductive procedures analogous to those of moral philosophy in the very special matters in which the moral theologian becomes involved. Thus we regard the statement as an over-simplification which can create an erroneous impression of the speculative method of moral theology, particularly by suggesting its affinity to mathematical method, with which it has almost nothing in common.

The second point has to do with the division of the *Secunda Pars* into its two major sections, the *Prima Secundae* and the *Secunda Secundae,* according to St. Thomas' statement:

> Because operations and acts are concerned with things singular, consequently all practical knowledge is incomplete unless it take account of things in detail. The study of morals, therefore, since it treats of human acts, should consider first the general principles; and secondly matters of detail.[78]

In light of this statement, some theologians seem to interpret the universal consideration of the *Prima Secundae* as being primarily a speculative one, leaving, by implication, the whole of the practical aspect of moral theology to be elaborated in the *Secunda Secundae.*[79] Again we would regard any

[76] "La méthode idéale de la philosophie morale est, non pas déductive, mais inductive; d'une induction psychologique ou métaphysique, et non d'une induction physique. La méthode de la théologie morale, au contraire, est essentiellement déductive, mais la méthode d'exposition peut être ici inductive."—O. Lottin, *Morale fondamentale,* Vol. I, p. 1.

[77] As we saw, for instance, in discussing the demonstrative method for defining charity, an *a posteriori* demonstration based on actual exercise is not used, but rather an *a priori* demonstration which has somewhat a deductive character. It should be stressed, however, that the resolution to which the latter leads is unintelligible unless it is in turn based on concepts that have been arrived at inductively and through *a posteriori* demonstration.

[78] *I-II,* 6, prol. (trans. English Dominicans).

[79] John of St. Thomas, for example, teaches: "Si vero scientia moralis secludat prudentiam, et solum tractat de materia virtutum definiendo, dividendo, etc., est speculativa, sicut fit in theologia, in *Prima Secundae*....."—*Curs. Philosophicus,* Ars Logica, II p., q. 1, a. 4, circa finem. O. Lottin holds a similar position: "La

such division of method according to the subject treated, in this general way, as a gross simplification. Following the analogy of what we have already pointed out to be the speculative method of moral philosophy, which is not concerned merely with the most general questions about human action and virtues, but must inquire into the quiddity of each individual virtue and *species specialissima* of human action, we would insist that the resolutive, or speculative, method of moral theology must be continued throughout the entire *Secunda Pars*. Granted that the matters treated in the *Secunda Secundae* are closer to direct application, this does not exempt them from the scientific analysis which bares their speculative truth to the intellect, and prepares for the direction of human action in the practical mode.

We would maintain, therefore, that the whole *Secunda Pars* is truly speculative, and employs a resolutive mode. Our understanding of this, however, is not such as to exclude that the whole *Secunda Pars* is also truly practical, and is directly usable in the compositive mode, as we are now about to see.

II. PRACTICAL METHOD IN MORAL THEOLOGY

In the order of speculation, it is frequently possible to treat interchangeably of the habit of mind by which the truths of a science are attained, and such truths themselves, without thereby falling into serious error. Thus it is possible to say that the body of knowledge contained in the *Secunda Pars* is itself the science of moral theology, and even that a resolutory process is to be found in the *Summa*. When transition is made to the order of practice, however, this identification cannot be made, if only because of the fact that the end of practical knowledge is not truth but operation. Thus it would be improper to say that the *Summa* contains practical truth in all its perfection, or that the compositive mode by which the latter is attained is found directly in the *Secunda Pars*. In the fullest sense of the term, as we have already seen, practical truth is only attained *in actu exercito* in the person imperating a human action. It might be said, however, and with good reason, that practical truth is found *in actu signato* in the *Summa*, and even that the compositive mode by which the latter is attained is to be seen there, in the sense that universal principles are

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science morale est à la fois théorique et pratique. De là une division fondamentale: s'enquérir d'abord de la théorie de la moralité, c'est-à-dire des conditions nécessaire pour qu'un acte humain soit moralement bon; envisager ensuite la pratique de la moralité, à savoir la manière dont s'acquiert et s'organise une vie moralement bonne. De là deux parties: la théorie de la vie morale; la pratique de la vie morale."—*Morale fondamentale*, I, 26. See also L.-B. Gillon, "Morale et science," *Ang.* 35 (1958) pp. 255-257.

applied to particular moral matters and definite rules given which can guide human action. Insofar as the latter indicate what should be done or avoided, they already have been composed with the first principles of synderesis—to say nothing of the more proximate scientific principles which indicate why they should so influence action—and in this sense are both practical and, at least implicitly, in the compositive mode.

Because of the difficulties which might easily arise from confusing the practical method of moral theology as exercised by one who possesses the theological habit, with the results of a practical method as expressed in the text of the *Summa* itself, we shall henceforth restrict our treatment to the method by which the moral theologian himself applies the truths he has reached in speculative fashion. Thus the sense in which we make the statement that the whole of the *Secunda Pars* is truly practical is that all of its matter is directly *usable* in the compositive mode characteristic of practical discourse—and this is true of the *Prima Secundae* as well as the *Secunda Secundae,* although we recognize that the latter, as already "composed" in some way, is more proximate to application.[80] Here, too, it should be noted that there is a variety of ways in which such use or application can be made by the moral theologian: for instance, in guiding his own action, in personally directing other souls to eternal salvation, in preaching, in teaching others moral theology or Christian doctrine. Since we shall consider these details of application in one of the following sections, we shall content ourselves now with a summary exposition similar to our discussion of the practical mode of moral philosophy—which can be most perfectly exemplified in the moral theologian's direction of his own action—and shall leave more specialized uses for later discussion.

A. THE PRACTICAL CHARACTER OF MORAL THEOLOGY

The practical nature of moral theology derives from its concern with the direction of human action, and therefore with its study of the operable

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[80] "Après la primauté de la béatitude, nul n'est plus remarquable, dans la *IIa Pars* que sa division en étude générale et en étude spéciale. Aucun auteur précédent ne nous annonça rien de pareil. Saint Thomas estime cet ordre de la démarche conforme aux exigences propres d'une science pratique. . . . Dans les sciences de l'opération on applique au singulier les principes généraux qui le règlent, selon une méthode que l'on peut appeler synthétique, puisqu'elle va du simple au composé. Si même il n'est point facile de maintenir uniformément une telle ligne de partage, la *Ia IIae* et la *IIa IIae* dans leur ensemble répondent aux deux temps successifs selon lesquels se constitue en droit une science pratique."—T. Deman, *Aux origines de la théologie morale,* 105-106. Cf. also: R. Martin, "De ratione et valore scientifico doctrinae moralis S. Thomae Aquinatis," *ETL* 1 (1924), 350.

in the supernatural order precisely as such.[81] Such a study, as we have seen, does not exclude a preparatory speculative investigation of such an operable as non-operable, or even a study of such non-operable entities as might be necessary for a proper understanding of how supernatural human action is to be regulated.[82] Yet, in the final analysis, moral theology is practical only in the measure that it conduces to virtuous Christian living, to the production of human acts that will lead ultimately to the beatific vision.

In accomplishing this end, moral theology furnishes *"aliquod auxilium"* to the placing of a virtuous supernatural act in much the same fashion as moral philosophy renders assistance in the natural order. There are, however, at least two differences that are noteworthy, and which serve to highlight the superiority of moral theology in the practical order when compared with a purely natural ethics. The first has to do with the special aid it receives from divinely revealed truth. We have already mentioned how much simpler and more straightforward the speculative method of moral science becomes when illuminated by the light of faith. This is not only reflected into the practical order, but also augmented in a special way by the many precepts, rules and counsels that are contained in the deposit of revelation.[83] Human judgment itself, unaided by divine faith, is uncertain, hesitant, and quite fallible as it descends to the singular and the concrete, and this is one reason given by St. Thomas to explain why God has revealed His divine law for the guidance of human action unerringly to its supernatural goal.[84] The moral theologian, then, subjecting these practical principles to scientific analysis, has an infinitely superior source of certain knowledge of the rules which should guide man's activity, com-

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[81] I, 1, 5; 14, 16, ad arg. sed contra.

[82] "Sciendum tamen quod non est inconveniens aliquam esse scientiam simpliciter practicam, et tamen aliquod objectum eius minus principale nullo modo esse operabile a sciente, sicut patet de scientia morali, quae in aliqua sui parte agit de potentiis animae. Scientia ergo dicitur simpliciter speculativa, cuius principale objectum est non operabile a sciente, et finis ejus est consideratio veritatis; sed illa dicitur simpliciter practica, cuius principale objectum est a sciente operabile, et ejus finis est operari." Capreolus, *Defensiones*, prol. Sent., q. 2, a. 1, 2a concl.

[83] Apart from precepts and counsels, revelation also furnishes us with the details of the life of Christ, the Divine Exemplar, on whom we can pattern our lives in very concrete fashion, to say nothing of the added example given by His Blessed Mother, the patriarchs, prophets and apostles.

[84] "Propter incertitudinem humani iudicii, praecipue de rebus contingentibus et particularibus, contingit de actibus humanis diversorum esse diversa iudicia, ex quibus etiam diversae et contrariae leges procedunt. Ut ergo homo absque omni dubitatione scire possit quid ei sit agendum et quid vitandum, necessarium fuit ut in actibus propriis dirigeretur per legem divinitus datam, de qua constat quod non potest errare."—*I-II*, 94, 4.

pared to what is available to the moral philosopher. The latter, for instance, beginning dialectically and arguing from the commonly-received opinions of men, might have considerable difficulty establishing—in some societies, at any rate—that adultery or fornication is contrary to reason and will not attain the *bonum humanum*. The moral theologian, on the other hand, knows this immediately from divine law, and consequently has a vastly superior starting point for the elaboration of his science precisely as practical.[85]

The second difference is closely connected with this, although it gets down to a more fundamental diversity between the natural and the supernatural orders. Supernatural habits, in general, differ from natural ones in that they do not merely perfect a human faculty so that it operates easily and well to produce its proper act. They also give it the ability to *operate* in the supernatural order, and because of this, are as much similar to the faculties themselves as they are to the natural virtues or habits with which such faculties can become endowed.[86] This means that in the order of knowledge, where the human intellect is a natural faculty that is both speculative and practical, supernatural habits will confer the ability to know supernaturally in both the speculative and practical modes, i.e., to know eternal truths, and to know how to direct action according to such truths.[87]

From such a consideration, we gain a deeper insight into the truth of the statement that sacred theology, while only one habit, is at once both speculative and practical after the manner of the supernatural virtues and

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[85] "Synderesis hanc proponit: omne malum est vitandum; ratio superior hanc assumit: adulterium est malum, quia lege Dei prohibitum. . . ."—*In II Sent.*, d. 24, q. 2, a. 4; cf. also *De Ver.*, q. 6, a. 1, ad 9. It is interesting to note in this connection that Cajetan, in treating of fornication in his *Summula Peccatorum*, states very succinctly what he considers the essential matter for a confessor to know on the subject: "Fornicatio (hoc est concubitus naturalis soluti cum soluta) peccatum mortale est: dicente Apostolo quod excludit a regno Dei, ad Gal., v." (ed. 1526, p. 280).

[86] "Habitus supernaturales habent vicem potentiae. In hoc enim distinguuntur a naturalibus, quod habitus naturales ponuntur ut melius et facilius producatur actus, non ut simpliciter producatur: habitus vero supernaturales ponuntur ad simpliciter operandum, quoniam potentia naturalis secundum suam naturam non habet virtutem ad producendum illum."—D. Bañez, *In I*, 88, 3, ad 3. Cited by Ramirez, III, 216, fn. 132.

[87] "Habitus supernaturales, vel originati ab illis, induunt modum potentiae, et afficiunt potentiam intellectivam tam quoad rationem speculativam, quam practicam; potentia autem intellectiva simul est speculativa et practica; et ita habitus ille superioris ordinis, quia ad modum potentiae se habet, et totam eam informat, tam ut est practica quam ut est speculativa, simul etiam induit rationem practici et speculativi: non eo modo quo est in habitibus inferioribus, sed ad illum modum quo est in potentia. Sic colligitur ex D. Thoma, II-II, 52, 2, ad 2. . . . ."—John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.*, In I, 1, disp. 2, a. 10, n. 9.

gifts.[88] It gains this advantage precisely from the influx of divine faith, which itself is both speculative and practical, and in its latter aspect confers a special efficacy on the theologian's direction of human affairs which is even comparable to that of infused prudence. John of St. Thomas makes the latter point in a passage that is worth noting:

> The principles of theology are things revealed through faith. Faith, however, not only believes that God is the first truth (which pertains to speculation), but also knows Him as the end to whose attainment we are directed (which pertains to practice). For this reason many precepts, both moral and ceremonial, are contained in Scripture. But theology is concerned, by way of discourse, with all those things with which faith and Scripture are concerned by way of belief. Therefore it is not only concerned speculatively with truth, but directively and practically with the end and means and precepts given by God, and in such a way that it enjoys eminently the force of prudence. Nor does it consist merely in speculation, but also directs in practice, for as St. Thomas says in the place cited (II-II, 9, 3), 'through the science of things to be believed and what follows from them, we are directed in our actions.' What follows from things to be believed is what theology deduces as conclusions known through what is believed by faith.[89]

Such a unity of principle from which moral theology proceeds, then, enables it to have a very intimate and intrinsic regulation of the practical order at the supernatural level, which is only imperfectly mirrored in the normative direction given to moral philosophy by the natural habit of synderesis.[90]

In light of these considerations, it can be seen how sacred theology, although *per se prima* speculative and only *per se secundo* practical, is even so *more* practical than natural ethics. The habit of faith on which it depends, moreover, puts it in contact with an object and an end that is infinitely more

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[88] "Theologia nostra, propterea quod est altioris ordinis, quamvis principaliter et primatio consistat in contemplatione Veritatis, tamen etiam per se secundo extenditur ad actiones per quas homo dirigitur ad assecutionem perfectae contemplationis Primae Veritatis."—D. Bañez, In I, 1, 6, ad 3. Cited by Ramirez, III, 214, fn. 120.

[89] *Curs. Theol.*, In I, 1, disp. 2, a. 10, n. 10.

[90] "Sic in istis habitibus (scil., supernaturalibus) speculativum est radix et fundamentum practici, non tamquam regula extrinseca, sed tamquam intrinseca: id est, ut conveniens eidem habitui, sicut eidem potentiae convenit speculativum et practicum; et ipsa ratio speculativi est fundamentum practici, non tamquam regula extrinseca ipsi potentiae, sed in eadem potentia fundata, et quadam extensione rationem practici habens."—*Ibid.*, n. 9. Thus John of St. Thomas sees no difficulty in maintaining the practical character of moral theology, despite his reservations about the practical character of moral philosophy. See *supra*, p. 152, fn. 137.

efficacious in moving to action than any truth that is knowable to reason alone.[91] Moral philosophy disposes to, and gives some assistance for, the acquisition and perfection of moral virtue. Moral theology, on the other hand, proposes truths to the human mind that are much more proportioned to move the will towards God, to incite the divine love of charity, which alone is efficacious to attain supernatural beatitude.[92] Whence we have a further insight into the affective side of moral theology, and why it can with good reason be called the "*scientia caritatis*."

B. MORAL THEOLOGY AND THE SUPERNATURAL VIRTUES

For a more precise understanding of the role of moral theology in the production of the supernatural act, and therefore for a better comprehension of its practical character and method, it will be necessary now to locate moral theology with reference to the theological and infused virtues, as we have already done for moral philosophy in relation to synderesis, prudence and the acquired moral virtues. Moral theology occupies an intermediate position between faith as practical—also referred to as supernatural synderesis—and infused prudence,[93] and therefore plays an analogous role in the direction of the supernatural human act to that which natural ethics plays in the purely human order.[94] Yet there are differences

[91] "Pariter sacra theologia est magis practica quam ethica, utpote de meliori objecto et fine et meliori medio procedens; finis enim theologiae 'in quantum est practica, est beatitudo aeterna, ad quam sicut ad ultimum finem ordinantur omnes alii fines scientiarum practicarum' (*I*, 1, 5): quanto autem finis contemplatus altior et melior est, tanto profundius et efficacius natus est movere voluntatem."—Ramirez, *III*, 226.

[92] "Sicut igitur theologia est potius contemplativa quam speculativa, ita etiam potius est affectiva quam activa, ut est philosophia moralis; quia potius movet ad caritatem erga Deum quam ad virtutes mere morales, ad quas solum movet moralis philosophia. Quin etiam tanto est magis affectiva quanto est magis contemplativa seu cognoscitiva, quia tanto magis et melius cognoscit bonitatem proprii obiecti, quod Deus est. Qua de causa, omnis actus theologiae circa omnem sui materiam natus est, quantum de se est, provocare affectum voluntatis erga Deum, et nisi impedimentum adsit ex parte theologi, semper illum excitat."—*Ibid.*

[93] "Theologia moralis media essentialiter cadit inter synderesim supernaturalem, quae est fides ut practica est, et prudentiam infusam, atque ideo conclusiones universales emit ex principiis syndereseos, quae simul principia sunt prudentiae infusae vel saltem acquisitae ut elevandae et illustrandae per altiora principia quam conclusiones philosophiae moralis."—Ramirez, *I*, 79-80.

[94] "Ad tertium respondetur, quod quemadmodum synderesis non necessitat voluntatem, quamvis ipsa maneat in eo, qui peccat contra legem naturae: ita etiam fides manet in peccatore, tamquam causa, et regula bonae operationis quantum est ex natura sua. Sed adverte, quod sicut synderesis est regula universalis bonae operationis, et applicatur in singulari hic et nunc mediante prudentia et recta intentione: ita etiam fides est quaedam synderesis supernaturalis, quae non operatur attingendo finem hic et nunc (nisi) mediante charitate et prudentia infusa."—D. Bañez, *In II-II*, 4, 2, ad 3.

which arise from the theological virtues of hope and charity, with the latter's influence on faith to make it either formed or unformed, which we shall now proceed to take into account.

In the natural order, as we have seen, man possesses certain inclinations to his own proper perfection which manifest themselves through the habit of synderesis in his intellect, through the tendency of his will towards the good in general, and through the tendencies of his sense appetites to their proper objects. These inclinations, when allowed to exercise themselves under the control of practical reason, naturally channelize into habits of action which are called the acquired moral virtues: prudence, in the practical intellect, informing and regulating the others, each of which is concerned with a particular matter - justice, in the will, controlling human operations with others, fortitude and temperance in the sense appetites, moderating the latter's inclinations. Moral philosophy or natural ethics, as a practical habit, is located midway between synderesis and acquired prudence. It can exist in an imperfect state without prudence and its accompanying moral virtue, and then it can have some efficacy working with synderesis to produce the reasonable act; or it can exist in a perfect state with prudence and moral virtue, and then it directs and confirms the prudential judgment, and in turn, through the latter, itself attains practical truth and certitude about the singular operable, which is its primary concern as a practical science.

In the supernatural order, by way of contrast, human nature itself is perfected by grace, which produces supernatural inclinations proportioned to man's supernatural end, and endows his faculties with supernatural habits which themselves are equivalent to faculties in the natural order.[95] Thus in his intellect he has the theological virtue of faith, which furnishes him with principles of action in conformity with the divine law to attain his supernatural end, while in his will he has the theological virtues of hope and charity, which, unlike the undetermined inclination of the will to the good in general, incline him to a very concrete and determined end, i.e., God Himself.[96] With charity, moreover, are also infused supernatural virtues corresponding to the acquired moral virtues, namely, infused prudence in the practical intellect, infused justice in the will, and infused fortitude and temperance in the sense appetites. The latter are said to be informed by charity insofar as they are impelled by charity, as it were, to a divine end which transcends the temporal matter with which they deal. At the same time, however, infused prudence, itself directed by faith and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, finds the mean of reason for infused justice, fortitude and

[95] For a study of the precise relation between the infused virtues and grace, see: C. Williams, *De multiplici virtutum forma*, 118-135.

[96] *De Ver.*, q. 14, a. 3, ad 9. Cf. also *De Virt. in comm.*, q. un., a. 8, ad 13.

temperance in particular actions, and thus the latter are also said to be informed by infused prudence in a manner completely analogous to the information of the acquired moral virtues by acquired prudence.[97] Because of the primary motivating force of charity, finally, all of the supernatural virtues are said to be connected through it, and, on that account, cannot exist without it. Still it is possible for the sinner to have an imperfect faith and hope, referred to as "unformed" because not informed by charity, and as such lacking the movement of the will necessary for meritorious action towards supernatural beatitude.[98]

Apart from this general relation of charity to the supernatural virtues, it is noteworthy that faith is also said to be the form of these virtues insofar as they are knowable by us, because it is through faith that we know what is virtuous in the supernatural order, even though we cannot operate virtuously without charity.[99] And similarly, faith has a special order to infused prudence which has no counterpart in the relation between synderesis and acquired prudence. Because it puts man in contact with the entire divine law, it can direct prudence in many details of supernatural living which are very concrete and specific, and, as such, escape direction by the most general principles of the practical order knowable to unaided reason.[100]

In this rather complex structure of virtues, moral theology, precisely as practical, occupies a position similar to that of moral philosophy between synderesis and prudence, except that its perfection or imperfection depends directly on the presence of charity, and not merely on that of prudence and acquired moral virtue. Its speculative aspect, like that of a natural ethics, can be acquired without any dependence on charity or the infused virtues, but we are not concerned now with this aspect; rather we are concerned with the practical phase of moral theology, where demonstrated knowledge is to be *used* in the direction of human action. In such an understanding, moral theology as it exists in the sinner, who lacks charity and is imprudent, is imperfect in very much the same way as unformed faith is imperfect in

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97 Thus Cajetan speaks of the "bonum supernaturale" as also "bonum rationis." See *In II-II*, 136, 1, nn. 2 and 4. For details of the comparison between charity and prudence as the form of the virtues, see: C. Williams, *De multiplici virtutum forma*, 111-118.

98 Cf. *II-II*, 4, 3-5; 17, 2, ad 2.

99 *De Caritate*, q. un., a. 3, ad 11.

100 "La loi divine ira donc jusqu'à prescrire les actes intéressant la fin surnaturelle de l'homme. Ni la loi naturelle ni la loi humaine qui en dérive ne pourvoient à une perfection de cette sorte; il appartenait à Dieu seul et à sa révélation d'y ordonner l'homme par des préceptes appropriés. La prudence infuse s'inspirera donc de telles règles. Elle prendra en considération la loi divine en ce celle-ci a de distinctif."—T. Deman, *Prudence*, p. 444.

the sinner.[101] It still is an intellectual habit concerned with knowledge that itself has a *per se* ordination to operation, but it lacks the charitable motivation of the will and the prudent application in a concrete situation necessary for it effectively to produce the singular operable.[102] Nevertheless, like ethics in the imprudent man, it can dispose to virtuous operation insofar as it cooperates with and perfects the practical principles known by unformed faith—or unformed supernatural synderesis—and this in much better fashion than moral philosophy, because of the greater specific detail of its knowledge of such principles.

In the theologian who possesses charity and the infused virtues, moral theology reaches its full perfection in the practical order.[103] Because taking its direction from informed faith, it is assured of the rectitude of the will and an infallible ordination to man's ultimate end, and on this account, observes Bañez, is even more practical than moral philosophy.[104] Like the latter, it

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[101] "Et cum dicitur quod potest aliquis esse theologus, et valde imprudens et peccator: respondetur quod tunc manet theologia *sine exercitio* practico et extensione actuali ad res practicas, non tamen sine essentiali ratione practici; sicut etiam fides potest dari in peccatore sine hoc quod actu se extendat ad exercitium practicum, sive ad virtutes: quod est amittere, non aliquam perfectionem intrinsecam, sed solum extensionem actualem et exercitium circa *ordinationem et regulationem* practicam virtutum. Eodem modo se habet theologia, quae in peccatore solum amittit actualem extensionem, *et exercitium practicum* circa regulationem prudentiae et virtutum."—John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.*, In I, I, disp. 2, a. 10, n. 17.

[102] Cf. *II-II*, 47, 13, ad 2.

[103] In this connection, a recent work by G. Gilleman is noteworthy for its attempt to show how charity itself should animate all of moral theology. The author states: "Les trois remarques que nous venons de faire sur notre point de départ nous permettent de situer notre travail et de lui assigner son but: Rechercher *théologiquement* le moyen d'appliquer *à toute* la formulation de la morale le principe universel de saint Thomas: 'Caritas forma omnium virtutum'; établir donc les principes d'une méthode qui reconnaisse explicitement à la charité, dans la *formulation* de la théologie morale, la même fonction vitale qu'elle exerce dans la réalité de la vie chrétienne et dans la révélation du Christ: non pas un rôle qu'elle jouerait parallèlement à d'autres réalités morales, mais un rôle d'âme, *d'animation*, qui s'exerce sur un plan plus profond que tout acte ou toute vertu déterminée."—*Le primat de la charité en théologie morale: essai méthodologique*. (Bruxelles/Bruges/Paris, 2 éd.: 1954), p. 17. Unfortunately the author's neglect of the virtue of prudence vitiates in large part the value of his contribution towards clarifying the role of moral theology in directing human action. While it will be granted by all that charity is essential for the integral perfection of the theologian, particularly as he proceeds in the practical mode, it still is necessary that his scientific analysis and his personal prudence show him the charitable thing to do in any concrete situation. For examples, see *infra*, pp. 208-212; also fn. 134.

[104] "Nostra theologia adhuc magis practica dicitur quam philosophia moralis, quia principia theologiae habentur ex fide, quae est quasi supernaturalis synderesis et ex propria specie, si perfecta est, postulat rectitudinem voluntatis, iuxta illud quod docet S. Thomas, *II-II*, 4, 2, et 3, et praesertim in 5, ubi ait: ad hoc quod actus fidei sit perfectus, requiritur ut voluntas infallibiliter ordinetur ad ultimum finem."—*In I*, 1, 5, ad 4; cited by Ramirez, III, 226.

too must be complemented by prudence in order to attain practical truth in all its perfection, but because of the superior source from which it takes its principles, it can be more effective than moral philosophy in the direction it gives to prudence itself.[105] Infused prudence, it is true, immediately governs the concrete operable, but it also supposes the perfection of the practical intellect by the virtues and the gifts in every possible way, and especially does it depend on moral theology to systematize and interpret the wide variety of precepts contained in divine revelation.[106] The moral theologian, then, at once endowed with prudence, whose judgment he reinforces with his science, and the whole train of supernatural virtues, can attain to practical truth and certitude in a most eminent way, and thus possesses the most practical knowledge available in the human mode for the direction of man's operation to its ultimate goal.

C. MORAL THEOLOGY AND THE SINGULAR OPERABLE

The precise way in which moral theology attains the singular operable now merits attention, not only to complete what has just been said about its relation to prudence, but also to locate casuistry and so-called "existential ethics" with reference to moral theology and prudence, and to prepare the way for the exposition of the certitude proper to moral theology which is to follow.

One way in which moral theology treats directly of singular events need not concern us here, but since it is pointed out by St. Thomas in connection with the scientific character of sacred theology, may be mentioned in passing. This is the actual use of happenings which are known through divine revelation to serve as examples of how man should act in order to obtain his proper end: such examples then can excite the will and have considerable motivating force in the production of virtuous acts.[107] In this

[105] "La prudence n'est donc pas moins empressée à s'inspirer des conclusions de la science morale que des lois positives. Où elle cesse d'être commandée, il lui reste d'être dirigée." T. Deman, *Prudence*, p. 438.

[106] "De toute manière, on le voit, la prudence est loin de se suffire. Elle n'est que la raison pratique en sa point extrême, où s'opère l'insertion des connaissances morales dans le particulier. Elle présuppose donc une raison pratique perfectionnée selon toutes les fonctions attribuables à cette faculté."—*Ibid.*, p. 440.

[107] "Singularia traduntur in sacra doctrina, non quia de eis principaliter tractetur: sed introducuntur tum in exemplum vitae, sicut in scientiis moralibus; tum etiam ad declarandum auctoritatem virorum per quos ad nos revelatio divina processit, super quam fundatur sacra scriptura seu doctrina."—*I*, 1, 2, ad 2. "(Sacra scriptura) proceditur etiam ad instructionem morum: unde quantum ad hoc modus eius debet esse praeceptivus, sicut in lege; comminatorius et promissivus, ut in prophetis; et narrativus exemplorum, ut in historialibus."—*In I Sent.*, q. 1 prol., a. 5.

way they themselves, as a part of moral theology, have some influence on the singular operable, but not the direct one which is our major interest.

The latter is rather the sense in which moral theology, as a practical science in the compositive mode, attains to the singular contingent in all its particularity, in accordance with St. Thomas' statement:

> Every operative science is the more perfect, the more it considers the particular things with which action is concerned.[108]

This is precisely the problem we have already examined at length in connection with moral philosophy. We would now apply our previous solution to the theological order, and at the same time take account of the role of casuistry in the compositive process of the moral theologian, as well as recent developments in "existential ethics," which is currently being proposed as a necessary complement to the traditional moral doctrine we have already described.

1. CASUISTRY

Casuistry itself is usually regarded either as an adjunct to, or as an integral part of, moral theology, and derives its name from the fact that it is a study of "cases," or specific problems relating to particular and concrete instances of human conduct. In its more specialized development it can become involved in extremely complex "cases of conscience,"[109] whose solution, say in matters of justice, require an extensive knowledge of civil law, finance, economics, sociology, etc., apart from the normal tracts in moral theology—all of which is necessary to weigh the circumstances of the case and determine the moral obligations falling on the individuals involved. Apart from all its complexity, however, in essence it is nothing more than an attempt to determine the morality, or practical truth, of a singular action which might confront an individual, taking into account all the factors that can be envisaged as relevant to the situation. The solu-

[108] *I*, 22, 3, ad 1 (trans. English Dominicans) Cf. also *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 1152.

[109] Casuistry has frequently been discussed in the context of problems of conscience, particularly by writers of the Society of Jesus who adopt a moral system in which conscience plays a central role. Our discussion, on the other hand, is presented in a context in which the virtue of prudence is treated as of primary importance in determining individual morality, with conscience playing a derived and secondary role. For a neutral discussion of the two alternative moral systems, see: G. Leclercq, *La conscience du chrétien*, (Paris: 1947), pp. 73-125. For a justification of the position we have adopted, on both historical and doctrinal grounds, see the scholarly article of T. Deman, "Probabilisme," in the *DTC*, 13-1, coll. 417-619. Cf. also M. Labourdette, "Théologie morale," *RT* 50 (1950), 222. St. Thomas' principal teaching on conscience is contained in *De Ver.*, q. 17; *In II Sent.*, d. 24, q. 2, a. 4; *I*, 79, 13.

tion that might be reached is then not the same as a prudential judgment, because it is not made by the individual agent who judges with reference to the rectitude of his appetites in this determined situation; as a consequence, it can at best be regarded as "preparing the way" for a prudential judgment, without replacing the latter itself.[110]

One way of characterizing the singular operable which is considered in the casuistic analysis is to say that the latter is concerned with the *individuum vagum,* which is a technical term used to designate a subject, conceived universally but precisely under the aspect of its particularity, without connoting thereby a determined individual.[111] An instance of such a usage would be to speak of "some man" or "a certain man" if one wished to indicate something which belonged only to an individual, but without attributing the characteristic to any precise person.[112] Such a designation is thus quite accurate for the singular action which is studied by the casuist, for it is singular or individual only in the vague sense of the *individuum vagum,* and is not really the singular operable of the existential order in which the compositive process of a practical science must terminate.

If one were to analyze, moreover, the factors which contribute to the successful solution of such cases, it would be found that they are solved not only by the use of universal principles drawn from moral theology, but also by the application of particular rules which have been verified through repeated use and are known to give workable solutions *ut in pluribus.*[113] Such rules are gradually formulated by those who have experience in directing souls and in solving cases of conscience, and on that account have some similarity with the practical principles mentioned in the *Nichomachean Ethics,* which derive from those who are elderly, experienced, and prudent in the direction of human affairs, and which we have already pointed out as making an excellent dialectical beginning for the elaboration of a moral science in the strict sense.

Returning now to our previous analysis of how moral science attains the singular operable as such, we have shown that it does so only when proceeding in the compositive mode of a practical science, and that in order to do so, it must be complemented by, and actually taken in conjunction with, a prudential judgment which directly imperates and brings into existence the human act. We have further explained how the prudential judgment itself immediately attains practical truth and certitude about this in-

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[110] Cf. T. Deman, *Prudence,* p. 513; O. Lottin, *Morale fondamentale,* I, pp. 11-12.

[111] *In I Periherm.,* lect. 10, n. 13.

[112] *I,* 30, 4. Cf. also *In IV Sent.,* d. 11, q. 1, a. 3; *In I Phys.,* lect. 13, n. 9.

[113] Cf. O. Lottin, *Morale fondamentale,* Vol. I, p. 12.

tended action, while moral science attains only a mediate practical truth and certitude, which gives assurance that the contemplated singular action is conformed to a general rule telling what should be done *per se* by any virtuous human being in similar circumstances, to attain his proper perfection. Both of these conclusions are now transposable to the supernatural order, with moral theology taking the place of moral science, and infused prudence that of acquired prudence or the prudential judgment. Apart from the more detailed practical knowledge that moral theology receives from the content of revelation, and the greater efficacy of its direction from the fact that its truths are proportioned to evoke charitable acts, it must still be completed by a personal judgment made in conformity with appetites of the individual, and which as such is not universal and therefore outside the scope of moral theology.

To locate casuistry, now, with reference to moral theology and infused prudence, it would appear to be nothing more than the extreme point to which moral theology can go, when proceeding in the practical mode, in order to give direction to concrete human action.[114] The fact that it is seemingly concerned with an individual case should not obscure the universal character of the conclusion to which the casuist comes: the individual is the *individuum vagum* which itself is a universal, although conceived under the aspect of a certain particularity.[115] And although the conclusion is offered as workable *ut in pluribus*, it should also be observed that this is not an indictment of its scientific character. The precise nature of practical truth, at the level at which it is reached in *any* practical science, is that it will be workable *ut in pluribus*, and this is necessary for it to leave some latitude in application because of individual differences of disposition and

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114 "Il semble donc que la morale spéculative ou universelle se différencie de la morale pratique ou particulière comme la science de l'espèce se différencie de la science de l'individu 'vague' ou indéterminé, tandis que tel individu concret ou déterminé ne tombe pas sous la connaissance scientifique mais sous la connaissance simplement expérimentale. De sorte que la morale spéculative considère directement les espèces morales de l'acte humain, la morale pratique, ses individus 'vagues' ou indéterminés; la prudence, ses individus déterminés ou concrets. Et l'on sait que la science de l'individu 'vague' et celle de l'espèce est une même science; personne ne dira qu'une psychologie considère l'âme humaine et une autre le principe de son individuation; c'est une extension de la même psychologie." — J. Ramirez, "Sur l'organisation . . . ," *BT* 12 (1935), p. 426.

115 "Ubi ergo est materia propria pro scientia morali practice-practica?—Nisi ponantur individua vaga seu indeterminata inter species infimas et individua signata, sicut sunt actus individui quos casuistae considerare solent; —et hanc portionem materiae suggerebam D. Maritain in mea recensione pro sua morali practice-practica.—Sed, ut ibidem animadvertebam, ad eandem scientiam specie pertinet considerare species infimas et individua vaga sicut et genera eius suprema."—J. Ramirez, "De philosophia morali christiana," *DTF* 14 (1936), p. 107.

singular circumstance in the concrete case.[116] It may happen, of course, that a particular casuist does not reach a conclusion in a scientific way, in the sense that he argues from probable rules and commonly-received opinions, and then he is functioning in a dialectical and pre-scientific mode. Or, on the other hand, it may happen that even though he approaches the problem with all the resources of a completely elaborated speculative moral theology, he is not able to resolve the case to his own satisfaction because of its singular difficulty, and must give an answer of which he is not completely certain even at the level of the *individuum vagum*—and then he has merely a dialectical extension of his scientific knowledge.[117] But in either event his judgment as a theologian does not touch, or actually imperate, the singular operable of the existential order; it is a judgment that is one level removed from that of personal prudence, and as such more properly pertains to moral science than it does to prudence itself.

Still it must be admitted, as John of St. Thomas observes, that moral theology itself is a type of prudence, *"non proxime et formaliter, sed directive et architectonice."*[118] Precisely as deriving from divine faith as practical, it has the role of directing prudence in a much more intimate way than moral philosophy; it must analyze, explicate and interpret those things which are contained in the deposit of revelation relating to moral formation and instruction.[119] Because of the superiority of its principles, moreover, it gives greater assistance to the prudential judgment than do the virtues of synesis and gnome. In fact, one of its tasks is that of ordering the judgments of these virtues in the light of revealed truth, to give the most enlightenment possible to the last practical judgment. Itself not the imperating and applying factor in human action, it can nevertheless be rightly called a *proxima regula praxis* with the function even of ordering and regulating the prudential judgment.[120] And in this sense, at least, casuistry can also be called a type of prudence—not that it takes the place of the imperating judgment in the *individuum determinatum*, but that it represents the closest approach of moral theology to this judgment, and therefore to the perfection of practical truth itself.

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[116] "La science morale, en tant que science, descend jusqu'à l'individu indéterminé de l'acte humain, et . . . la prudence remonte jusqu'à celui-ci en lui donnant l'ultime détermination individuelle, d'où résulte un individu concret ou déterminé."—J. Ramirez, "Sur l'organisation. . . ," *BT* 12 (1935), p. 427.

[117] A case in point would be the morality of atomic weapons, as we have already mentioned, because of the lack of technical information necessary to give a definitive answer.

[118] *Curs. Theol.*, In I, I, disp. 2, a. 10, n. 17.

[119] *Ibid.*

[120] *Ibid.*, n. 23.

2. EXISTENTIAL ETHICS

Quite recently, in this connection, some theologians have proposed to improve on such a conception of the relation between moral theology and prudence by innovating a type of "existential ethics" which will extend the treatment of moral theology all the way to this *individuum determinatum*, to ascertain the norms of moral conduct which are not merely general ones, but are directly applicable to the existent individual.[121] This proposal, it should be noted, is not to be identified with that of the "existentialist ethics" of Christian moral philosophy, which makes no claim to descend to the concrete singular, but proposes to remain at a general or scientific level. Rather it has its roots in contemporary existentialist philosophy and phenomenological method, and aims at a new type of knowledge in the moral order, and attaining directly to the "moral imperative" for the individual person in all his individuality.[122] Since this proposal suggests a goal that is impossible of attainment according to the doctrine we have just elaborated, it will be worthwhile to examine it here briefly, at least for the negative assistance it gives in understanding the relation of moral theology to the concrete, singular operable.

The proponents of this theory maintain that it is different from the "situation ethics" that has come under ecclesiastical condemnation, but that at the same time it preserves the kernel of truth to be found in the latter teaching.[123] Its ontological basis is ultimately to be found in the great dignity and individuality of the human soul, which possesses an actuality and perfection not to be found in the generalized concepts used to describe it,

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[121] Cf. K. Rahner, "Ueber die Frage einer formalen Existentialethik," *Schriften zur Theologie*, Vol. 2, pp. 227-246; F. Böckle, "Bestrebungen in der Moraltheologie," *Fragen der Theologie heute*, pp. 443-444; J. Fuchs, *Situation und Entscheidung. Grundfragen christlicher Situationsethik* (Frankfurt: 1952), pp. 69-92.

[122] For the general background of the influence of phenomenology and existentialism on Catholic theology, see: A. Dondeyne, *Contemporary European Thought and Christian Faith*, (trans. by E. McMullin and J. Burnheim), Pittsburgh/Louvain: 1958. A Thomistic critique of this influence is to be found in: M. Labourdette, *Foi Catholique et Problèmes modernes*, (Tournai: 1953).

[123] "Wir haben auf die Situationsethik zu Beginn unserer Ueberlegungen nur darum hingewiesen, weil einerseits das, was wir formale Existentialethik nennen wollen, nicht verwechselt werden darf mit der (skizzierten) Situationsethik und weil anderseits diese Existentialethik nach unserer Meinung der Kern der Wahrheit ist, der auch in der falschen Situationsethik steckt."—K. Rahner, *Schriften zur Theologie*, II, 230. "Existenz und Erkennbarkeit des spezifisch Einmaligen, streng Individuellen an der sittlichen Verpflichtung ist der Gegenstand und die Aufgabe der Existentialethik. Sie hat ihre Funktion im Rahmen und als Ergänzung der Essenzethik und darf darum nicht mit der Situationsethik verwechselt werden. Situationsethik im eigentlichen Sinn versucht die konkrete Forderung aus der einmaligen Situation *gegen* das allgemeine Gesetz zu begründen. Sie ist in dieser Form von der Kirche verurteilt."—F. Böckle, *Fragen der Theologie heute*, pp. 443-444.

and as a consequence is not itself translatable into universal ideas.[124] From this it is argued that God must will singular moral obligations for such an individual soul, and that it would be absurd to think that God would only be able to intimate His will through general or universal norms, as if the individual soul itself were only the concrete realization of a general essence or idea, without its own determinations precisely as individual.[125] Since such individual rules or norms must exist, then, they are made the object of a special kind of moral theology known as "existential ethics," which at least will have to determine their formal structure, and the fundamental methods for ascertaining individual moral obligations in all their concretion.[126]

When further precisions are made about the nature of this novel development in moral theology, it is said to be different from, and complementary to, an abstract and generalized "essentialist ethics"—not in the sense that it disregards essence completely to consider only existence, but in the sense that it considers the positive, material aspects of an existent essence in all its concretion, which cannot be deduced from general notions,

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[124] "Insofern der Mensch in seinem konkreten Tun in der Materie ständig ist, ist sein Tun *Fall* und Erfüllung eines Allgemeinen, welches als vom Einzelnen Verschiedenes und ihm Gegenüberstehendes, eben als allgemein-satzhaft artikuliertes *Gesetz* sein Handeln bestimmt. Insofern derselbe Mensch in seiner eigenen Geistigkeit subsistiert, ist sein Tun auch *immer* mehr als blosse Anwendung des allgemeinen Gesetzes im Casus von Raum und Zeit, es hat eine inhaltliche positive Eigenart und Einmaligkeit, die nicht mehr übersetzbar ist in eine allgemeine Idee und Norm, die in Sätzen ausgesprochen werden kann, die aus allgemeinen Begriffen gebildet wird. Mindestens in seinem Handeln ist der Mensch wirklich auch (nicht nur!) individuum ineffabile, das Gott bei seinem Namen gerufen hat, einem Namen, den es nur einmal gibt und geben kann, so dass es wirklich der Mühe wert ist, dass dieses Einmalige als solches in Ewigkeit existiert."—K. Rahner, *ibid.*, 237.

[125] "Zu dem Gesagten muss noch folgendes hinzugefügt werden: Dieses positiv Individuelle an der sittlichen Tat, die mehr ist als die Erfüllung der allgemeinen Norm oder eines abstrakten Wesens "Mensch," ist durchaus auch als solches zu denken als Gegenstand eines verpflichtenden Willens Gottes. Es wäre für eine theonome, theologische Sittlichkeit absurd zu denken, Gottes verpflichtender Wille könne sich nur auf die Tat des Menschen richten, insofern sie gerade die Realisation der allgemeinen Norm und des allgemeinen Wesens sei."—*Ibid.*, 238.

[126] "Es gibt ein sittliches Individuum positiver Art, das nicht übersetzbar ist in eine materielle allgemeine Ethik; es gibt eine verpflichtende *sittliche Einmaligkeit*. . . . Insofern es ein existentialethisch Sittliches von verpflichtender Art gibt, das anderseits aus der Natur der Sache heraus nicht in allgemeine Sätze materialer Inhaltlichkeit übersetzt werden kann, muss es eine Existentialethik formaler Art geben, d.h. eine solche Ethik, die das grundsätzliche Bestehen, die formalen Strukturen und die grundsätzliche Weise des Erkennens eines solchen Existentialethischen behandelt. So wie es einerseits keine Wissenschaft vom Individuellen als wirklich *individuellen* Einzelnen als solchem geben kann und est doch eine allgemeine formale Ontologie des Individuellen gibt, so und in diesem Sinn kann es eine formale Lehre der existentialen Konkretion, eine formale Existentialethik geben und muss es sie geben."—*Ibid.*, 239-240.

but must be studied in its particular individuality.[127] Exactly how this knowledge of the individual is to be attained, however, is a question that is left in the main unanswered.[128] Some vague indications are given as to the role of personal intuitions, mystical experiences, and the phenomena studied in modern "depth" psychology in the elaboration of the new approach, but no attempt is made at a complete description of its subject matter or method.[129]

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[127] "Der Begriff einer 'Existentialethik' schliesst dieses Missverständnis aus, er erweist sich eindeutig als Gegen- und Komplementärbegriff zu abstrakt-allgemeiner 'Essenzethik.' Dennoch bezeichnet diese 'Existentialethik' nicht eine wesenlose 'Existenzethik' (im Sinne der geläufigen Distinktion von Existenz und Essenz), sondern bezieht sich—im gemäss dem ursprünglichen Sinngehalt des modernen Wortes 'Existential'—auf das *materiale Wesen* des Menschen, insofern sich dieses, wenigstens als *physis*, als Prinzip des Auf-und Eingehens in die Aktualität des (geschichtlich-) personalem Handelns, in der Positivität der je vereinzelten, einmalig-einigen Konkretion der individuellen Entscheidung konstitutiv vollenden muss, so dass es gerade nicht in einer rein deduktiv erlangten, abstrakt-essentialen-Norm- und Ordnungsethik die *allein* hinreichende Bedingung seiner freien sittlichen Selbstverwirklichung haben kann, sondern ebenso unabdinglich (d.h. in der Linie der *Konstitution* des materialen, sittlich-personalen Wesens) eingewiesen bleibt in die unableitbare qualitative Eingenart des einmaligen, nicht adäquat fallhaften, individuellen Aktes. —Eine Analyse dieser 'existentialen' Struktur des menschlichen Wesens könnte eine genauere *philosophische* Begründung dessen liefern, was wir hier unter einem mehr theologischen Gesichtspunkt entwickelt haben."—*Ibid.*, 239, *fn.* 1.

[128] "Das praktisch dringlichste und schwierigste Problem hinsichtlich einer solchen formalen Existentialethik wäre natürlich die Frage nach der *Erkennbarkeit* des individuellen Sittlichen und dessen Verpflichtung. . . . Wie weiss der Einzelne überhaupt von sich als dem einmalig Einzelnen? Wie ist eine solche Erkenntnis denkbar, obwohl sie grundsätzlich nicht adäquat die Erkenntnis einer gegenständlichen, satzhaften Reflexion sein kann? Wie ist die Frage zu stellen und zu beantworten, wenn und insofern dieses Individuelle nicht die Individualität meines Sein und meines schon frei gewirkten Zustandes ist, sondern die individuelle Einmaligkeit eines von mir erst noch zu Tuenden? Wie kann dieses individuelle Künftige auch als Gesolltes erkannt werden? Wie sieht diese (sittliche) Notwendigkeit aus, die in der zukommenden Geschichte und an ihr selbst hervortritt? Es ist klar, dass wir hier all diese Frage nicht wirklich beantworten können."—*Ibid.*, 240-241.

[129] Man könnte zur Verdeutlichung dieser unreflexen, nichtsatzhaften Selbstgegebenheit der Person für sich selbst in ihrer positiven Einmaligkeit hinweisen auf die Dialektik zwischen der *Heilsunsicherheit*, die wesentlich zum Christenstand gehört, und dem (ebenfalls gegebenen) Zeugnis des Geistes, dass wir Kinder Gottes sind. . . . ; man könnte Phänomene der heutigen Tiefenpsychologie heranziehen, die so etwas wie eine Koexistenz von Wissen um sich einerseits und einem Nichtwissen und einer Verdrängung eines dennoch gegebenen Wissens um sich selbst anderseits dartun. Solche und viele Dinge müssten überlegt werden, wollte man zu einem Wissen des einzelnen um seine Einzelheit, um die Existentialqualität seines Handelns also möglichem und als existentiell verpflichtendem kommen."—*Ibid.*, 241-242. "Noch endgültiger wird dann die Forderung geprägt durch die unmittelbare Gnadenführung Gottes. Zur rationalen Standortbestimmung 'muss darum die Intuition kommen, die aus der Liebe quillt.' So kann auch solche Kasuistik niemals nur Sache einer rationalen Technik sein, sondern muss aus den

While a detailed consideration of such a fragmentary theory would hardly be indicated, on its own merits, two observations may be made regarding it in order to set it in relief against traditional doctrine. The first has to do with the presupposition made by its proponents that the traditional moral theology antedating their theory is an abstract essentialist doctrine which employs a purely deductive procedure and as such fails to make contact with the existential order. From what has been said previously in this study, such a view is based on an over-simplification—if not a complete misunderstanding—of both moral philosophy and moral theology as they are methodologically developed in the Aristotelian and Thomistic traditions respectively. It may well be, however, that the proposal of such a theory is a reaction against a neoscholastic ethical rationalism with Kantian overtones which *is* purely deductive, and is an abstract essentialist doctrine which requires radical revision and modification to bring it from the ideal to the real order.[130] In such a case, the proper procedure is not to attempt to rectify one error by adding to it another which is equally divorced from Thomistic doctrine, but rather to correct the error at its source by re-asserting the empirical, existential, phenomenological analysis which is the bedrock foundation of the entire Thomistic synthesis, and without which there can be no science of moral theology in the strict sense of the term.

The second observation regards the character of the proposed "existential ethics" as a type of knowledge itself. By the very terms of the proposal to attain knowledge of the concrete individual, and not in the sense of the *individuum vagum* but rather in that of the *individuum determinatum*, this cannot be homogeneous with the type of knowledge which is generally regarded to be that of moral theology. According to the doctrine we have already elaborated, there is no question but that the subjective dispositions of the individual do make the notion of practical truth, in all its perfection, a very personal matter which is only attained in the prudential judgment of the one imperating the concrete, singular operable itself.[131]

Gesinnungen der Wachheit, der Klugheit und der Liebe betätigt werden."—F. Böckle, *Fragen der Theologie heute*, p. 444.

[130] For a summary and critique of Kantian influences in German theology, particularly as exemplified in the teaching of Georg Hermes, see: K. Eschweiler, *Die Zwei Wege der neuen Theologie*, (Augsburg: 1926), pp. 81-130. A more general summary of systematic moral theology in Germany from the early nineteenth century to the present is given by: P. Hadrossek, *Die Bedeutung des Systemgedankens für die Moraltheologie in Deutschland seit der Thomas-Renaissance*, (München: 1950), pp. 93-358.

[131] Thus infused prudence is the virtue given by God to show man how he should attain personal perfection and sanctification, which is itself incommunicable, and yet capable of attainment through observing the rule of reason when it is complemented by divine grace and the gifts.

What is so startling about the proposed theory is that it calls attention to this individualistic aspect of morality as something hitherto unknown, and as awaiting the new theory before it can even be discussed in scientific terms. It is almost inconceivable that the proponents of such a theory should be unaware of the vast technical development within Thomism analyzing the role of circumstances in determining the morality of the human act, the necessity for the rectification of the appetites intimately associated with material and subjective dispositions, the central importance of prudence in guaranteeing practical truth and certitude for operation in the singular case, etc., etc.--and yet their silence on these matters leaves little room for a benign interpretation.[132]

That such a proposal should be regarded as a development of moral theology, moreover, indicates a basic confusion between the prudential judgment and a strictly scientific judgment which terminates the compositive process of moral theology. It is only the former judgment which can actually imperate the singular operable, saying in effect, "This action is to be done by me here and now in these concrete circumstances, because it is the right thing for me to do, considering my own bodily dispositions and my personal appetites which have become habituated to reasonable action." The last judgment to which the compositive process of moral theology can come, on the other hand, must always fall short of this actual imperation in a personal way, and must be content with a conclusion of the type: "This kind of action, in such and such circumstances (multiplied as often as desired to describe the particularity of a contemplated action conceived as an *individuum vagum*) is *per se rectum* for a virtuous Christian and is to be done." The two judgments are in no way contradictory, for in the normal case the former should always be complementary of the latter. And if it is the former type of judgment which is actually the goal of the new "existential ethics," then the latter is only another name for Christian prudence, and should be recognized as such. But if "existential ethics" is properly moral theology, then it must stay at a universal level, and cannot as a science directly attain to the singular operable in all its singularity. In either event, according to this resolution, the novel conception is merely a duplication

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[132] More alarming still is the possible inference that until the proposed theory is itself developed, Christians will have no way of knowing God's will in their own personal regard, and will have to work under abstract, generalized rules of "essentialist ethics" while looking forward to the day when the more personalized rules of "existential ethics" will become available to them. This would be tantamount to saying that there has been a divine oversight in providing for the direction of the individual in the supernatural order up to now, which is finally about to be rectified by the new theory.

of—and a poor substitute for—an existing type of ethical, normative knowledge which has already been well analyzed in the Thomistic tradition.

D. DETAILS OF APPLICATION IN THE PRACTICAL MODE

While one should be wary, therefore, of any attempt to replace the last practical judgment of prudence by a so-called "scientific" judgment, it should also be recognized that a close liaison must exist between the compositive process of the moral theologian and the judgment which imperates the singular operable. It will be our purpose now to delineate in slightly more detail the relations which obtain between these two types of practical knowledge. As in our treatment of the details of speculative analysis we found it impossible to give more than a few general indications of how one proceeds in particular matters, so here too we can only sketch the main points which are involved in the application of the results of such analysis. In Chapters Two and Three we have already indicated that the resolutive mode of moral science supplies middle terms which can function in a practical syllogism, and it can be seen readily that the almost infinite variety of possible human operations confers on the compositive mode of moral science a complexity approaching that found in the composition of prudence itself.[133] Nonetheless the moral theologian must know how to use his speculative knowledge in the practical direction of souls to their ultimate end in the supernatural order, and it is this use which we intend to describe now in a general way.

1. THE DIRECTION OF SOULS

For purposes of simplification, we shall treat only of three types of direction, and shall discuss only one example of each insofar as it bears on our methodological analysis. The first will be the case where the moral theologian is viewed as directing himself, the second where he is directing another individual by personal advice (say, in the confessional), and the third where he is directing a group through moral exhortation or preaching. This will then lead to some conclusions about the teaching of sacred doctrine

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[133] "Ratio enim practica, quae discurrit circa unam veritatem, non potest circa aliam nisi diversas praemissas et motiva inveniat quibus circa illam discurrat, et ideo lumen hoc practicum non est universale et simplex, sed probativum et ex diversis mediis dependens, ideoque extensione indiget perfici, ut plura complectatur. Et ideo S. Thomas (II-II, 49, 3 et 5) eodem modo loquitur de prudentia sicut de scientia, quia per docilitatem et ratiocinationem acquiritur, et de uno discurrit ad aliud, imo multo tempore et experimento indiget ad sui acquisitione, ideoque in juvenibus non datur, neque secundum actum, neque secundum habitum, ut ex Philosopho docet ipse D. Thomas (II-II, 47, 14, ad 3)." — John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.*, De habitibus, (ed. Laval) nn. 728-729.

and theology itself as a special type of application in the practical mode, which can be particularly effective in assuring continuity between the speculative and compositive modes of moral theology.

In the first instance, the moral theologian himself may be presented with a problem respecting his own charitable action. In such a case, if his scientific knowledge of charity is to direct his future activity, his compositive process must start with the conclusions he has already reached from his speculative analysis of the virtue of charity, which will tell him not only what charity is, but the various objects to which it extends and the proper order which obtains among them. With this knowledge, he can then plan a future course of action and make a judgment about its morality, by composing this general knowledge with the circumstances which he foresees will attend a particular situation. His compositive process will thereupon terminate in a judgment, *in actu signato*, that this type of action in these circumstances will be the right and charitable thing to do. In the actual situation, his action may be guided by the practical conclusion he has already reached *in actu signato*, but it will be imperated by another judgment, *in actu exercito*, which takes account of all the concrete circumstances which attend the action, and with the knowledge of which he finally places the act. If he is a prudent man, his emotional reactions will be under the control of reason and his last practical judgment will bear the imprint of his habitual theological knowledge: he will therefore do what is objectively the right thing to do, and he will have a subjective certitude that he has acted charitably in the given situation.[134]

In such a very schematic representation of a complex human act, it is possible to distinguish virtually at least three stages, the first terminating in the speculative judgment respecting the quiddity of charity and its properties, which can be made with strict demonstrative certitude in the resolutive mode, the second terminating in the practical judgment respecting the morality of a contemplated course of action, which can be made with a practical certitude that, in itself, *this is the right thing to do for the* virtuous Christian, and the third terminating in the last practical judgment imperating the action as performed, which can be made with full moral certitude that the concrete, singular action was the *right thing* to do. The important thing to note is that the first stage alone is reached by a resolutive process. The second and third are both attained by a method of composition, the second by a composition proper to the science of moral theology itself, and the third by a composition proper to prudence, which may use

[134] This is one instance where prudence and theological science point out the charitable *thing* to do in a given situation. Cf. fn. 103, *supra*, p. 197.

the latter, but in any event complements it to imperate the singular contingent act.

In the second case, where the moral theologian may be conceived as giving direction to another person in the matter of charity, additional factors have to be taken into account, and these further complicate the way in which theological knowledge influences the actual operation. The advice of the moralist, in such a case, must again begin with his speculative knowledge of charity, its quiddity, the objects to which it extends and in what order, etc. He must then compose these middle terms in a practical syllogism which furnishes him with practical rules which should govern operation for the virtuous Christian placed in the general circumstances described by the penitent. With this knowledge, which in the normal case will be habitual with the confessor, he then has to make an estimate of the spiritual state of the penitent, counsel him as to what he should do, and possibly give reasons which will cause him to assent to the practical truth of the advice given. The latter, it should be noted, will not necessarily be the proper reasons as furnished by the speculative analysis, for these may not be directly comprehensible to the penitent, but they will usually be expressed in terms of precepts that are divinely revealed, and that are known—through the explicative function of the speculative resolution—to be applicable and properly motivating in this particular situation. If the penitent is rightly disposed, he will then accept this advice, assenting to the divine precepts on divine faith and to their application to his particular case through his trust in the confessor's technical knowledge—which, for the penitent, will probably be at the level of opinion—and plan his future action accordingly. When presented, finally, with an actual situation similar to that on which he has sought direction, he will himself have to make a prudential judgment, *in actu exercito*, imperating a singular, contingent action, of whose practical truth he will be certain through his personal prudence, which has been guided and reinforced by divine faith and the theological science of the confessor.

Again this is a very schematic representation, but it will suffice to show that the three stages virtually present in the first case must be replaced by at least five stages in the second case. The first two stages will be very similar in both cases, and will be those of theological resolution and theological composition on the part of the confessor. The third stage will then be a prudential composition made by the confessor, terminating in a practical judgment, *in actu exercito*, that the advice he gives is practical truth for the individual to whom it is given. The fourth stage will represent a type of non-scientific resolution—the resolution of ordinary practical discourse—on the part of the penitent, which he effects through the habits of

eubulia and *synesis*, the former regulating his taking of counsel from the confessor, and the latter his judgment as to what the right thing will be for him to do in his determined situation. The fifth stage, finally, will be attained by a composition which is that of the penitent's personal prudence, and which will govern the action he initiates in the concrete, existential circumstances with which he is presented. The whole process, it should be noted, consists of two resolutions and three compositions, and of these, in the normal case, only the first resolution and the first composition properly pertain to moral theology. It could happen, of course, that the confessor make no use of his theological science, and then the first two stages will be replaced by one which will be a resolution of ordinary practical discourse; or, alternatively, it could happen that the penitent himself be a moral theologian, and then the fourth and fifth stages would include a proper scientific resolution and composition, apart from those already indicated. But for the usual cases of spiritual direction, the direct influence of moral theology will be limited to the first two stages, and will even be effected in such a way as to be completely unnoticed on the part of the penitent, and to be done habitually by the confessor himself, so that he also is not reflectively aware of his use of theological science.[135]

The third type of spiritual direction, where the theologian is directing a group by preaching, is quite similar to the second type, and need not be dwelt upon at length. Should the theologian be preaching on charity, for example, his remote preparation will parallel the first two stages we have just discussed, where the resolution and composition of theological science will supply him with knowledge of the nature of charity and the rules which should govern its exercise by the individual. The third stage, on the other hand, will not be one where he employs the art of individual counseling, as in the previous case, but rather one where he employs the art of rhetoric, in order to move the congregation to action in the supernatural order. In general he will be limited to a description of general situations, as opposed to the highly particular situations involved in personal guidance, and he must make an estimate of the general knowledge and dispositions of those making up the congregation, in order to plan his rhetorical approach properly. The latter, under the influence of his theological knowledge, will then make use of precepts and instances drawn from the Scriptures, examples from the lives of the saints, and similar motivating material which

[135] Sometimes, however, those receiving guidance will be aware of the lack of theological foundation in their spiritual direction; whence St. Theresa of Avila's preference for a director who was a competent theologian, over one who was a holy but unlearned man. Cf. Santa Teresa de Jesus: *Vida*, cap. V, n. 3; cap. xiii, n. 16; *Camino de Perfeccion*, cap. v, n. 1 (*Obras Completas*, 4 ed., Burgos: 1949).

will manifest the practical truth of the operation to which he is exhorting the congregation.[136] Those hearing him, on the other hand, will assent to this truth under the influence of divine faith and their trust in the preacher, whom they will judge on the basis of his sincerity and other indications of his personal character, and will otherwise proceed to imperate their own actions in a way analogous to that of the fourth and fifth stages of the previous case.

From this brief indication of three types of application in the practical mode, it can be seen that the compositive process of moral theology does not attain to the operable with the directness and sureness that the resolutive process attains to speculative truth about the operable. The best contact between the compositive mode of theological science and the last composition effected by prudence undoubtedly occurs in the first case, which is analogous to a doctor's doctoring himself in the natural order,[137] and where habitual scientific knowledge is ever available, at the service of the last practical judgment, to guide it in a most reasonable matter to perfect practical truth and certitude. The second and third cases leave more room for discrepancies between the composition of moral theology and the prudential composition of the one imperating the singular, existential action. Yet there is an influx of theological knowledge into the operation of the average Christian who seeks personal guidance from his confessor, or who listens attentively to the more general guidance given to him by the preacher, in the manner which we have indicated. Although indirect in its influence, it is still a most valuable adjunct to the personal prudence of the individual, and one of the best guarantees of continued virtuous action that will lead to the full perfection of the Christian person.

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[136] It is this point which seems generally to have been missed by those who propose a "kerygmatic theology" to replace traditional theology. While it would be absurd to think that one should preach technical analyses of the virtues, etc., to a congregation, it is even more absurd to think that one could make most intelligent use of the Scriptures, Church Fathers, and other sources apt to motivate a congregation, without himself understanding such materials in the light of a strictly scientific theology. For an exposition of kerygmatic theology, see H. Rahner, *Eine Theologie der Verkündigung*, (2. Aufl.), Freiburg: 1939. For a critique, see A. Stolz, "De theologia kerygmatica," *Ang* 17 (1940), 337-351. An extensive bibliography is given by B. M. Xiberta, *Introductio in Sacram Theologiam*, (Matriti: 1949), pp. 53-58.

[137] The example of a doctor's doctoring himself is cited by St. Thomas as being a type of art that is closest to the operation of nature herself: "huic arti enim maxime assimilatur natura." (*Cf. In II Phys.*, lect. 14, n. 8; also lect. 1, n. 5.) Thus the direction of one's action by habitual practical knowledge might also be considered as the most "natural" way, or the way most in accord with man's nature as rational, to achieve human perfection.

2. THE TEACHING OF MORAL THEOLOGY

Because of the superiority of habitual knowledge of moral doctrine, particularly when possessed in a scientific way, it can be seen immediately that a most effective application of theological knowledge is made when the latter itself is taught to others. This is one of the reasons why it is so important to teach Christian doctrine in the schools, and even to the very young, for in this way the truths most necessary for salvation are communicated to them from the very outset, and in a manner in which they can be retained for the rest of their lives. But as students advance in their intellectual formation, and particularly when they have been introduced to the study of philosophy, there is no reason why they should not also be introduced to the formal study of sacred theology. The benefits of such systematic instruction for moral formation, not only on the part of college and university students but also on the part of educated laymen, are enormous when compared with the effects of occasional spiritual direction and apostolic preaching. Granted that lay students of this type need not acquire the professional competence of the moral theologian, they nonetheless thereby satisfy their obligation to perfect their prudential knowledge through contact with the Church's teaching at a level proper to their station in life,[138] and also assure themselves of a degree of technical competence which is vastly superior to what they could learn through their own limited experience in daily living.[139] Thus they approach the first case of spiritual direction which we have just discussed, and although not on that account dispensed from seeking the continued advice of competent theologians, are able to provide for themselves in many circumstances where they would otherwise lack theological direction.

If such knowledge is important for laymen, it goes without saying that

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[138] "Il est requis de l'homme prudent dont nous parlons *présentement* qu'il ait la foi—au titre propre de la prudence. Et s'il n'est pas requis de lui qu'il soit théologien (non plus que la prudence acquise ne suppose *nécessairement* chez qui la possède l'habitus de la philosophie morale), du moins se tiendra-t-il de quelque manière en communication avec ce savoir. . . . Par là s'établit chez le juste l'unité de la contemplation et de l'action, la conduite de sa vie étant soumise à l'influence des connaissances les plus hautes et, en un sens, les plus étrangères aux contingences de l'existence humaine."—T. Deman, *Prudence*, p. 447.

[139] "Il ne faudrait pas pour cela exalter la cogitative au-dessus de l'intelligence. Par la technique (scil., scientia practica) la connaissance en effet est plus parfaite, puisque par elle on connaît les causes et jusqu'à un certain point les essences, tandis qu'à l'expérience on ne doit qu'une sorte de poussière de faits. Quand on possède la technique, l'on n'est pas troublé outre mesure par des objections imprévues et l'on arrive assez bien à les resoudre, grâce aux idées générales que l'on possède. Avec la simple expérience, au contraire, on est désarçonné par la moindre objection, par le premier échec que l'on constate à ses expériences passées. . . ."—J. Peghaire, "Un sens oublié, la cogitative," *RUO* 13 (1943), 161*-162*.

the science of moral theology should be taught, and taught well, to those who are entrusted by their office with the guidance of others to Christian perfection.[140] It is in this sense that those who teach moral theology in seminaries are themselves participating in the active apostolate, for it is the knowledge which they communicate to future directors of souls which will be applied in the compositive mode by their students. Thus St. Thomas conceives the role of the seminary professor as a practical one, not unlike that of a skilled artisan who is showing others how to work:

> In the spiritual edifice there are those who are like manual workers, who are concerned with the care of souls in particular, for instance administering the sacraments or doing other detailed work of this kind. There are also the Bishops, who are like skilled artisans directing and arranging how the foregoing should carry out their work; it is for this reason that they are called *'episcopi,'* that is, 'superintendents.' And similarly, doctors of theology are like skilled artisans who investigate and teach how others should procure the salvation of souls.[141]

According to this conception, it should be noted, sacred theology should not only be taught speculatively, but also as a practical science which enters into specific detail as to "how others should procure the salvation of souls." Exactly how this is to be done poses a pedagogical problem whose solution is outside the scope of this study, and which has some elements in common with the problem of how any practical science, such as medicine or engineering, should be taught. Yet there are some practical consequences that can be deduced from what has already been said about the resolutive and compositive modes of moral theology, which will form the basis for some concluding remarks about this phase of the application of theological knowledge.

The first thing to note is that there are limitations as to what can be taught in any practical science. Scientific aspects, as such, can be taught,[142] but this is not true of all types of syllogistic reasoning which will be involved in applying general knowledge to the singular operable.[143] The compositive

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[140] Cf. *Quaest. Quod.* 1, q. 7, a. 2 (a. 14): "Ipsa etiam ratio demonstrat quod melius est erudire de pertinentibus ad salutem eos qui et *in se* et in aliis proficere possunt, quam simplices qui in se tantum proficere possunt."

[141] *Ibid.*

[142] "Omnis scientia videtur esse docibilis, idest potens doceri. Unde in primo *Metaphysicorum* dicitur quod signum scientis est posse docere."—*In VI Ethic.*, lect. 3, n. 1147.

[143] "Non autem quilibet syllogismus est disciplinalis, idest faciens scire; sed solus demonstrativus qui ex necessariis necessaria concludit."—*Ibid.*, n. 1148.

process of moral theology, for example, can be taught insofar as it is based on a causal analysis, and since the concatenation of causes that are involved is itself intelligible, can be communicated to others. The compositive process of prudence, on the other hand, cannot be taught, because it is based on personal experience and individual dispositions, and will be accepted by others only at the level of opinion or belief because of its contingent character.[144] What is true of prudence is also true of the art of counseling, the art of preaching, and the art of teaching, because in each case the universal knowledge furnished by the practical science cannot substitute for the personal experience necessary to apply it properly in the singular case.[145] This is what makes it impossible, for all practical purposes, to *teach* the compositive mode of a practical science all the way to the point where it contacts the singular, contingent operable. The universal aspects of the composition are teachable, but not the unique way of making application in the individual case.

But if this difficulty is present inherently in the compositive mode, it should also be noted that there is no corresponding difficulty in teaching the resolutive or speculative mode of moral theology. The latter is eminently teachable, and in fact, it is this which yields all the fundamental doctrine that is used in the compositive mode to direct proper operation. For this reason, the basic core of all teaching of moral theology must consist in an exposition of the resolutive or demonstrative method of analyzing man's operation at the supernatural level, applied so well in the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas. Because of the extreme variability of the matter with which the moral theologian treats, moreover, this analysis must be carried to an investigation of all the virtues and vices which function principally in fostering or impeding man's progress to his supernatural perfection. The reason for this can be seen very well from analogies with medical training,

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144 "Signum scientis est posse docere: quod ideo est, quia unumquodque tunc est perfectum in actu suo, quando potest facere alterum sibi simile, ut dicitur quarto *Meteororum*. Sicut igitur signum caliditatis est quod possit aliquid calefacere, ita signum scientis est, quod possit docere, quod est scientiam in alio causare. *Artifices* autem docere possunt, quia cum causas cognoscant, ex eis possunt demonstrare: demonstratio autem est syllogismus faciens scire, ut dicitur primo *Posteriorum*. Experti autem non possunt docere, quia non possunt ad scientiam perducere cum causam ignorent. Et si ea quae experimento cognoscunt aliis tradant, non recipientur per modum scientiae, sed per modum opinionis vel credulitatis. Unde patet quod artifices sunt magis sapientes et scientes expertis."—*In I Meta.*, lect. 1, n. 29.

145 "Cum ars (scil., scientia practica) sit universalium, experientia singularium, si aliquis habet rationem artis sine experientia, erit quidem perfectus in hoc quod universale cognoscat; sed quia ignorat singulare cum experimento careat, multoties in curando peccabit: quia curatio magis pertinet ad singulare quam ad universale, cum ad hoc pertineat per se, ad illud per accidens."—*Ibid.*, n. 22.

for the moral theologian's care of the soul is quite similar to the doctor's care of the body. A young intern, for instance, who knows all the general principles about the circulation of the blood, but has no knowledge as to where to locate a pulse, will be unable to use his universal principles in the concrete case. Likewise, one who knows all about the heart—admittedly one of the most important organs of the body—but has seen nothing of the tracts on the kidney, will be completely powerless before the first patient who presents himself with kidney trouble. The young confessor is in a completely analogous position with respect to the organic life of the soul, excepting that his vocation makes him even more a "general practitioner," and what is more, he must depend almost exclusively on his habitual knowledge when giving direction to souls. Here again, if he has learned well the speculative content of the *Prima Secundae* and the *Secunda Secundae*, he will have an ample store of knowledge which is itself *per se* practical, and which he can compose and apply—with more facility as he gains experience—in the cure of souls entrusted to him.

Granted that the young theologian has this fundamental training, the question may be raised as to how he can be given some practical experience in the compositive mode even before souls are entrusted to his care. It is in this area, we believe, that courses in pastoral theology (and to a lesser extent, in ascetical and mystical theology) can be of some assistance, in that they give more proximate preparation with regard to actual situations that may be encountered when dealing with special cases.[146] Here too, exercises in casuistry can give a type of vicarious experience, analogous to that given to engineering and medical students by their laboratory assignments. But, in the final analysis, perfection in any practical science is governed by the adage: *"faber fit fabricando."*[147] A supervised introduction to the actual work of the ministry is the best way to teach the young moralist how to apply his speculative knowledge, for until he benefits from his own personal

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[146] It is interesting to note, in this connection, that Maritain conceives mystical theology as specifically distinct from speculative moral theology on the grounds that the one is practically practical while the other is speculatively practical. Thus he says: "Il importe de comprendre qu'au regard de cette action par excellence qu'est la passion des choses divines et l'union contemplative avec Dieu, il n'y a pas seulement une science spéculativement *pratique* qui est la science du théologien. Il y a aussi une science pratiquement *pratique*, qui ne s'occupe pas *tant de nous dire* ce qu'est la perfection que de nous y conduire, qui est la science du maître de spiritualité, du praticien de l'âme, de l'artisan de sainteté, de celui qui se penche vers nos misérables *coeurs* qu'il veut à tout mener à leur suprême joie. Cette science pratique de la contemplation est celle où Jean de la Croix est maître."—*Les degrés du savoir*, pp. 627-628. Following what we have already said in previous chapters, we reject this distinction as being just as superfluous in moral theology as it is in moral philosophy. Cf. *supra*, p. 80, fn. 42, and p. 92, fn. 82.

[147] Cf. *In II Ethic.*, lect. 1, nn. 250, 252.

experiences, he will remain inexpert in the art of directing souls to their eternal salvation.[148]

As a final observation, it may be remarked how senseless it would be to attempt to form moral theologians by exercising them exclusively in the compositive mode, while neglecting to supply the speculative knowledge that is the *sine qua non* for the composition proper to moral science. To insist exclusively, for instance, on practical principles—or general rules that should govern human conduct—and then on extensive drill in how to apply such principles to individual cases, destroys the whole character of moral theology as a practical science, and reduces it to the state of a mere art. Instead of the moralist enjoying a position analogous to that of the doctor, in such a conception he is reduced to the state of a "pill-dispenser," who can effect some cures, it is true, but generally is powerless to deal with anything but the routine malady of a not very serious nature.[149] If those who are entrusted, therefore, with man's physical health must be thoroughly equipped with a speculative knowledge of the human body, of all its organs and their proper functioning together with the disorders that can endanger its life, it stands to reason that those who are entrusted with the health of the spiritual organism should have similar professional training, assuring them of scientific knowledge adequate to cope with all the conditions in which the human soul can find itself, and who can give expert advice to those who seek spiritual health and perfection.

III. CERTITUDE IN MORAL THEOLOGY

With this we come finally to the question whose answer is of paramount importance for ascertaining the role of demonstration in moral theology, and in terms of which the entire development of this study can be summarized, that namely of the certitude of conclusions arrived at in moral theology. The question of moral certitude, in general, is extremely complex, as we have already seen, and yet a correct understanding of the various certitudes that are attainable in dealing with the human act is indispensable for

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148 Whence the wisdom of the Church's recent inauguration of a fifth year of sacred theology in order to introduce young priests to the practical problems of the pastoral apostolate. Cf. *Statuta Generalis Constitutionis Apostolicae "Sedes Sapientiae" adnexa*, art. 48, par. 2; also *AAS* 48 (1956), pp. 364-365.

149 We grant, however, that in times of epidemic, for instance, it might be more beneficial to train vast numbers of nurses or medical technicians who can be more effective in curing the prevalent disease than a small number of highly trained doctors. A necessity of this type, in the spiritual order, undoubtedly influenced the Church's training of priests in the Post-Tridentine period. In more normal times, nevertheless, there can be no denying the superiority of the doctor's professional training when compared to the instruction in techniques given to the nurse or medical technician.

the moral theologian. Cajetan's commentary on the prologue to the *Secunda Pars* could hardly be briefer than it is, but still he thinks it important first to remind his readers of Aristotle's warning that "the minute accuracy of mathematics is not to be demanded in moral matters," before rushing on to his most reasoned exposition of the Thomistic text.[150] Obviously, then, this is a subject which cannot be neglected in a treatment of demonstrative methodology in moral theology: rather it is of such moment that everything that has already been said derives therefrom its significance.

Our general answer to this question, paralleling the solution previously given to the problem of certitude in moral science, is that there are actually two certitudes to be found in the various conclusions reached by the moral theologian, one a speculative certitude corresponding to that of theological demonstration in the other tracts of sacred theology, the other a practical certitude which is proper to moral matters and has some affinity with the certitudes of supernatural synderesis and infused prudence. To furnish a background for understanding the latter, we shall begin with a summary of various supernatural certitudes of the practical order, and then take up respectively the speculative and practical certitudes proper to moral theology.

1. SUPERNATURAL CERTITUDES

The supreme certitude of the supernatural order is that of faith, which is a direct participation of divine truth; being both speculative and practical, as we have already seen, it elicits the greatest firmness of assent in both the speculative and practical orders of knowledge. St. Thomas explains, on this basis, that it not only engenders greater speculative certitude than any human wisdom, science or understanding, but that it is also superior in this regard to the gifts of wisdom, knowledge and understanding, insofar as they too presuppose faith as a principle.[151] And in the practical order, its certitude not only transcends that of natural synderesis, but it is greater than that of prudence and art, because the latter are concerned with contingent things, while it is concerned with eternal truth, *"quae non contingit aliter se habere."*[152]

Apart from certitudes that are formally in the order of knowledge, however, it is possible to speak of certitudes that are participated by other

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[150] "Suscipiantur autem velim haec, sicut et cetera nostra, si et inquantum rationi consonant: neque enim eis fidem dari maiorem posco, quam ex ratione gigni nata est. Verumtamen memores sint quod 'acribologia mathematica' non est expetenda in moralibus, ut dicitur in II Metaphys. Divi igitur Thomae intercessione fretus, ad textum propero."—*In prol. I-IIae.* Cf. Aristotle, *II Meta.*, 3, 995 a 15; St. Thomas, *In II Meta.*, lect. 5, n. 336.

[151] *II-II*, 4, 8.

[152] *Ibid.*

faculties and habits insofar as they are moved by knowing faculties. It is in this way that moral virtues are said to have a kind of certitude in their operation, and, even more important, that the theological virtue of hope has its own proper certitude, which comes through the knowledge given it by faith.[153] Such certitudes, it should be noted, are not themselves cognitional ones, and are spoken of as certitudes of "order" or "intention."[154] Thus the certitude of hope is not to be identified with that of faith: it is found in the will and not in the intellect, it is certitude of a goal to be attained and not of a truth that is actually apprehended, and it can be defective *per accidens* while that of faith cannot be defective in any way whatsoever.[155] Its order or intention is certain, but this is not the same as a cognitional certitude that the end to which it is ordered or which it intends will be absolutely attained.

The certitude of infused prudence, different again because of the latter's intimate connection with charity and the infused moral virtues, as we have already indicated, in a way includes both these types of certitude, namely the cognitional and the ordinal or intentional.[156] Itself formally in the intellect, it also presupposes a certitude of intention in the will and the appetites, without which it cannot be assured of the practical truth of the contemplated action, and therefore cannot have the practical certitude of the singular operable which is its proper object. The same thing is true, but to a lesser extent, of supernatural synderesis--of faith as practical--and this even in its unformed state: it must be assured of the certitude of the will's motion towards the good, if it is itself to furnish principles that will be efficacious in the order of operation. It goes without saying, then, that practical certitude in the supernatural order attains its highest perfection in the human agent in the state of grace, whose intellect is perfected by informed faith and prudence, whose will is endowed with hope and charity and the infused virtue of justice, and whose sense appetites are controlled

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[153] *II-II*, 18, 4.

[154] Cf. *supra*, p. 53; also *In II Sent.*, d. 26, q. 2, a. 4.

[155] Cf. J. Ramirez, "De certitudine spei christianae," *CT* 57 (1938), pp. 377-378.

[156] "Certitudo ordinis seu intentionis, ut nomen ipsum indicat, est certitudo practica, quae in agente rationali dicitur ordinationis, secundum quod est elicitive rationis practicae disponentis seu ordinantis actionem ex motione voluntatis, ut accidit in *imperio seu precepto* prudentiae, juxta illud: rationis est ordinare, sapientis (=prudentis) est ordinare; sed, prout est *elicitive* ab ipsa voluntate movente rationem practicam ad ordinandum de mediis ex intentione recta finis, appellatur certitudo intentionis, nam intentio pertinet elicitive ad voluntatem: at in agente naturali non habente intellectum conjunctum, dicitur certitudo inclinationis, quae est ordinatio vel intentio quaedam innata ad propriam operationem et finem, indita ab Auctore naturae. . . ."—*Ibid.*, p. 358.

by infused fortitude and temperance. In such a man there is the greatest potentiality for practical certitude in the cognitional mode, as well as in the intentional mode which must accompany the latter, in order to attain unerringly to practical truth.

Our problem, therefore, is one of locating the speculative and practical certitudes of moral theology within this hierarchy of supernatural certitudes, in order to understand the intrinsic value of the conclusions furnished by moral theology, and their special utility in the direction of human action at the supernatural level.

2. THE SPECULATIVE CERTITUDE OF MORAL THEOLOGY

Of these two certitudes, the speculative one presents little special difficulty. It is the result of a resolutive or demonstrative process which is properly that of human reason, but at least one of the premises is seen under the light of faith, and therefore the conclusion is assented to with a certitude which is properly theological, and is the same as that we have discussed at length in Chapter One. It is in virtue of this certitude, then, that moral theology is homogenous with the remainder of sacred theology, and through which the unity of sacred theology as a speculative habit is preserved.

Two points, however, are worthy of mention with reference to this speculative certitude. The first is that it derives from faith precisely as speculative, and not as practical under its function of supernatural synderesis. Therefore it is not certitude of a rule or precept that should govern human action, but rather certitude of a truth about human action. Thus it is a certitude about the operable considered as non-operable, or in the speculative mode. Because it is about an operable, moreover, it is knowledge that is usable in the practical mode, but it is not under this aspect that its truth is known speculatively, or with its accompanying certitude.

The second point is that such speculative certitude of a conclusion in moral theology is not only more certain than corresponding conclusions in moral philosophy, but it is more certain than the conclusions of *any* human science. The reason for this is to be found in the fact that it proceeds from the eternal and immutable source of all truth, and thus its principle elevates it above every type of ordinary human knowledge. This does not mean that the superior certitude is one of evidence, as we have already explained in Chapter One. Since it derives from the obscure light of faith, it is rather a greater certitude based on firmness of assent of the will than it is one based on increased clarity for the human intellect. Apart, however, from the limitations of the subject in which it is received, the truth of the conclusion is

more certain than that of any purely human science, and this is what we mean when we say that it has greater speculative certitude.

3. THE PRACTICAL CERTITUDE OF MORAL THEOLOGY

The practical certitude of moral theology, on the other hand, is associated with the use of demonstrated knowledge in the compositive mode, and therefore it derives partly from the speculative certitude we have just discussed, and partly from its composition with the principles of supernatural synderesis, or of faith precisely as practical. As such it is certitude of practical truth, or of knowledge of the operable under the aspect of its rectitude.[137] Deriving jointly from the supernatural certitude of faith and from the theological certitude of moral conclusions in the speculative mode, its certitude is superior to that of any practical certitude of the purely human order, such as natural synderesis, moral science, and acquired prudence, although being concerned with a different type of truth from acquired prudence, it is not strictly comparable with the latter.

Like the certitude of moral philosophy in the natural order, moreover, that of moral theology stands in special relation to the other practical certitudes of the supernatural order, namely, those of supernatural synderesis and infused prudence, and on this account also becomes indirectly involved with the various certitudes of order or intention that we have just mentioned. It differs from the certitude of supernatural synderesis in that it is not the immediate certitude of divine faith, but rather a derived certitude of practical reason illuminated by faith. Important to note here, however, is the fact that supernatural synderesis is itself different from natural synderesis in that it is not merely concerned with the most universal and commonly-known truths of the practical order, but also with very special rules and precepts. Thus it is not on the basis of the universality of its truths that moral theology is distinguished from supernatural synderesis, but rather on the basis of the light through which assent is given, i.e., respectively the *lumen theologicum* or the *lumen fidei*. On the other hand, it can also be said that moral theology derives its conclusions from principles that are far more certain in their specific detail than the first practical principles of the natural order, and on this account, although less certain than supernatural synderesis itself, is far more certain than any practical habit of the purely human order.

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137 "*Ad id quod dicitur de parte theologiae morali: respondetur quod in moralibus id quod scientificum est, solum tractat de regulis quibus recte operandum est, et istae non sunt contingentes, sed certae, sicut omnes aliae regulae artium, licet versentur circa materiam contingentem; quia versantur circa illam non absolute, sed ut regulabilis est regulis certis et determinatis, quae scilicet deducuntur ex principiis practicis certis.*"—John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Theol.*, *In* I, 1, *disp.* 2, *a.* 9.

This special enlightenment deriving from supernatural synderesis also places moral theology in a position with relation to infused prudence superior to that which moral philosophy occupies with respect to acquired prudence. As in the latter case, moral theology cannot attain practical certitude in all its perfection as it concerns the singular operable to be done, and for this must be completed by the personal prudential judgment. Yet having a superior source of knowledge, it can reinforce the practical certitude of the prudential judgment in a way far superior to the natural habits of synesis and gnome.[158] And although prohibited by its scientific nature from attaining the singular contingent in the sense of the *individuum determinatum*, it can have certitude of what should be done all the way to the level of the *individuum vagum*, as we have already noted, and this at least partially from the very detailed direction it derives from its knowledge of the divine law, which is sufficient of itself to direct man to his ultimate end in every detail of his interior life.[159] Thus, far from conferring only *aliquod auxilium* on the direction of human affairs, in the manner of moral philosophy, it is an invaluable help—and, in the case of most Christians, even a necessary help—to the attainment of a certain prudential judgment by the individual in any concrete situation.

It is precisely for this reason that the practical certitude of moral theology can be called a type of prudential certitude—not an imperative and applicative certitude, to be sure, but rather a regulative and normative certitude which is most proximate to, and confirmatory of, the latter. In this understanding, there is a further relation of the practical certitude of moral theology to the supernatural certitudes of order or intention which may be worth noting. The moral theologian can say with certainty what should be done by any Christian in a given moral situation in order to attain ultimately to the beatific vision. The practical truth and certainty of his judgment then presupposes that the Christian is in the state of grace, that his will and his appetites are rectified and properly ordered by charity and the infused virtues, and therefore that he will have a certainty of operation which is necessary for the full perfection of practical certitude attending the action itself. And as this certitude is in the moral theologian, so it can also be said to be, in a proportionate way, in moral theology as it proceeds in its compositive mode: not *in actu exercito* as it would be in the individual theologian prudently giving direction to a soul, but rather—to adapt Cajetan's distinction to a slightly different context,[160]—*in actu signato*, as it is already contained in the speculative truths of the science conjoined with the precepts

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158 Cf. *ibid.*, a. 10, n. 23.
159 Cf. *I-II*, 91, 4; *II-II*, 8, 3, ad 3.
160 Cf. *In I-II*, 58, 5, n. 8; text given *supra*, p. 131, fn. 131.

and counsels of divine revelation, and presupposing the right dispositions of the subject in which it will ultimately be applied.

This practical certitude of moral theology, finally, is the certitude which causes all the confusion and difficulty in locating moral theology with respect to speculative science, and in delineating the proper role of demonstrative methodology in its elaboration. It is true that there are many ways of speaking according to which it can be said that its practical certitude is of conclusions that are true only *ut in pluribus*. What moral theology has to say about marriage and adultery, for instance, will hardly be practical truth for a pagan polygamist living according to his reason, and it may even not be practical truth for some Christians poorly instructed in their faith and guided by an invincibly erroneous conscience. And in very detailed prescriptions, the certitude and truth cannot be mathematical. It must, by its very nature, be approximate and allow of some latitude for individual dispositions and abnormal circumstances, even when applied by the Christian endowed with all the infused virtues—for it suffices that the prudential judgment of the latter *approach* the mean of reason, and not find it in mathematical fashion. But still, when all these incidental and *per accidens* considerations are eliminated, moral theology can ascertain what is *per se rectum* for human action in order to attain its ultimate end.[161] Its certitude in so doing is inferior, in an absolute sense, to the speculative certitude of mathematics, even though it depends on a speculative theological certitude superior to the latter.[162] But in the practical order, it is the greatest certitude that can be had short of that of the last practical judgment itself, and as such, the most *useful* for directing the image of God to his ultimate perfection.[163]

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[161] Cf. Cajetan, *In II-II*, 154, 2, n. 14; text given *supra*, p. 136, fn. 149.

[162] This, then, is the sense of the statement: "acribologia mathematica non est expetenda in moralibus." Cf. Cajetan, *In Prol. I-IIae*: text given in fn. 150, p. 218. Cf. also fn. 156, p. 138.

[163] The reader may wonder at this point if there is *any* sense in which the practical certitude of moral theology can be said to be superior to that of the last practical judgment of infused prudence. The answer to this question can be seen in terms of what has already been said in Chapter Three about the notions of practical truth and certitude, and the relations which obtain between synderesis and prudence in their attainment. Practical truth and certitude, when taken in their strictest meanings, can only be concerned with the singular and contingent, which alone is operable by man, and never with the universal and necessary, which as such is immutable and escapes man's causality. Taken in this strict sense, the practical truth and certitude of prudence is superior to that of synderesis, because prudence attains directly to the singular and contingent, while synderesis,—although having the greatest certitude about its first practical principles,—may err indirectly through the improper application of conscience in the singular case. In a broad sense, however, where practical truth and certitude are taken as being associated with all habits of the practical order, synderesis may be said to have a greater

Thus we conclude that, in a manner quite analogous to what we have already seen from our analysis of moral philosophy, there are two certitudes associated with moral theology, but that each one is superior, in its own order, to the corresponding certitudes associated with a natural ethics. The speculative certitude generated by the resolutive mode of moral theology is homogenous with that of all theological demonstration. As such, it participates in the certitude of faith, and at the same time, because of the special techniques of demonstration that it employs, attains to the strict, apodeictic certitude of Aristotelian science at the level of reason, even though concerned with a highly variable and contingent subject matter. On the other hand, the practical certitude which is generated by its compositive mode rests on this speculative certitude and composes it in turn with the practical certitude of faith as a form of supernatural synderesis. Looking forward to a proper application in the individual case with the complete moral certitude of infused prudence, it itself gives the surest rule that can guide the prudent Christian in all the details of his supernatural life. In either certitude, it is the influence of divine faith, as both speculative and practical and as possessing the plentitude of certitude in both orders, that accounts for the eminent superiority of moral theology over any human science analyzing and regulating man's proper operation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

With this we terminate our study of the demonstrative process in moral theology. The task to which we have set ourselves in the present Chapter has been the synthetic one of combining various elements already developed earlier in the treatise, in order to describe and locate the use of demonstration in the method that characterizes the moral theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. This has been carried out, in the main, by explaining first the

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practical truth and certitude than prudence, because it is the originative source and guarantee of prudential truth and certitude, in a general way, even though it requires further determination to reach the concrete case. In an analogous manner, it can be said that if practical truth and certitude be taken in their strict sense, they are attained more perfectly in the prudential judgment of infused prudence than they are in the practical conclusions of moral theology. In a broad sense, however, where these terms are applied to general truths that can direct singular action, the conclusions of moral theology are more certain than those of infused prudence insofar as they can guide and regulate the latter in a general way, much as synderesis guides and regulates prudence. We have preferred to follow the strict terminology, and for this reason place the greatest practical certitude in the last judgment of infused prudence, although we recognize that the latter is in turn reinforced and confirmed by the conclusions of moral theology, and on that account that the latter have a greater *general* certitude, even in the practical order, than the last determination of prudence. However, it is not this certitude which is most perfectly *practical*, and that is why we prefer the stricter terminology.

speculative method used by the moral theologian, and then showing how the practical method proceeds from the latter and furnishes conclusions which are immediately applicable to the direction of souls at the supernatural level. These results were then applied to the problem of the certitude associated with such conclusions, to arrive at a solution which we believe attains substantially to the truth of the matter, and at the same time is most consistent with terminological usage in the Thomistic tradition.

With regard to speculative method, we saw that its methodological basis was rooted in the *a posteriori* demonstration which must be used in all scientific studies of the human soul and the operations which proceed from it. Although this serves as a starting point, however, we also explained how it leads to a type of *a priori* demonstration, usually made *ex suppositione finis*, which is extremely useful in finding definitions of the entities with which the moral theologian deals. It is in this phase of his speculative method that the moral theologian parallels the demonstrative procedures used in other tracts of sacred theology, particularly in the study of man and his potencies and in sacramental theology, which we have treated summarily in Chapter One. Our discussion of this demonstrative methodology, moreover, accented its sapiential character—as opposed to what we have called its purely scientific character—by showing how the rational process is for the most part ordered to the explication of truths already known in a general way through divine revelation, which are thereby given a technical elaboration that is most fruitful for understanding the spiritual organism itself, as well as the human and divine factors that conduce to its proper perfection. We saw too that there are limitations on the use of demonstrative method by the moral theologian, some arising intrinsically from the basic unintelligibility of matters to which it may be applied, others from the fact that it would not be feasible to apply it to the study of entities that are of minor importance in the attainment of perfection, even though such application might be theoretically possible.

Our concern with the practical method of moral theology, on the other hand, was mainly one of showing that the moral theologian's discursive process does not terminate with his merely contemplating the truth about the operable which he studies, but rather must continue into a type of practical discourse which furnishes rules for the production of that operable by the individual person. It is in this sense that we said that demonstration actually occupies an intermediate position in the integral method of the moral theologian: it concludes the resolutive mode, but at the same time it furnishes middle terms which can be composed in a practical syllogism which is useful for directing human action. In describing this compositive mode of moral theology, we were careful to distinguish it from the com-

position which is properly that of prudence and which imperates the singular operable itself. The term of the moral theologian's composition, we saw, could at best be the *individuum vagum* for whom it could furnish a rule proximately governing action, without actually imperating the action at a personal level. As a corollary to this, we showed the fallacy involved in trying to improve on traditional concepts of morality by a proposed system of "existential ethics," akin to the "situation ethics" that has fallen under ecclesiastical condemnation. We then entered into a few details of the application of theological knowledge to the direction of souls, and concluded by stressing the importance of habitual knowledge of the results of speculative analysis, such as contained in the *Secunda Pars* of St. Thomas' *Summa*, principally in confessors and preachers and those officially entrusted with the care of souls, but secondarily and in a proportionate degree in educated laymen who can be introduced to the study of sacred theology.

With this understanding of the dual method of moral theology, we were finally in a position to answer the difficulties about the certitude of theological conclusions in moral matters. Our solution paralleled what we said in Chapter Three about the certitudes associated with moral philosophy, except that we took further account of the influence of divine faith, as both speculative and practical, on the theologian's conclusions. As a consequence, we saw that some of the conclusions reached by the moral theologian—those namely resulting from the resolutive mode—enjoy the full speculative certitude of the results of theological demonstration, and in this sense are even more certain than conclusions established in the science of mathematics. Other conclusions, resulting from the compositive mode, have a type of practical certitude in that they furnish rules which *per se* should govern the operation of the virtuous Christian seeking perfection, but which defect *per accidens* from the practical truth and moral certitude attained by the individual in the prudential judgment. In this sense, such conclusions do not have the absolute character of the results of mathematical or other speculative demonstration, but in the practical order, they give the most certain norm, short of the precepts contained in divine revelation and assented to directly by faith, which is available to direct man to his supernatural end. The possibility of these two certitudes, and the difficulties which arise when they are not carefully distinguished, can therefore be traced to the special speculative-practical character of a theological science dealing with human action, or what is ultimately the same thing, to the special position occupied by demonstration in the methodological elaboration of moral theology.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Demonstration, therefore, has a primary role to play in moral theology according to the methodology of St. Thomas Aquinas. This primacy is not one that is strikingly apparent to the beginning student, nor is it appreciated generally by theologians who are not expressly concerned with a reflex study of method, nor is it even stated explicitly in the theological writings of St. Thomas. Rather it is a primacy akin to that of the foundation of a building, which is not itself visible nor appreciated in the routine appraisal of the completed structure, but without which the structure could not stand and attract attention through its more observable features.

The fundamental role of demonstration in the Thomistic development of moral theology is traceable ultimately to the fact that, for St. Thomas, the latter is an integral part of the science of sacred theology, which differs from divine faith in that it is not immediate knowledge of the supernatural as such, but rather a mediate form of knowing by which assent is made to the truth of a proposition insofar as it is seen through a middle term. For St. Thomas, moreover, a middle term which would generate mere opinion is not enough for the technical elaboration of sacred doctrine to which he addressed himself. Rather, the goal of his endeavors was mediate knowledge with a certitude at least the equivalent of that to be found in the conclusions of Aristotelian science. Such a result, by the methodological canons the Angelic Doctor employed, could only come from a demonstrative process, and this is the basic reason why demonstration functions so fundamentally in the method he used to elaborate his moral theology.

When one searches further into the details of that usage, one finds that in the main it is ordered to the explication of truths that have been divinely revealed about human activity at the supernatural level, by which man can attain the ultimate perfection and happiness envisaged for him by God. Because of this explicative function, which is aimed more at an understanding of truths already known than it is at the deduction of new conclusions, it can be seen why moral theology makes more use of the philosophical disciplines of psychology and ethics than do other tracts in sacred theology, and why it proceeds more in a sapiential mode than in a simple scientific one. At the same time, because the activity which it studies is radicated in the human soul, it uses demonstration in a special way to investigate the nature and properties of various parts of the spiritual organism, to furnish a

complete and well articulated body of knowledge regarding the principles from which such activity proceeds. This knowledge, akin to the medical doctor's scientific analysis of the organs of the human body, furnishes a most useful standard against which the moral theologian can check the health of the spiritual organism, and supply directives which will be efficacious in leading men to their supernatural goal.

* * *

It is true, nonetheless, that there are many problems which arise in connection with this usage of a demonstrative methodology, particularly from the extreme variability and contingency of the human act itself, as we have already pointed out in the Introduction. The contingent as such cannot be the subject of demonstration—and there is no way of avoiding this basic limitation—but even the most contingent act will have its intelligible aspects, and will be characterized by some type of necessity. It is precisely the moral theologian's methodological problem to ascertain the element of necessity associated with human activity at the supernatural level, and to develop appropriate procedures for assuring that his demonstrative process terminates in necessary knowledge, even though it be concerned with matter that is not itself completely determined and necessary. The general method for so doing is to demonstrate *ex suppositione finis*, in order to show all that is necessarily entailed in the realization of man's supernatural perfection, despite the recognition that such perfection will not be realized by each individual man. Such a procedure obviously does not attain the singular as such, but it is important to note that it does attain the singular under its universal and scientifically knowable aspect. Thus it is truly an "existential" type of knowledge, and not merely an abstract, idealized caricature of perfect knowledge which some have characterized as "essentialist." The latter terminology derives from a basic misunderstanding of how scientific knowledge is attained in all fields of investigation, given the limitation that man only attains the existent singular through a universal concept, and is no more a valid criticism of moral theology than it is of any human science.

Moral theology, moreover, does furnish rules which can direct and govern man's progress to his ultimate perfection in the supernatural order, and this is its most important function as a practical science. But such rules are not given directly by a demonstrative process. Rather, in order to understand the precise method by which such rules are attained, it is necessary to distinguish the practical character of moral theology from its speculative character, and the compositive and resolutive modes which are associated respectively with these two aspects of one and the same science. Demonstration is itself a resolutive process, which terminates in the demonstrator's contemplating the truth of a conclusion precisely as seen through one or

more middle terms. The compositive process of moral theology, on the other hand, takes the results of a demonstrative analysis, and recomposes them with first practical principles in order to furnish specific practical rules that are applicable to particular instances of human conduct. The connection between the two modes of procedure comes from the fact that the same middle terms that are uncovered by the speculative analysis are used in the composition which terminates in the rule. It is for this reason that demonstration can be said to occupy an intermediate position in the integral method of moral theology: it terminates the resolutive mode, while at the same time it furnishes the materials with which the compositive mode leading to the rule can be begun.

It should likewise be noted that the rules resulting from the compositive process of moral theology are *not* to be identified with the regulatory judgments of prudence or art which imperate the singular operable itself. Whereas the latter represent practical knowledge in its most actual form, or *in actu exercito,* the former represent the type of habitual knowledge furnished by a practical science, which is available for application to the *individuum determinatum* through a prudential judgment, but which itself can only be extended as far as the *individuum vagum,* insofar as it conceives the universal or general case under a certain particularity. Although on this account not able to take account of individual dispositions and singular circumstances, the practical direction given by moral theology shares in the practical certitude of the moral precepts contained in the deposit of revelation, and is the most complete indication available to the virtuous Christian as to how he should act in order to attain his supernatural end.

It is only when these aspects of the method of moral theology are understood, moreover, that the problems about the certitude of its conclusions can be solved. In this connection, it should be noted that the modern scholastic division of certitudes into metaphysical, physical and moral—which is frequently found in manuals—is not to be found in St. Thomas or the early Thomistic tradition. Of the three, moral certitude undoubtedly can be the source of the greatest confusion, for it can be attributed variously to the demonstrated conclusions of moral science, to the practical rules furnished by moral science for the guidance of human action, and to the last practical judgment of prudence. For this reason, it is better to ignore this distinction entirely when speaking of the certitude of conclusions in moral theology, and instead to focus attention on the speculative and practical truths which are attained by the resolutive and compositive modes respectively, and to make precise the certitude associated with each.

On this basis, then, it can be said that any conclusion established in moral theology by a strict demonstrative process has a speculative certitude

that is not inferior to the certitude of conclusions established demonstratively in metaphysics, mathematics, physics or logic, in the sense that it has an apodeictic character and could not be otherwise than it is. What causes difficulty on this point is the recognition of the fact that such certitude is not easily attained in the matter with which the moral theologian deals, while it is invariably associated with the matter with which the metaphysician or mathematician is concerned. Because of this situation, the moral theologian is generally restricted in the way in which he is able to demonstrate, and must employ procedures that are analogous to those used by the natural philosopher and psychologist. At the same time, however, because he demonstrates theologically, his conclusions participate in the certitude of faith, and on this account are more certain than the demonstrated conclusions of any human science. Thus the speculative certitude of conclusions reached by a valid resolutive process in moral theology is not limited in any way, and is homogeneous with that of conclusions reached in other tracts of sacred theology.

With regard to the certitude of the practical truth reached by the compositive process, on the other hand, the situation is somewhat different. Here practical truth and certitude is only perfectly realized in the prudential judgment which imperates the singular operable, with full cognizance of individual dispositions and all the moral circumstances which attend the placing of the act. Moral theology, by contrast, has a practical certitude of the rule which it can furnish for the general case, which in turn is applicable, *ut in pluribus*, in individual circumstances. Because of its very nature as a universal rule which may have to be further determined or even modified in the individual case, this type of conclusion does not have the absolute character of the speculative conclusions reached in metaphysics, mathematics, and even in the resolutive mode of moral theology. Still, in the practical order, in view of its special assistance from the precepts of divine faith, it furnishes the most certain rule of what should be done, *per se*, by the virtuous Christian who would act reasonably to achieve perfection in the supernatural order. The limitation in this practical certitude, it should be noted, is not one that comes from the demonstrative process that is employed in moral theology, but rather is inherent in the very nature of practical truth and the way it can be reached by the compositive process of any practical science. Notwithstanding this limitation, however, the practical certitude of such conclusions of moral theology is superior to any other practical certitude of the natural order, and can even confirm and strengthen the practical certitude of the judgment of infused prudence, although it itself must be complemented by the latter to actually imperate the single, contingent action of the individual.

This, then, furnishes a general solution of the difficulties mentioned in the Introduction, and which we there proposed as the motivating force behind our study. The question might now be raised as to what is the pedagogical import of this solution, particularly in view of the fact that St. Thomas himself makes very little explicit mention of his method, and seems never to have stressed the importance of demonstration in moral theology. Should, for example, demonstrative methodology be made a focal point in the teaching of moral theology, and stress placed on the various types of certitude that characterize the conclusions reached in both the speculative and practical exposition of the subject matter?

In answer to this question, we would incline to the position that, as a general rule, it is better to follow St. Thomas' own practice, and not to stress too much the demonstrative methodology that is being used to study the subject matter. It goes without saying that the demonstrations will themselves have to be taught, because students cannot be furnished merely with conclusions, but have to be given the proper reasons which will cause their assent to the conclusions, and these in general will be the middle terms of demonstrative syllogisms. That to which we have reference here is rather a reflective analysis, where not only the demonstration is presented, but attention directed explicitly to the method of demonstrating and the certitude which is thereby attained. Such a procedure, while theoretically desirable, has two practical dangers which should be noted. The first is that it is difficult to teach two things at once, and if too much stress is placed on the method, the students may not learn the matter with which the method is concerned.[1] If a choice has to be made between the matter and the method, therefore, we would prefer to teach the matter well, and use the method *in actu exercito*, without explicitly calling attention to the reflective aspects of its use. The second difficulty is closely associated with the first, and centers on the fact that it is one thing to be certain of a conclusion, and quite another to be certain that one is certain. If questions of certitude are raised in the teaching process, many students will not have certainty of the conclusions being proposed, and thus will be completely lost when expected to see *why* they are certain of their certainty. On the other hand, if the professor aims at proposing the matter in a clear and systematic fashion, they may attain certain knowledge of the conclusions themselves, and this is sufficient for all practical purposes for which their knowledge will have to be employed.

While, however, this might be the most feasible course to follow in the general case, we would also take the position that particular problems of the times may dictate a change in such a teaching policy. For instance, in

[1] Cf. *In II Meta.*, lect. 5, n. 335.

contemporary philosophy, the two intellectual movements that have the greatest current appeal, viz., phenomenology and analytical philosophy, are both basically concerned with questions of methodology. Some students, influenced by these movements, may gain the impression that great progress is being made in methodological studies, and even question the validity of the analysis being presented by the professor on the grounds that it does not take account of modern developments. In the face of such a situation, it might be highly advisable, and even necessary, to take up questions of methodology from time to time, particularly to explain what kinds of certitude are attainable and the various methods by which they can be attained.

So much for the relevance of demonstrative methodology, in general, to the teaching of moral theology. What has been said is primarily applicable to the intellectual formation of seminarians, but it is worth noting that these conclusions are not without application in college teaching. If moral theology is to replace the "religion course" in the Catholic college, and not be merely a sophisticated type of moral exhortation, or what is worse, a dry exercise in casuistry, it should be taught *as* theology, and that means it should be taught in the scientific mode. Yet, as we have seen, the scientific mode of *moral* theology is a peculiar one, one that must make allowance for practical aspects of the science as well as those that are purely speculative. In light of this, there may be legitimate complaint that some college teaching has not been practical *enough* for the American collegian. But the inference should not be drawn that moral theology can only be made more practical by making it less speculative. If our study has shown anything, it has shown that moral science can only be a practical science *in the measure that it is* first speculative: it *must* be speculative, in order to be practical. And it is precisely the speculative or demonstrative aspect that is teachable, that supplies the unchanging foundation for practical applications properly adapted to the changing exigencies of the times. In this regard, it is interesting to note that American educators, traditionally pragmatic, have recently insisted on a strengthening of medical and engineering curricula in the area of the "pure sciences" as being the training best adapted to progressive development of these essentially practical disciplines. Must moral theologians take a leaf from their notebooks, to convince themselves that the traditional way is the best after all, and is actually the progressively scientific approach to changing situations in twentieth-century morals?

Another point that merits comment is the intimate relationship that must exist between the teaching of moral philosophy and moral theology respectively. From what has been said about the sapiential character of moral theology, it is apparent that the latter makes great use of moral philosophy in its own elaboration. Obviously, then, the teaching of moral theology in

the college must be accommodated to the philosophical development of the college student. In some ways, moral theology is much easier to teach than a natural ethics, if for no other reason than because divine faith, as practical, already gives very detailed directions for the attainment of supernatural happiness. Yet the theological explication of these directions can only be done through the development of moral philosophy. Once this is recognized, it matters little whether the moral philosophy be itself taught independently, or in connection with moral theology as one of the latter's sapiential functions. The very structure of the science offers considerable latitude to the educator, who thus has the freedom to work out a content and concatenation of courses suited to his immediate pedagogical requirements.[2]

* * *

Apart from the teaching of moral theology, there is finally the problem of the organic development of the science itself by competent theologians. Here again the relationships between traditional modes of thought and contemporary approaches call for investigation and study. The fact that new approaches are being urged is a sign that the old have not been completely effective, and yet the situation is not as simple as this indication might make it appear. The question that suggests itself rather is this: Are those who reject the old fully cognizant of what they are rejecting? Are new approaches being proposed because their proponents are well acquainted but dissatisfied with the moral theology of St. Thomas, or is it rather because they poorly understand the latter, or have never truly appreciated the complex requirements for a science that can direct human action to its supernatural end?

Certainly some recent innovations, as has been seen in this study, give reason to suspect that their authors have neglected the study of traditional doctrine.[3] This is not to deny that much hard work has been put into their proposals. The shame is that such work should be so singularly misguided and unenlightened with respect to classical contributions, and particularly in the field of demonstrative methodology. And there is really no excuse for Catholic theologians not being well versed in the Thomistic approach to moral problems: the teaching of the Holy See has been remarkably clear and consistent in this regard. It is not by rejecting the philosophy and theology of St. Thomas that progress will be made, but rather by first understanding the teaching of the Angelic Doctor, and then extending it and applying it to meet modern problems.

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[2] For a full discussion of this topic, see the symposium edited by Reginald Masterson, O.P., *Theology in the Catholic College*, Dubuque, Ia.: 1961, particularly the chapter by B. M. Ashley, O.P., "Philosophy and College Theology," pp. 233-268.

[3] See also C. William's review of Lecleq's *La philosophie morale de saint Thomas devant la pensée contemporaine*, *FZTP* 7 (1960), pp. 74-77.

Granted, as the detailed working out of our study has shown, this task is a difficult one. Human nature being what it is, it is much easier to make a new beginning than to go through the hard work of comprehending and evaluating what others have already done. Hence the temptation to be radically new and different, to which innovators succumb in every age. Four centuries ago, Cajetan had to warn contemporary moralists: "We must proceed very carefully in this consideration, lest, departing from the excellence of Aristotle and St. Thomas, we should fall victim to our own imaginings, and coin the new because we do not understand the old."[4] In our own day, the same warning again becomes applicable, indeed merits repeating with more insistence than ever. "Let no Christian, whether philosopher or theologian, embrace eagerly and without due consideration whatever novelty happens to be thought up from day to day, but rather let him weigh it with painstaking care and a balanced judgment, lest he lose or corrupt the truth he already has, with grave danger and damage to his faith. . . . As we well know from the expetience of centuries, the method of Aquinas is singularly pre-eminent both for teaching students and for bringing truth to light; his doctrine is in harmony with divine revelation, and is most effective both for safeguarding the foundation of the faith and for reaping, safely and usefully, the fruits of sound progress."[5]

Our study will have achieved its aim if it has shown how remarkably apposite are these words of the Holy Father, viewed in the context of recent methodological innovations in moral theology.

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[4] *In II-II*, 129, 1, n. 2.

[5] Pope Pius XII, *Encyc.* "Humani Generis," *AAS* 42 (1950), pp. 572-573 (trans. *IER* 75 (1951), p. 312); cf. also *AAS* 38 (1946), p. 387.

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