



AN INTRODUCTION TO  
PHILOSOPHY

BY

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THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED  
WITH AFFECTION AND REVERENCE  
TO  
MY FIRST TEACHERS AND MY LIFELONG FRIENDS,  
THE MOTHER SETON SISTERS OF CHARITY  
*of Seton Hill, Greensburg, Pennsylvania*



## PREFACE

An Introduction to Philosophy ought to live up to its name. It should tell the young collegian, and the presumably older non-collegian who takes it up with serious intent, a number of important things. It should answer the questions naturally to be expected of the person who wishes to be introduced,—questions such as these : What is philosophy ? How did it come into existence ? What interesting things have happened to develop it or to hinder its development ? What great names are identified with its effort ? What have the bearers of these names done for philosophy ? Is there a single true philosophy ? Can there be a really false philosophy ? Can one know true from false ? What, in outline, are the things philosophy speaks of ?

Some such litany of inquiries, duly adapted, would be recited,—at least inaudibly in his own mind and heart,—by any normally curious human being about to be introduced to a Personage. And philosophy is as interesting and as exciting as any Personage, even if he were spelled in capitals throughout.

This book attempts to introduce the reader or student to philosophy by answering the sort of questions just listed. It tells, in the somewhat dry and dusty fashion exacted by the needful compression of much in small space, the story of philosophy: its birth, its experiences, and even discusses its ancestry. It sets forth numerous samples of the language of philosophy, and insists upon a clear understanding of these terms. It tells of true philosophy, and of many a system of doctrines that tries to justify itself as true philosophy. It follows the winding course of philosophy through the centuries and down to our own. Then it sets forth the content of philosophy, the seven master sciences which are the departments of philosophy in its rounded and

complete form. All this the present manual attempts to do. Such value as the book may have lies all in this attempt. The introduction may be a stumbling and half-inarticulate thing, but if it brings minds into familiar and appreciative communion, it can claim value despite its defects and stutterings.

It is hoped that this Introduction will really introduce many minds to the Queen of Human Sciences. After that is done, the personal efforts of each individual must determine whether he is to retire to the remembrance of a regal smile, or to be held as a favored courtier close to the queenly throne.

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# AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

## INTRODUCTION

I. The Name *Philosophy*; 2. Definition of Philosophy; 3. Object of Philosophy; 4. Importance of Philosophy; 5. Identification of the True Philosophy; 6. Division of This Treatise.

I. The Name *Philosophy*: The word *philosophy* is a combination of two Greek nouns, *philia* which means “love” or “friendship,” and *sophia* which means “wisdom.” We may therefore translate the word *philosophy* as “the love of wisdom.” A *philosopher*, consequently, is “a lover of wisdom.”

Translating a word is one way of expressing its *nominal definition*. For a nominal definition (called so from the Latin *nominalis* which means “having reference to a *nomen* or *name*”) tells what a name means. A nominal definition explains a name, but sometimes it tells very little about the thing which has the name. Of much greater value and importance is *real definition* (called so from the Latin *realis* which means “having reference to a *reality* or *thing*”). For while nominal definition explains the name of a thing, real definition explains the thing itself. Still, there is sometimes much enlightenment to be found in studying aptly formed names. This is so in the case of *philosophy*. We shall therefore pause briefly to consider the nominal definition of philosophy. Afterwards we shall study its real definition.

We have legend, if not history, to tell us that the word *philosophy* was coined by Pythagoras in the 6 century B.c. This ancient Greek teacher is praised for his humility or his clear-sightedness,

—which comes to much the same thing,—in recognizing the fact that a man, by the use of his unaided natural powers, can never attain to wisdom pure and simple. He can be, and should be, a lover of wisdom, a seeker after wisdom. But he may never presume to call himself absolutely wise. And hence Pythagoras called his own deep studies, not wisdom, but the love or the quest of wisdom; that is, he called these studies *philosophy*.

Not long after Pythagoras there appeared in Greece men of wide influence but of inferior mind who proudly called themselves “the enlightened” or “the wise” (as who should say “the intelligentsia”); the name in Greek is *sophoi*. History has permitted these persons to keep the name thus usurped, and knows them as *The Sophists*. But it is a tidy piece of irony that the name *Sophist* has come to mean, not a man truly wise, but a pretender and a quack. “Thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.” We wonder what lies in store for the prideful modern “intellectuals” who make a religion of the latest apparent findings of material science. Doubtless their place is already set among the antic-comedians on the stage of coming time, and futurity will use them for its mirth, yea, for its laughter.

Philosophy, *nominally* or by virtue of the word as a name, means the love of wisdom. The words *love* and *wisdom* call for a moment’s attention.

*Love*, in its fundamental meaning, is the tendency or drive of the will towards an object. It is an act and a state of the will, not a tender sentiment or affection. Sometimes, indeed, the will-act and the will-state of love are attended by soft feeling, but this is not always or necessarily the case. It is important to notice and to remember this fact in a day when the cinema and light fiction have distorted and almost destroyed the true meaning of the word *love*.—Love is of two types, called by the learned *desiring Love* and *well-wishing love* (or, in the ancient Latin terminology, *amor concupiscentiae* and *amor benevolentiae*). *Desiring love* tends to possess its object; *well-wishing love* tends to do good to its object. Manifestly, the love of wisdom which we call *philoso-*

*phy* is desiring love. It is love which finds expression in effort, in quest, in striving to possess and to retain wisdom.

And what is this *wisdom* which philosophy seeks? Wisdom is not the same as knowledge, for a person might know much and still be unwise. Wisdom indeed involves knowledge, but it also includes the ability, the inclination, and the steady purpose of putting knowledge to good use. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) says in his book *Summa Contra Gentiles* that a man is to be called wise when he knows what he has to do and plans and manages to do it well. Thus wisdom involves several things: an end or purpose to be attained; an appreciative knowledge of this purpose; an ability, an inclination, and a steadfast effort to achieve the known purpose in the best possible manner. Thus it is *wisdom* to work for a known good purpose in a steady, devoted, and enlightened way. Such is wisdom considered *subjectively*, that is, in its *subject*, in the person who possesses it. Taking the term *wisdom* in an *objective* sense (that is, as a thing in itself, independent of a possessor) and regarding it in a most general way, we may say that wisdom is the sum-total of the things worth knowing and working for, which can attract the best efforts of the best minds and wills. This is the wisdom which philosophy pursues. This is that deepest knowledge, that *altissima scientia*, of which philosophy is the love and the untiring quest.

2. **Definition of Philosophy**: The real definition of philosophy, as contrasted with the nominal definition already discussed, tells us that philosophy is *the science of all things naturally knowable to man's unaided powers, in so far as these things are studied in their deepest causes and reasons*. We shall presently ponder each phrase of this definition. But first it will be well to inspect the meaning of the term *philosophy* as it is loosely employed in casual speech.

We often hear such expressions as these: "the philosophy of education," "the philosophy of religion," "business philosophy,"

“the philosophy of history,” “the American philosophy of life,” “the philosophy of style.” Now what does the term *philosophy* mean in all these uses, or what, at least, does it suggest? It suggests, first of all, a body of reasoned truths or of conclusions regarded as truths. Further, it suggests that these truths are the background, the basis, and the ultimate explanation of the thing to which they are referred as “a philosophy.” Thus the expression “the philosophy of education” suggests a body of reasoned truths (or principles, or “values”) which give meaning to the word *education*, which show the worth of education, and which indicate, in a basic way, the best means of achieving and imparting it. Again, the expression “the philosophy of style,”—that is, of literary style,—means, as it does in Herbert Spencer’s little book which bears that title, the root-reasons which are back of all the rules of grammar and rhetoric. Therefore, “the philosophy” of anything suggests the sum-total and system of reasoned truths which are back of the thing and give it meaning. Of any activity or procedure, of any plan, of any programme, of any “way of life,” *the reasoned basis* is called its *philosophy*. Here, of course, we have the term *philosophy* in a very restricted meaning, even a metaphorical meaning; philosophy thus restricted comes close to what people usually mean when they use that horrible misnomer *ideology*. We have no quarrel with such a restricted use of the term, but it is not in this sense that we employ it in the present treatise. In this study we use the term *philosophy* to indicate the science of all things knowable, the science which is “man’s ultimate effort to interpret the universe”; we do not use the term to mean the basis of some one effort or some one phase of human activity or interest. We do not speak of *the* philosophy of this or that; we speak of *philosophy*. Our concern is philosophy in its first meaning as the *universal* science, not in its restricted or metaphorical meaning as a special or particularized science.

Reverting now to the real definition of philosophy, we find that we have called it the science of all things naturally knowable to man’s unaided powers in so far as these things are studied in

their deepest, their ultimate, causes and reasons. This definition must be learned with care ; we must be sure of the precise meaning of its every phrase.

a) Philosophy is a *science*.—*Science*, considered objectively, is a body of related data, set forth systematically, expressed with completeness, and presented together with the evidence (proofs and explanations) which justifies and establishes these data as certain and true. *Science*, considered subjectively, is scientific knowledge in the mind of a person; it is knowledge that is rounded, systematic, evidenced, and complete.

A science is (objectively) any branch or department of things knowable which presents *related data with certitude, proof, system, completeness*. A science (subjectively) is a person's certain, evidenced, systematic, rounded knowledge of things knowable.

When we say that philosophy is a science, we take the term *science* objectively. We mean that philosophy is a body of related data that is systematic, complete, evidenced, and certain.

It is to be noted in passing that the evidence or proof requisite for a science is not merely experimental or laboratorian evidence. Evidence may also be (as in the case of pure mathematics) *reasoned* or *rational* evidence. This point is important because many teachers- of our times have presumed to limit science to the domain of the laboratorian and the statistician, arbitrarily ruling out rational evidence from the realm of true science. Such a ruling is blind and brazen impudence ; it is also self-contradictory. For no amount of laboratorian data, no number of experiments, no catalogue of statistics, can amount to scientific evidence unless reason reduces them to unity and order and draws conclusions from them. And neither the nature and value of reasoning nor the basic force of the conclusions drawn by reason can be tested by laboratorian devices or proved by experimental methods. We therefore reject the *positivistic, sensistic, materialistic, and empiricist* doctrine that pure reasoning is of no scientific value. Philosophy is a rational or reasoned science, not a laboratorian science. Philosophy does indeed use the findings

of the laboratorian sciences, but it is not confined or hampered by their limitations. It sheds its great light upon the data of the laboratory sciences, serving the scientist as daylight serves the laborer or the mechanic, and, in its turn, it draws from them illustration and even direction for its efforts. But it is not fettered by their methods or subjected to their special requirements.

b) Philosophy is the science of *all knowable things*.—In a day of intense specialization, it seems silly to say that there is a single science of everything. Nearly all the sciences we know of, and notably the positive sciences which keep our laboratorians busy, are partial or departmental sciences. Each of these deals with a branch of knowledge, and each is divided into almost endless departments and sub-departments. In the face of this bewildering maze of sciences, how can we think of *one* science which embraces in its scope every possible object of human knowing? Yet there inevitably *is* such a science. Even those who scoff at the assertion of its bare possibility are forced to assume its existence and to build their findings upon it as a necessary base. A little thought will convince anyone that there must be such a science; the difficulty suggested by the variety and multiplicity of partial sciences is merely a seeming difficulty. Cardinal Mercier has an enlightening word to say on this point in his *Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy* (p. 2) : “Philosophy does not profess to be a particularized science with a place *alongside* other such sciences and a restricted domain of its own for investigation; it comes *after* the particular sciences and ranks *above* them, dealing in an ultimate fashion with their respective objects, inquiring into their connections and the relations of these connections, until it finally arrives at notions so simple that they defy analysis and so general that there is no limit to their application. So understood, philosophy will exist as long as there are men endowed with the ability and energy to push the inquiry of reason to its furthest limit. So understood, it is a living fact, and it has a history of more than two thousand years.”

Indeed, as the Cardinal goes on to point out, it is impossible

to have any particularized science without some fundamental grasp or some assumption of universal truths. The very existence of particularized or partial sciences affirms the existence of a non-particularized science, that is, of philosophy. For it is as impossible to have a partial science without reference to a universal science as it is impossible to have words without reference to a language, or even to have parts without reference to a whole. Not that philosophy is the simple sum-total of partial sciences. No, the relation of the particular sciences to philosophy is not the relation of constituent parts or elements to a totality which is their sum; rather, it is the relation of elements to a reality which is other and greater than themselves. Somewhat similarly, a building which is called a triumph of architecture is something other and something greater than any or all of the bricks and beams used in constructing it. A living plant is something more than a simple sum of parts. A language is more than a list of words; a literature more than a sum of sentences. The glorious harmonies of a musical masterpiece make something other and greater than a sum of notes. To dwell for a moment on the last illustration, we may notice that the harmonies of a musical composition "come after and rank above" the individual notes that make it up. The composition is not a simple addition of note to note; it involves more than single notes or chords sounded in sequence; it involves notes and chords in their relations, their interpretations, their fusions in a reality which is both *other* and *greater* than themselves. So philosophy which is the science of all things, and therefore includes all other sciences and their objects, comes *after* and ranks *above* the partial sciences, and is *other* and *greater* than the sum-total of all these. Philosophy achieves its place *by drawing into basic unities* the vast and bewildering world of knowables with which all other sciences deal piecemeal.

c) Philosophy is the science of all things *naturally knowable* to man.—Philosophy investigates all that man can know by the use of his unaided knowing-powers; that is, by the use of his



intellect or reason working upon the data gathered by his senses. Philosophy does not investigate what man has come to know by Divine Revelation, except, indeed, in so far as he could have known this without such revelation. For this reason philosophy is called *ahuman science* in contrast with *the divine science* of Christian Theology. Philosophy, indeed, is the queen of human sciences.

Sometimes philosophy is described as “the handmaid of theology.” This title is most honorable, and it is thoroughly justified. For the truths which philosophy discovers, discusses, and proves are in perfect alignment with truths divinely revealed. Philosophical truths, moreover, help a person to grasp and appreciate revealed truths. Further, the systematic procedure of philosophy suggests itself as the best and noblest instrument for setting forth the truths of theological science. Thus, in these several ways, philosophy *serves* theology, or, more precisely, serves man in his study and appreciation of theology. Since this service of philosophy to theology is the service of the *human* to the *divine* science, it is aptly described as the service of a handmaid. Now, certain mistaken minds,—some of which are malicious as well as mistaken,—interpret the phrase “the handmaid of theology” to mean “the slave of theology.” These minds, out of an abundance of ignorance which misses the clearest truths of history, suggest that Catholic philosophers, in times past, have bent and twisted philosophy to make it support revealed truth. Nothing could be further from the fact. True philosophy does support Revelation. Naturally so. For the power of reason by which man discovers and proves truths is a gift of the same God who has supernaturally revealed certain truths. There is no contradiction in God; hence there can be no contradiction in His manifestations of truth, whether these be made naturally through the activity of sound minds or supernaturally through His revealed Word. No twisting or bending of philosophy is required to make it serve theology. Philosophy is by nature the devoted handmaid of theology, not its shackled and tortured slave.

d) Philosophy is the science of all things naturally knowable to man *inasmuch as these are studied in their deepest causes and reasons*.—The quest of philosophy is an ultimate one. Philosophy seeks bed-rock for the edifice of human knowledge. Every science looks for causes and reasons to evidence its data ; philosophy seeks the last, the ultimate, the deepest causes and reasons. Philosophy, therefore, stands unique among human sciences. The partial or particularized sciences,—such as physics, chemistry, biology,—must be satisfied with proximate causes and reasons, that is, with those that are more or less ready to hand. For each of the partial sciences works in a very restricted field, and must find justification for its data within that field or in immediately related fields. Philosophy, however, is not so restricted ; philosophy is not immediately or necessarily concerned with proximate causes ; it wants the ultimate, the root-deep evidence for its truths.

To illustrate the contrast between the particular sciences and philosophy, consider a block of limestone. Mathematical science is interested in it solely as *quantity*. Physics looks to its *mass* and *inertia*. Chemistry wants to know the substantial bodily constituents (the *elements*) that compose it. Now, philosophy ignores quantity, physical properties, and chemical constitution (although it does not deny these things). Philosophy poses an ultimate question; it asks, “What, in the deepest sense of the inquiry, is this thing called a block of limestone?” Philosophy does not, like mathematics, inquire about the size or measurement of the limestone. It does not, like physics, investigate qualities or properties of limestone. It does not, like chemistry, seek to know which other bodily realities (called *elements*) make up this bodily reality called limestone. Philosophy asks what this limestone *is*. The other sciences accept the basic fact, the deepest reality, of the block of limestone ; they take this for granted ; they do not seek to investigate it. But it is precisely this deepest reality, ignored or blindly assumed by the partial sciences, that focusses the inquiry of philosophy. Philosophy asks, “What, ulti-

mately, *is* this limestone?" Well, it is a thing or reality; it is a substantial reality; it is a bodily reality. Fundamentally, ultimately, this limestone is *a substantial reality of the bodily order*; more briefly, it is *a body*. And as such, as *a body*, the limestone block engages the attention of philosophy. Notice here what an immense world of knowable things is *drawn into unity* in the one concept or idea of *body*. Notice too how truly *ultimate* is the quest of philosophy as contrasted with the effort of partial sciences to gain *proximate* justification for their conclusions. We have here something that should give us a grasp of the truth that philosophy can be, and is, a science of all things knowable (despite the endless variety and multiplicity of these things), and that philosophy penetrates as deeply as the human mind can go in its investigation of reality.

Philosophy seeks to trace things actual and things possible to their last discernible causes and reasons. Now *a cause* is anything that contributes in any way to the producing or the maintaining of a reality. *A reason* is whatever helps in any way to explain a reality to the inquiring mind. A cause contributes to the *becoming* or the *being* of a reality; a reason contributes to a person's *understanding* of a reality. In a word, a cause produces or maintains, a reason explains.

All reality must be either produced or unproduced. If produced, *it is caused*, it is *an effect*. One effect may, in turn, become the cause of a further effect. But the chain of cause-and-effect is not endless, nor can it be endless. Working back along this chain, we inevitably must come to a First Cause which is not produced, not an effect of a prior cause (for it is *first*). There must be a First Cause, existing of its own necessity, by its own unbounded and supreme excellence. And this Cause is, and must be, *one*. There is only one First or Primary Cause. All other causes in the universe, whether actual or merely conceivable, are *effects* before they are *causes*. As causes then they are not primary, but *secondary*. The one First or Primary Cause is God. God is First; He has no cause or causes of Himself; He is un-

produced; He is not an effect. Yet God is somehow knowable (even as He is here shown to be knowable in the present train of argument) ; God is recognizable; God is explainable to the inquiring mind. All of which proves that while there are no *causes* of God, there are *reasons* which explain to the mind the existence and the excellence of God. Notice and remember this truth : All reality other than God has *both causes and reasons*; God has no causes but only *reasons*.

Now, when we know the cause of anything we have at least a partial explanation of that thing; therefore, *every cause is a reason*. But there are reasons other than causes; therefore, *not every reason is a cause*. Further, a reality, even if it lack causes (as does God) cannot lack reasons; for reality as such is knowable, graspable, understandable. Hence, *everything* is explainable ; everything has its *reasons*; this is true even if the reasons elude the grasp of man's imperfect mind. In a word *nothing can exist without a sufficient or fully-accounting reason for its existence*. This is the meaning of the familiar Latin axiom *Nihil sine ratione sufficienti existentiae suae*. Literary folk like to refer to this truth as the necessity for a *raison d'être*.

Causes are of four chief types; these are called, respectively, *material, formal, effecting, final*. A bodily reality is the product or effect of all four types of cause ; a spiritual reality is the effect of the last three types, for a spirit has no material cause. A *material* cause is the bodily stuff out of which a body is made. A *formal* cause gives "form" or character or definiteness or determinateness to a reality, making it that thing *formally* or *as such*; and this, whether one considers a substantial or an accidental reality ; hence a formal cause is either *a substantial formal cause* (such as that which makes a silver statue *silver*) or *an accidental formal cause* (such as that which makes a silver statue six inches high). An *effecting* cause produces an effect by its activity or operation. A *final* cause is the goal which invites or indicates the aim of the activity of the effecting cause.

Philosophy is interested in all types of causes and in all reasons,

but only in so far as these are *ultimate* or serve as means to the discovery of the ultimate explanation of reality. Herein we notice once more one of the *unifying* characteristics of philosophy, and we are enabled to grasp something of the possibility of a single science which deals with all knowables. For the multitude of sciences that exist today to amaze us with their endless variety are largely a tissue of *proximate causes and effects*, and of *reasons immediate and often provisional*. Philosophy, by entering the *ultimate* realms of investigation, is able to unify, clarify, and enhance the many and various findings of the particular sciences.

3. **Object of Philosophy** : When we speak casually of “an object” we may mean a reality or thing, as when we talk of “visible objects” or “objects of value” or “objects of art.” Or we may mean the end, aim, or purpose of an action, fact, or event, as when we speak of “the object of a visit” or “the object of a plan or programme” or “the object of a meeting.”

Now, when we speak of *the object of a science* we employ the term *object* in an ancient technical sense. First of all, the object of a science is what the science treats of; it is what we loosely call “the subject-matter” of the science. In this sense the object of a science is known as *the material object*. Thus, for example, the material object of the science of geology is the earth; the material object of the science of physiology is the human body; the material object of the science of astronomy is the world of heavenly bodies. Hence when we speak of *the material object* of a science we name, in general, the field in which the science works.—In a second and more penetrating meaning, the object of a science is what gives the science its precise character, its “form” as the ancients would say. It is that which makes a science this determinate science, *formally* or *as such*, and marks it off from other sciences in the same general field. In this sense the object of a science is called *the formal object*. Now, that which gives a science its accurate and determinate character is its point of approach, its aim and purpose, and the principles

which guide it or light its way. Thus geology which studies the earth as its material object is concerned with *the rocky structure of the earth*, and not with the shape or size of fertility or divisions of the earth. We say : the material object of geology is the earth; the formal object of geology is the rocky structure of the earth.

Many sciences may work in the same field; therefore many sciences may have the same material object. But no two sciences deal with the material object in precisely the same way and with the same end in view ; should they do so they would coalesce as *one* science. Hence no two sciences can have the same formal object. Sciences are distinguished one from another by their objects, and, in last analysis, by their complete formal objects. To illustrate this, consider the sciences of anatomy, physiology, and hygiene. All three of these sciences have the same material object, namely, the organs of the human body. But these three sciences have not the same formal object. Anatomy studies its material object for the purpose of knowing *structure*; physiology studies the same material object for the purpose of knowing *function*; hygiene studies the same material object for the purpose of knowing how to maintain *normality and health*.

The material object of philosophy is *reality*, that is, "all things knowable." The formal object of philosophy is *reality in its final explanation*, that is, "studied in its deepest, its ultimate causes and reasons." Philosophy is at one with all sciences in its material object, for all sciences deal with reality, although each particular science has but a limited part of reality in its scope while philosophy has all. But philosophy stands alone, stands unique, in its quest of *ultimate* causes and reasons. Philosophy is distinguished from every other science by its formal object.

There was once great confusion on the question of the distinction between philosophy and theology. The difficulty was this: Philosophy deals with all knowables in an ultimate manner. So does theology. For all knowables may be summed up in two words, *Creator* and *creature*, or in two equivalent words, *God* and *the universe*. It would seem then, since both theology and

philosophy deal with God and the universe in an ultimate way, that these two sciences coalesce as one. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) cleared up the difficulty. He showed that the formal object is itself twofold : the formal object as *aim, purpose, or special aspect*, and the formal object as *guiding principle or light*. The former he called “the formal object *which*” (*objectum formale quod*) ; the latter he called “the formal object *whereby*” (*objectum formale quo*). Now, philosophy deals with all knowables (its material object) in an ultimate manner (formal object *which*) under the unaided light of the human mind (formal object *whereby*). Theology, on the other hand, deals with its material object (all knowables—God and creatures) in an ultimate manner (formal object *which*) under the light of Divine Revelation (formal object *whereby*). Stating the principle: *sciences are distinguished one from another by their respective formal objects and ultimately by the formal object “whereby,”* St. Thomas drew a clear line of distinction between philosophy and theology.

We may state the object of philosophy as follows :

Material Object : all things knowable; all reality;

Formal Object *Quod*: reality as knowable in its ultimate explanations ;

Formal Object *Quo*: reality knowable in its ultimate explanations under the light and effort of man’s unaided reasoning power.

4. **Importance of Philosophy**: On the face of things, it is unquestionably important for us to know what man has accomplished through the centuries by the closest and most intense use of his mind. It is manifestly important to know something of man’s quest into the heart of reality and to read some of the results of that quest.

We all acknowledge the importance of knowing man’s deeds, his dreams, his plans and policies, his management of affairs, his aspirations. Still greater must be the importance of knowing

man's achievements in the high domain of the intellect. To follow the course of human efforts to learn ultimate truth; to be culturally enriched by a knowledge of what these efforts have won; to be helped by this knowledge to avoid the calamitous mistakes of the past; to achieve in all this a real enlightenment of mind,—surely this is to pursue most noble aims. Now, the earnest study of philosophy and its course through history is the one direct means of pursuing such aims. Can there be any doubt then that philosophy is a science of tremendous importance?

Father Stanislaus Lortie in his *Elementa Philosophiae Christianae* (Vol. I, p. 4 f.) says that philosophy is of great importance (a) to individual persons, (&) to human society, (c) to the Christian Faith, and (d) to all the particular sciences.—(a) The individual finds in the study of philosophy a splendid means of exercising—both understanding and will: the understanding is stimulated by the quest of ultimate truth; the will is stirred by basically known truth to choose what is truly good, (δ) Human society finds its condition improved as its members advance in the knowledge of truths fundamental to the social order, to sound economics, to solid political science, (c) .The Christian Faith is benefited by philosophy inasmuch as this science demonstrates the truths which the Fathers of the Church called “The Preamble of the Faith”; further, philosophy is a splendid instrument for the scientific exposition of the truths of Faith, and it illuminates sacred doctrine by apt analogy and telling similitude. Philosophy also defends the Faith against those who presume to attack it in the name of reason; for true philosophy shows that there is, and must be, completest harmony between faith and reason, between religion and science, (d) The particular sciences find in philosophy,—as M. Jacques Maritain points out,—their judge, their defender, and their governor. Yet, though philosophy uses the particular sciences as instruments, and furnishes to them their requisite basis of reasoned principles, it never loses its queenly independence; it remains ever superior to the particular sciences and is “pre-eminently free.”



These, then, are the points in which philosophy shows its tremendous importance: its intrinsic character; its necessity to man in individual and social life; its service to religion and to scientific study; its rank and independence as the queen of human sciences.

No one should go unwillingly to the study of philosophy, surrendering reluctantly to its imperious claims and taking up the work as a dull and heavy duty. For philosophy is not only inescapably important for the person who seeks education and culture; it is also one of the most attractive and absorbing studies that can engage the attention of any mind.

5. **The Identification of True Philosophy:** We have defined philosophy as the science of all things naturally knowable viewed in their last discernible causes and reasons. Pondering this definition, we conclude that a considerable amount of time must have been required for the necessary viewing and discerning. Philosophy, the greatest of human sciences, was not developed in a day. It must have come to whatever objective perfection it may now possess through the expenditure of great effort long sustained.

Now, it is hardly conceivable, in this clamoring, arguing world, that the development of philosophy has been a manifest and steady growth, like that of a tree in a garden, a thing to be recognized by every observer, and not to be mistaken or denied. No, there must have been in ages past, there must be still today, many and various philosophical *efforts*, some copiously fruitful, some largely futile and false. Man has been slow of mind since the original Fall; he has been in ignorance, subject to pride and prejudice; he has been wildly capricious and wilful. Even the story of man's most serious and studious thinking cannot be a simple record of steady achievement and constant agreement. Quite the contrary, in fact. Hence there have been, and there are now, multitudes of theories and of systems of theories which are not true philosophy at all. There are, to use a graceless phrase,

many "false philosophies." Grains of truth are everywhere, of course; no system of thought, however mistaken, can be so wholly false as to exclude altogether every element of truth. But there are endless systems and theories in the world (many of them exhumed from ancient books and presented as sparkingly new "interpretations of the universe") which, in general character, and in their speculative and practical conclusions, are false and harmful to minds and souls. On the other hand, however, much of man's philosophical effort through the ages has led to the discovering of ultimate truth; much of man's mental labor has been successful labor. And, since the effort to systematize findings has been as continuous as the effort to know root-causes, we must reasonably expect to find, somewhere in the world, *a comparatively complete and ultimate system which alone is entitled to the name of philosophy*. In a word, there must be available now for the mind a *true philosophy*. It may not be wholly perfect; indeed, we cannot expect it to be that, since it is a human achievement and will necessarily bear the mark of human limitations. But, after two thousand years of tireless questing, there must be now available a system of ultimate thought, of reasoned truths, of which we say, "This is the best that the mind of man has been able to achieve; this system, more than any other, meets at all points the requirements of fact, and of reason in its most penetrating investigation of reality." The philosophy of which these words can justly be said is the true philosophy. Nor is it true in any mere metaphorical sense, true because it seems acceptable, true because it is comparatively better than other systems. It must be true in fact, true actually, true in very truth. If it be not so, then truth is simply not attainable by man's mind. For if two thousand years of the best efforts have produced a best and tested system which is not a true system, how can we hope that truth will be attained in two thousand years more, or in two million? How can we hope that man's mind can achieve philosophy at all? Unless we are prepared to accept the self-contradiction and the insanity of complete skepticism, we must

admit, on the one hand, that the mind is capable of attaining truth, and, on the other hand, we must acknowledge some success where that capability has been exercised for studious centuries. That man can go on learning is certain, but that man can utterly change the pattern of his knowing, and can abandon all the most certain and fundamental principles and data of his knowledge, is so impossible as to be inconceivable. The true philosophy, then, imperfect but still *true* and *relatively perfect*, must be here in the world for the energetic and adequate mind to discover and embrace.

The modern mind is subject to a benighting influence in the steady advance of experimental science. It is likely to conclude that light and truth lie all ahead, and that the past was all a groping and mistaken time. One thought should serve to correct this sort of blindness. If there is no eternal, unchanging, unaging meaning in the words *truth*, *knowledge*, *certitude*, how do we even know what we are after in all our splendid experiments? How do we even know our aims, however far off in a glorious future we choose to set their attainment? This thought should lead to another: that philosophy is a system of *ultimate* truths which must stand up, and stand unchanged, under all the new findings of all the new sciences. True philosophy will throw its light around the findings of the partial sciences, and will take illustration of ultimate truths from what they offer. But this is only saying what has already been said: "True philosophy must meet at all points the requirements of fact and of reason." True philosophy welcomes and fosters the development of all sciences; the light of its ultimate truth finds new glories in them, as the light of the sun flashes with new beauty when the prisms which refract its ray are multiplied in number and variety.

We assert then that true philosophy *exists in the world*, and that it is *available to the human mind*. Yet much "false philosophy" is here too. How shall the true philosophy be known? What criteria have we for identifying the true philosophy?

First of all, true philosophical doctrine must exhibit itself as

*enduring, as historically continuous.* Truth endures; error tends to fall away, although it tends also to recur and reappear in new guises. A doctrine which has managed *to last*, to weather storms of skepticism and direct attack, to stand up and stand firm under all the advances and extensions of human knowledge, has a claim on our attention as true doctrine. It has proved its mettle; it is authentic ware. Further, doctrine which involves a necessity of truth in itself, and has endured because it cannot be rationally doubted or denied, is necessarily part of the true philosophy.

Again, in addition to lastingness, a true philosophical doctrine will fit in with others of its kind in a sort of interlocking security, so that there is a true *consistency* in the system of such truths. Philosophical truths cannot be like individual survivors riding individual planks; they must rather be amicable and mutually helpful survivors in a single boat,—the one ark of intellectual salvation.

Still again, in addition to lastingness and interlocking consistency, true philosophical doctrines must be *changeless in themselves*; they are not to be trimmed or shaded, contracted or expanded. As the world grows older, as the sum of human knowledge is extended, as science opens new doors and windows, the truths of philosophy must show themselves over and over again, and in more and more detail, to be the rays of a single glorious sun. Truth is always truth. There is no such thing as a doctrine becoming more true or less true, although, of course, there is always the possibility of man's learning more about what is in itself changelessly true. Truth is eternally *there*. It may be discovered in successive and increasingly larger views, but, in itself, it neither grows, nor does it fade into falsity. Further, no truth can be in conflict with any other truth. Where such conflicts seem to exist, they are apparent, not real conflicts, or one of the conflicting things is falsity and not truth.

The course of human history shows a successive discovery and application of ultimate truths. We discern, moving down through the centuries, the stream of man's philosophical achieve-

ment. Sometimes the stream is clear and clean; sometimes it is muddled with intermingled error. In one place its course is straight and plain; in another it moves through bewildering loops and curves. Here it is open, there it lies concealed by some rank growth that obscures its channel. But the stream flows on, flows ever, continuous, consistent, enduring.

Now, of all the doctrines propounded and defended by many men of many ages, which are those that constitute this ever-flowing stream of true philosophy? Which are the truths that make the perennial philosophy, the *philosophia perennis*, the philosophy which runs a course unbroken through the centuries? Well, we shall find that this philosophy is mainly *Greek* in its origins, and mainly *Aristotelian* in its Grecian character. We shall find that this philosophy has come, in the main, from Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle,—but chiefly from Aristotle,—and that it moved into Christian times to take new light and power in the day of Christianity which succeeded the night of pagan antiquity. We shall find it enriched by the genius of St. Augustine in the 4 century; carried forward by religious men,—sole preservers of things of the mind during the true Dark Ages,—into the 9 century and the Revival of Learning under Charlemagne and Alcuin. We shall find it taking more complete form under the labor of the eloquent Roscelin, the deeply learned St. Anselm, the keen but hesitant William of Champeaux, the fiery and erratic Abelard. We shall find it rounding into perfection under the power of the unequalled genius of the 13 century when the greatest minds gave it their best efforts,—William of Auvergne, Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, St. Albert the Great, St. Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus. After the 13 century, the *philosophia perennis*,—henceforth known as *the Scholastic philosophy* or *the philosophy of the schoolmen*,—moved through the years to our own day, often obscured, often ignored, often and for long periods despised as outmoded by those who knew little or nothing of its doctrines and their compelling evidence. Despite continued and recurring obstacles and

obscurities, this philosophy has ever been coming newly into view, ever striving to assume and maintain its rightful place of pre-eminence and control. Today it challenges the attention of the best minds, and its influence widens hourly. Many of its most notable modern exponents are called, perhaps regrettably, *the Neo-Scholastics*,—the “neo” being a concession to current fashion and a call for attention which, without it, would hardly be bestowed.

The Scholastic philosophy, or, more precisely the Greco-Scholastic philosophy, survives in the world today as *the only continuously existent and consistent system of philosophic thought that man may find in all the records of his race*. It represents the best that man has been able to do in his tireless quest of root-reality. It is the one system that has any roundness or completeness in its expression of the human philosophic effort, that is, of the effort of the deepest and most earnest human thought upon *the ultimate unities* which embrace all knowable reality within their mighty scope. This blunt statement is ever provocative of indignation and denial among non-Scholastics with their broken and partial philosophies. But there the thing stands. Like it or hate it, it is fact and not fiction. This is no dictum of partisan minds, but the irrefutable declaration of human history.

Nor is this perennial philosophy, this acme of human achievement in “interpreting the universe,” a dry and dusty system of statistical truths, set in an iron fixity that leaves nothing for the student but the task of memorizing, and balks constructive thinking or advance in philosophic knowledge. No one who knows anything of the Scholastic philosophy could so utterly misconceive it or so slanderously misrepresent it. The Scholastic philosophy has been likened to a stream; it is no stagnant pool. It is a running, living, vitalizing stream, and its springs are ever-flowing, fresh, clear, new as well as old. Indeed, it is the non-Scholastic welter of philosophies that resembles the stale standing water that can do no more than dry away and leave but

fruitless and hardened clay. These futile "philosophies," with their opinions, their views, their approaches to this subject and to that, can never give the human mind the certainty it requires for constructive thinking; they can never bring knowledge to flower or truth to glorious fruitfulness. It is these, and not the perennial philosophy, which give a show of reason to the layman's notion that philosophers are mere idlers and misty-eyed dwellers in a world of unreality.

Now, why should there be indignation and denial when the unique claims of the Scholastic philosophy are presented? There are many minor reasons: the resentment of prideful minds against any claim to uniqueness; the current substitution of fashion for thought, which finds anything with the mark of the past upon it an object for scoffing and derision; the ineptitude that ignores history, and reduces knowledge to a set of charts on the walls of a laboratory. Plain, brazen, unblinking ignorance is another reason. But the major reason for modern resentment against the claims of Scholasticism lies in this fact: the great Scholastics of the past were Catholics and, for the most part, churchmen, who, finding that divinely revealed truth may have in philosophy a noble instrument for exposition and scientific elaboration, applied their philosophic doctrines in the realm of theology. Because, as a fact, Scholastic philosophy stands in agreement with Catholic doctrine (and how could it be otherwise, since both are true?) biassed minds have declared that the Scholastics forced and twisted their philosophy to fit with their religion; that they warped its tenets into place as "Catholic philosophy"; that they shackled and enslaved philosophy to serve a set system of theology. All this is, of course, quite untrue. The *philosophia perennis* has not been warped or twisted; it fits naturally and nobly into its place as the free-serving and devoted *ancilla theologiae*. Just as grace supposes nature and builds upon it, so does Revelation suppose reason and ennobles and enlarges its efforts and its scope. Yet the modern non-Scholastic will have none of this. To him, Scholastic philosophy is Catholic philoso-

phy. And Catholic philosophy is theological philosophy. Now, nothing is more distasteful to the modern mind than theology. For the first mark of pride is that it resents God, and the modern mind is sadly tainted by pride.

Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as Catholic philosophy. That is to say, there is no system of philosophical doctrines built up for the purpose of supplying a reasoned basis for Catholicity. True philosophy actually supplies such a reasoned basis, but it has not been elaborated for that purpose. True philosophy is naturally and inevitably the reasoned basis for true theology. But, as it is the fate and the glory of the Catholic religion to resemble its Divine Founder in being the object of hatred, abuse, contempt, and misrepresentation on the part of those who do not know and will not investigate its character, claims, and history, so it is the fate and glory of the true philosophy which naturally supports Catholicity to be the object of like evil sentiments and activities on the part of persons who reject, with the smallest and most cursory investigation, its irrefutable claims upon the human mind.

At the outset of our study we assert the claims of Scholastic philosophy to be the true philosophy. As we have said, there are elements of truth scattered through many doctrines and many systems and schemes of theories. But in the Scholastic philosophy we find truths systematized, correlated, set forth in a rounded completeness which covers the whole ground of rational inquiry. We do not assert that the Scholastic philosophy is wholly perfect. We must admit that certain departments of it, and notably that called Natural Philosophy or Cosmology, are subject to development and improvement. But in its basic principles, in its rounded character, in its coherence and continuity, in its reasoned conclusions, it is a unique thing in the world. If there can be true philosophy at all, and surely there can be, then this is the true philosophy. Our studies, as we advance, will help to show the justice of this claim.

From the standpoint of Scholastic philosophy we shall view



and criticize the development of philosophic thought as we endeavor to trace, in an elemental and sketchy manner, the progress of the *philosophia perennis* through human history.

6. **DIVISION OF THIS TREATISE:** The first part of the present study is descriptive and historical. We shall, in this part, look into the beginnings of philosophy, its development, its coming of age. The second part of our study turns upon the essential questions of philosophy; it turns upon what may be called the diversified function of philosophy. If we choose, we may say that the first part of this study is *historical*, the second part *functional*.

The treatise is therefore divided into two Parts. These, with their subjoined Chapters are set forth in the following scheme :

### PART FIRST

#### The Origin and Growth of Philosophy

- Chapter I. The Beginnings of Philosophy
- Chapter II. The Development of Philosophy
- Chapter III. The Perfecting of Philosophy
- Chapter IV. The Course of Philosophy to Our Times

### PART SECOND

#### The Questions of Philosophy

- Chapter I. The Logical Question
- Chapter II. The Critical Question
- Chapter III. The Ontological Question
- Chapter IV. The Cosmological Question
- Chapter V. The Psychological Question
- Chapter VI. The Theological Question
- Chapter VII. The Ethical Question

## PART FIRST

### The Origin and Growth of Philosophy

The Part gives some account of the roots of philosophic endeavor, and of the emergence and development of philosophy. It gives a summary description and criticism of notable philosophical doctrines from the most ancient times to the present day. These matters are discussed in four Chapters, as follows :

Chapter I. The Beginnings of Philosophy

Chapter II. The Development of Philosophy

Chapter III. The Perfecting of Philosophy

Chapter IV. The Course of Philosophy to Our Times



## CHAPTER I

### THE BEGINNINGS OF PHILOSOPHY

The present Chapter discusses *the roots of philosophy* found in man's rational nature and in some primeval manifestation to man of the meaning of reality, particularly of his own existence. Further, the Chapter studies *the first emergence of philosophy* among the ancient Orientals and the early Greeks. The Chapter is accordingly divided into two Articles :

Article i. The Roots of Philosophy

Article 2. The Emergence of Philosophy

#### Article 1. The Roots of Philosophy

a) Man's Rational Nature;    b) Primitive Revelation and Tradition.

a) M a n ' s   R a t i o n a l   N a t u r e

Philosophy, the loving quest of wisdom, the tireless pursuit of knowledge to its deepest origins and roots, comes into being, first and foremost, because the human mind is forever seeking to *know*, and to grasp the ultimate *how's* and *why's* of what it knows. Man has a quenchless thirst for knowledge. Nor is this a desire for mere data, for bare facts and events; it is a desire for data with their explanations, their justifications, their evidence, their proofs. And if a proof or explanation is not in itself an evident and inescapable reality, the mind looks for proof of that proof. So the search for solid and reliable knowledge,—for *truth*, in a word,—is carried forward, or naturally tends to be carried forward, towards fulfillment. The mind proves truth by truth ; it holds truths in relation and connection ; it delves deep to unify and clarify its findings in an ultimate understanding. Thus man is, by his very nature, philosophical.

The incessant questions of a child are manifest proof of *the natural thirst for knowledge* in which philosophy finds its first root. And though the child, unspoiled and trusting, will accept any explanation as satisfactory, and will find, for instance, no difficulty in the story of a fat Santa Claus coming down a narrow chimney or in the leap that carried the cow over the moon, the young mind will presently inquire further for evidence as extended experience makes its first willing acceptance give place to doubts. In its immaturity, in its lack of time and experience to draw into understandable unity the endless wonders of the world about it, the child accepts any explanation of any fact, and accepts fantastic tales quite casually as no more wonderful than the reality of this most wonderful world. But the child accepts each explanation, each wondrous tale, because it regards these things as true. Truth is what the mind is after; truth is what the mind desires; truth is what the mind is *for*. And the quest of truth, down to its last foundations, is a philosophical quest. Here is discerned the first root of philosophy.

Nor can it be successfully objected that many minds are indifferent, careless, unconcerned about the quest for truth and the explanation of facts. Such an objection is far from exact. No normal mind, however incurious, is without special interests in which it has the tendency to *know* and to *understand*, even though enervation or lack of energy hinders the full exercise of this tendency. There are indeed countless persons who have no direct or conscious interest in what are loosely called "the things of the mind," that is, deep reasonings upon abstract truths, such as are the delight of the practised philosopher. There are many who have no sympathy with such things; who regard effort spent upon them as idleness and waste of time; who consider all "philosophizing" as silly vaporizing in a world of unreality. It is remarkable that this should be, since the philosopher, above all others, is most thoroughly and exclusively concerned with reality. It is remarkable, but it is so. But the point we make here is

that even those who regard professed philosophers as fools who wear out their minds (and their readers and hearers) in meaningless discussions of “the whichness of what” and “the whatness of which,”—even those scoffers to whom there is no important reality beyond machines and microscopes and bread and sport, even these are seekers after facts with their causes and reasons, their how’s and their why’s. Your “practical” person, full of scorn for philosophy, is none the less an ardent admirer of the man who knows his job; it is his own proudest boast that in his special sphere of interest and activity he “knows all the answers.” So even this “practical” person is proof sufficient of our assertion that the human mind wants knowledge, and wants the how’s and why’s of what it knows.

But we have no need to pause and argue with the inept, the lazy, the incurious. Our statement that the human mind is naturally philosophical in its effort is manifestly true of the mind at its unspoiled best. That some minds are ill-directed and spend their energies amiss; that some are thwarted by incapacity; that some are quickly weary in the quest of truth,—these facts are in no sense an argument against *the native tendency* of the human mind for ultimate truth. Indeed, they are rather a proof of that tendency. There is an explanation for the fact that many human beings fail to seek out ultimate causes and reasons, fail to realize or to concern themselves about the meaning of existence, and are content with second-best and third-best explanations of the world about them, of life, of duty, of effort. There is an explanation, and only one. It is the fact that something has, in human origins, gone wrong with man; something has hurt his mind, darkening it and making it subject to sudden weariness, willing to surrender its effort under the stress of exacting labor. The name of this fact is Original Sin. And of that we may not pause to speak further in this place.

We come back to our statement that the first root of philosophy is found in man’s native tendency to know truths with their

evidence. This statement is given with technical accuracy in the following formula: *the first root of philosophy is found in the rational nature of man.*

Now, the nature of a thing is its working essence. And the essence of a thing is that which constitutes it and makes it what it is. Essence regarded as the source of operations is called *nature*; thus we are justified in our description of nature as "working essence." To illustrate: the *essence* of a man (physically considered) is his body and soul; these are the elements which constitute a human being, and *make him what he is* in his fundamental actuality. But the *nature* of a man is the essence looked at as the source and font of human operations. So we say that it is according to man's *nature* that he feels and sees and thinks and wills. Man's essence *works* that way. That is his *mode of operation*. That is his *nature*.

When we say that the nature of man is *rational* we use the term in its original Latin meaning, not in its current meaning of "conscious" or "normal." A *rational* nature means a nature fundamentally equipped for understanding and freely choosing. We do not say that a being of rational nature can think or will at any instant; no, we say that such a being is *fundamentally equipped* for thinking and willing, even though some obstacle should prevent the exercise of these activities. Thus a baby, even a baby yet unborn; a madman; a man unconscious, each of these is *a being of rational nature* as truly as is the alert, mature, and normal man who is consciously exercising his powers of thinking and willing. This is a point of boundless importance for many reasons which lie outside the scope of our present study. But one of these reasons is of such vital character that it must be allowed to obtrude itself even here; we shall pause upon it for a brief paragraph.

One great reason for stressing the true meaning of the phrase "rational nature" lies in the fact that current usage makes the word "rational" practically synonymous with the word "conscious," or the word "lucid," or the word "normal." Thus we

speak of one recovered from the stress of high emotion, or of one who has emerged from delirium or coma, or of one who has achieved normality after a temporary lapse into insanity, as one who "is quite rational again." This is a sad, nay a disastrous use of the word. For it has in it the suggestion,—which grew up and grew strong together with the materialistic and pagan view of things which we call "modern" and sometimes "scientific,"—that one who is not "rational" (that is, one who is not in adequate and active awareness and management of himself) is something *less than hitman*. Especially is this so with reference to the unborn child, the insane, the more benighted sort of criminal, the senile, the immature,—the "unfit," in a word. And out of this evil sense of the term "rational" has come, in a measure far greater than most of us realize, our easy tolerance, our sober acceptance, of "scientific" discussions and justifications of abortion, of sterilization, of euthanasia or "mercy killing." No one would listen for a moment to the proposal, however sober and "scientific," that we should murder or mutilate a great number of perfectly normal men. But many of us will listen patiently, perhaps with half-assent, to the proposal that the abnormal, the subnormal, or the outworn should be eased gently out of life or mutilated and made impotent to propagate. It is, in large measure, our false grasp of the word "rational" that prevents us from seeing that the one proposal is precisely the same as the other. Each is a proposal to maim or murder human beings, every one of whom is *a being of rational nature*.

Here we recall an important Scholastic distinction. A being *fundamentally equipped* for an operation is said to possess *in actu primo* the perfection which that operation indicates or bestows. A being that *exercises* the operation is said to possess its perfection *in actu secundo*. Literally, the Latin phrases mean, respectively, "in first actuality" and "in second actuality"; we may, however, translate them freely as "in basic fact" and "in actual exercise." Thus a baby is a thinking and a walking be-



ing *in actu primo* or in basic fact, because it is fundamentally equipped for the operations of thinking and walking, even though lack of experience and of development balks the actual exercise of these operations. After a time, the child will both think and walk, and, in exercising these operations, it will be a thinking and a walking being *in actu secundo* or in actual exercise. It will think and walk *in the second place*, given the existence of the basic equipment for thinking and walking *in the first place*. Now, the point here to remember is that every rational creature is rational by reason of the fact that it possesses *in actu primo* the powers of understanding and free choice.

That every human being is a being of rational nature is a truth discussed in the department of philosophy called *psychology*. For the present, we merely notice the fact that man is rational, that he has the natural equipment and tendency to think, to apprehend, to understand, to think things out, to correlate and integrate his findings and to bring them into unity. In all this man shows himself to be cast in the image of God who knows all things in the unity of eternal understanding. And this connatural human power and tendency for understanding, reasoning, unifying,—this *rational nature* of man,—is the first root of philosophy.

It must be noticed that a rational nature is more than a *knowing* nature. All animals have a knowing nature, but man alone, of all animals, is rational. Animals are equipped for sense-knowledge; man is equipped for intellectual knowledge, that is, for rising from the individual findings of the senses to the supra-sensible and universal grasp of reality and for will-acts in the light of this superior knowledge.

Sense-knowledge is knowledge of concrete and individual things; mental or intellectual knowledge is knowledge of essences (expressed in the mind as concepts or ideas) and of the relations of essences (expressed in the mind as judgments and reasonings). The sense of sight, for example, beholds individual objects, say a tree or a group of trees. But the mind, taking the

findings of sight, rises from these data to an *understanding* of what *tree* means, not this tree or these trees only, but any tree and every tree. Further, the mind rises to concepts or ideas of things which the senses cannot possibly grasp,—things such as substance, or symmetry, or beauty.

Inevitably, out of its findings and their unions, their comparisons, their relations, their connections, the mind becomes aware of truths which it enunciates within itself as *judgments* and expresses outwardly as *propositions*. And out of judgments, aligned in their proper relations, the mind will draw *conclusions* or further judgments. Thus does the mind *reason* or *think things out*.

Among reasoned conclusions of the mind there are, by natural necessity, certain clearly recognized truths involving duty, obligation, rightness or wrongness ; in a word, *morality*.

The fact that a man can define a reality, that he can discuss things in a general way, that he can do a sum in arithmetic or prove a theorem in geometry; the fact that he is aware of duty and recognizes the need of law and order,—all these facts are proof inescapable that man is a being of rational nature, and, by that same token, that he is by nature *philosophical*. Philosophy exists because, first of all, man has a nature that makes him pursue the philosophical quest. Such is the meaning of the declaration that the first root of philosophy is *the rational nature of man*.

#### b) Primitive Revelation and Tradition

The fact that man is of rational nature, and therefore fundamentally philosophical, does not mean that all human beings are actively interested in the deep and determined process of thinking things out which we call *philosophical speculation*. No, all we may say, and must say, is that man is equipped by nature for such speculation. It is to be expected, however, that man's natural equipment for speculation would manifest itself in the formation of some system of thought about reality. Special tastes and

talents, together with favoring circumstances, must have come into play, sometimes in man's history, to put him to the task of using his natural equipment in the developing of philosophy.

None the less, the fact of philosophy in the world is not entirely explained in terms of rational nature, tastes, talents, and circumstances. There is ample evidence in the history of human thought that all men, from the earliest times, have had *some common store of knowledge* to draw upon. The ancients, despite wide variations in their cultures, had many notions in common. They all had some knowledge of the emerging of the earth out of a chaos of waters. They all believed that man was made, directly or indirectly, out of the clay of the earth. They all held that man is meant to serve God. They all were convinced that the human race had somehow gone wrong in its very origins, and that mankind had suffered a fall. They all felt that the business of life involves some sort of cleansing and refining of self, and the attainment of a more perfect state here or hereafter. They all taught that man is, in one way or another, to work for reunion with his Primal Source. Further, all the ancients had the story of a destructive flood of waters which laid waste the world, and the story of the dispersion of human tribes. We must conclude that mankind came to a knowledge of these things through the medium of some *primitive revelation*.

Christians find this conclusion consonant with their belief that God instructed our first parents; that He spoke with them familiarly; that He doubtlessly gave them information about their material origins even as He imparted knowledge of the creation and inbreathing of their spiritual souls which gave them their perfected being as images of God. This primitive revelation of man's nature, dignity, duty, and destiny, together with the earliest and most striking experiences of the human race, must have been a matter of common discussion. All these facts must have been narrated again and again by the human voice as the story was handed on from generation to generation. In a word, the primitive revelation and the first great experiences of mankind

must have been perpetuated through early times by *human tradition*.

Now, tradition, unless it is divinely protected and conserved (as is the case with Sacred Tradition which is a source of Divine Revelation), is a stream that inevitably gathers alien matters as it flows along. Man is imaginative, and his fancy tends to dress fact with such abundance of adornment that the fact itself is sometimes obscured and even forgotten. For this reason, modern man, driven by the same imaginative impulse, is too ready to dismiss old traditions as "mere folk-lore." But there is always a reason for folk-lore; there is always a living truth in the wrappings of fanciful detail; there is no such thing as *mere* folk-lore. And so, while it is undoubted that the primitive revelation and the earliest events of human history have come down the stream of human tradition in an imperfect and progressively obscured condition, we are none the less on solid historical ground in our conclusion that these two things (primitive revelation and remembered events of early history) are factual and not fanciful. The *primitive revelation* and *human tradition* come together to constitute a true source of philosophical concepts and speculation. They may justly be regarded as the second root of philosophy.

#### Summary of the Article

In this Article we have discerned the fact that the first root of philosophy is the rational nature of man. We have defined *nature* as "essence viewed dynamically," that is, essence regarded as the font of operations. And *rational nature* means nature equipped *in actu primo* (or "in basic fact") for understanding and free self-directive choice. We have noticed the fact that man has some common original storehouse of knowledge which can be accounted for only by a *primitive revelation* and an essentially reliable *human tradition*; these two agencies constitute the second root of philosophy.

Our study thus far has given us the meaning of certain philo-

sophical terms, such as: *essence, nature, sensation* (i.e., *sense-knowledge*), *intellection* (i.e., *intellectual knowledge*), *concept, judgment, proposition, reasoning, actus primus, actus secundus.*

## Article 2. The Emergence of Philosophy

a) First Efforts; b) The Ancient Orientals; c) The Early Greeks.

### a) F I R S T E F F O R T S

Since man is by nature philosophical, it is inevitable that the earliest records of his thinking should manifest something of that human *quest of ultimate causes* and that human *effort to make a deep unification of knowledge* which we call by the name *philosophy*. As soon as man begins to think he begins to think things out; he begins to speculate or reason deeply; he begins to philosophize. As soon as he records his thinking, philosophy begins, however imperfectly, to take form. Philosophy emerges the moment the mind comes to grips with reality and begins to draw conclusions and unify findings.

Some writers speak of a period of human history and of human thinking as “pre-philosophic.” With all reverence for great learning, we dare to reject this term as inaccurate. It is true that the earliest records of man’s thinking offer us no rounded and systematized interpretation of “all things knowable.” But it is equally true that these records show a real approach to the realm of knowables. Such an approach is not pre-philosophical, but simply philosophical. There is no warrant for cramping the meaning of the word *philosophical* to exclude all early reasoning on the subjects of God and duty. For theology and ethics (that is, the philosophy of God, and the philosophy of duty) are as truly philosophical as cosmology (the philosophy of the bodily world) or metaphysics (the philosophy of reality as such). Hence we need not apologize for applying the high name of *philosophy* to the religious and moral conclusions of the ancient

oriental peoples who have left us the earliest records of human thinking.

The philosophical efforts of man, from earliest to most recent, are efforts to find the true answers to one or other of certain fundamental questions. These questions may be listed as seven :

(1) *The Logical Question*, that is, the question of correct procedure in reasoning, in thinking things out ;

(s) *The Critical Question*, that is, the question of the extent and reliability of human knowledge ; the question of the possibility and method of achieving truth and certitude ;

(5) *The Cosmological Question*, that is, the question of the ultimate constitution of bodies, and of their nature and properties ;

(4) *The Psychological Question*, that is, the question of the meaning of life, especially human life, and of the nature and powers of the human life-principle or soul ;

(5) *The Theological Question*, that is, the question of the existence, nature, operations, and perfections of God ;

(d) *The Ontological Question* (or, if one prefer, *The Metaphysical Question*'), that is, the question of the meaning and properties of *being* as such ;

(7) *The Ethical Question*, that is, the question of morality in human conduct, of right and wrong, of human duty and human destiny.

These seven questions delineate the field of philosophy. They frame the discussion of "all things knowable."

## b) THE ANCIENT ORIENTALS

The ancient oriental peoples were the Hebrews, the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, the Chinese, the Hindoos, the Persians. To the records of these early peoples we turn to discern the emergence of philosophy.

1. *The Hebrews*, whose name is probably a derivation from Heber who was one of the ancestors of Abraham, had, from their

earliest recorded times, a belief in one God (*monotheism*). They believed in the immortality of the human soul, and in a life to come which involves retribution for the good or evil practised in this earthly existence. Evidence for these statements is found in the most ancient books of Holy Scripture. After the 6 century b.c., distinct groups of religious philosophers appeared among the Hebrews : (a) *The Pharisees* held the doctrines already mentioned (one God; immortality of the soul; rewards and punishments of a life to come), and they claimed to be the only authorized interpreters of the moral and ceremonial law. (&) *The Sadducees* denied the existence of anything spiritual (*materialism*) ; they acknowledged the existence of God but denied His government and providence in the world (*deism*) ; they found the true goal of human life in earthly pleasures and enjoyments (*hedonism*), (c) *The Essenes* were a cloistered group who held the necessity of self-denial to loose the soul from its body-prison into the happiness of heaven. They taught that the soul existed before it was joined to the body (*pre-existence of souls*), and that it was imprisoned in the body for some fault.

The Hebrew philosophy deserves its name; it must not be brushed aside as pre-philosophical. It deals, however brokenly, with the theological question, the psychological question, and the ethical question. An important point to notice is that this early philosophy had the idea of *one only God*; that is, it held the doctrine of *monotheism*. Here we see that monotheism is a really primitive doctrine, and not the development of cruder beliefs as some materialists and evolutionists of our day would like us to think.

2. *The Chaldeans* (that is to say, the Babylonians and the Assyrians) at first held by *monotheism*; they believed in one supreme God called *El*. Later they degraded this pure belief into a system of *polytheism*, that is, a theory of a plurality of gods. They held that man exists for the worship and service of divinity; to fulfill his destiny he must practise virtue, he must be a lover of peace, and must be just in his dealings with his fellows.

Again we find *monotheism*, that pure and elevated doctrine, as a really primitive form of belief, indeed of reasoned knowledge. Evolutionists would like to have it that crude and polytheistic beliefs were gradually refined into monotheism, but history has not a single instance of such a refinement. Monotheism precedes polytheism, and, among peoples not divinely protected from the lapse, monotheism degenerates into polytheism. Notice that the Chaldeans dealt with the theological question and the ethical question.

3. *The Ancient Egyptians* were, at first, monotheists; they lapsed into polytheism at an early period of their history, and deified the elements and parts of the universe. About the 7 century b.c. there was a mighty religious revival among the Egyptians, and the very animals of sacrifice came to be worshipped. But animal worship (*zoolatry*) was unknown to the most ancient Egyptians. The Egyptians believed in the immortality of the soul, and, about the 7 century b.c., they came to believe in the transmigration of souls (*metempsychosis*). They taught the necessity of virtuous living as the means to happiness in a life to come.

Here we find the elements of a philosophy which dealt with the theological question, the psychological question, and the ethical question.

4. *The Ancient Chinese* believed in one God called *Shang-ti*, a personal deity, distinct from the world, and all powerful. This pure belief quickly degenerated, especially after the 12 century b.c. when ancestor worship came strongly into vogue. Worship of the sun, moon, and stars (*sabaeism*) also appeared. After the 6 century b.c., the Chinese were much influenced in thought and conduct by their philosophers, especially Kun-fu-tse (Confucius) and Lao-tse. Confucius preached faithful observance of ancestral customs; he discouraged the natural tendency of men to pry into causes and reasons; his was a philosophy to kill philosophy. Lao-tse taught the existence of a Supreme Being called Tao (hence his doctrine is called *Taoism*) who produced the world. Tao is



ever serene, untroubled; man must model himself on Tao; man must cultivate serenity of mind, caring nothing for riches or honors, or even for learning or for laws; man must follow quietly and unexcitedly his own natural bent.

The ancient Chinese dealt with the theological question, and, in a measure, with the psychological question; their great philosophers were concerned chiefly with the ethical question.

5. *The Ancient Hindoos* had sacred books called *Veda*, that is, *science*. These show traces of an original monotheism, but only traces, however plain. Polytheism came into being among the Hindoos at an early period. The Hindoo philosophy is very vague, but it contains unmistakable evidence of some belief in human immortality, in man's duty to worship divinity and to avoid sin. Between the 8 and the 5 century b.c. certain books (called *Brahmanas* and *Upanishads*) were written to explain the *Vedas*. These hint at a supreme and personal God called *Prajapati*, but this notion is quickly submerged in a welter of polytheistic doctrine. The theory developed in the *Brahmanas* is that the world and all things in it are *maya* or illusion. There is only one reality called *Brahma*. Man must rid himself of the deceiving idea that he exists as an individual; he must strive to merge himself consciously in Brahma with whom all things are really one [*pantheism*]. Aligned with this doctrine of Brahma is *Buddhism* which holds the world unreal and illusory and teaches man to seek changelessness and peace in a state of *Nirvana* in which all desire is dead, all emotion extinguished.

The Hindoo philosophy deals slightly with the theological question, largely with the ethical question. Notice that it is *pessimistic* in character; it holds that man's lot is one of deception and pain, and teaches him that his sole ethical effort is to be rid of pain.

6. *The Ancient Persians* were monotheists at the first, but about the 8 century b.c. there appeared a mighty teacher called Zarates or Zarathustra (whom the Greeks called Zoroaster) who taught the existence of two warring gods [*religious dual-*

*ism*) ; one of these was the Supreme Good, the other the Supreme Evil. The good deity was called *Ahura-Mazda* (the Greeks named him *Ormuzd* or *Ormazd*) ; to him we attribute all good things, fire, light, stars and planets, summer, fertility, the human race. The evil deity was called *Angra-Mainyu* (the Greeks made the name *Ahriman*) ; to him are to be attributed all evil things, darkness, cold, bad spirits, disease, death, poisonous plants, ferocious animals, storms, and all destructive forces. These two divinities wage ceaseless war. One of the followers of Ahura-Mazda is the great spirit *Mithras* who will captain the forces of good to the final defeat of Angra-Mainyu. Perhaps, after the evil divinity and his followers have been hurled into the pit of punishment, Mithras will intercede for them, and they will ultimately be admitted to the paradise of delights in which Ahura-Mazda reigns.—Man was created pure by Ahura-Mazda ; he ate certain forbidden fruits and, in consequence, lost the love of his creator and was numbered with the hosts of Angra-Mainyu. Human nature was thus soiled at its source, and each individual feels within himself the war of good and evil. Man must rid himself of the evil and seek his original perfection. Man's soul is immortal ; it will be brought to purification and happiness either by strong efforts for virtue in this life or by suffering hereafter.

The ancient Persians discussed the theological question and the ethical question with incidental discussion of the psychological question. We notice in their strange *mélange* of doctrines some vestiges of the primitive revelation in the somewhat distorted account of man's creation and original sin.

### c) The Early Greeks

Most accounts of philosophy begin with the speculation (that is, the deep philosophical studies) of the Greeks, dismissing the ancient orientals as pre-philosophic. We have noticed the unfairness of this practice.

The Greeks had a natural liking for things of the mind. They were inclined to dwell upon what they saw in the world about

them and to think out causes and reasons. Among the Greeks, far more than among any other pre-Christian people, philosophy was steadily cultivated. It reached a state of rounded development in the Golden Age of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

The earliest Greek philosophers attacked the cosmological question; they sought the explanation of the bodily world. Other questions of philosophy were only incidental to their studies.

For convenience, we group the philosophers of this period into "schools," that is, classifications of philosophers who studied the same matters or held similar views. The "schools" we are to notice are: the Ionians, the Pythagoreans, the Eleatics, the Atomists, and the Sophists.

*I. The Ionians*, taking up the cosmological question, asked what is the original matter of which the bodily world is made, (a) Thales, of the 7 and 6 centuries b.c., taught that the world-stuff is water, for the world is a mixture of solids, liquids, and gases, and water is the only substance which we commonly find in all three forms. (b) Anaximander, of the 7 and 6 centuries b.c., thought the original world-stuff is a kind of spray or mist which is an infinite and living substance (he called it "the Boundless"). Out of this substance all bodily things emerge, and, under the action of heat which is inherent in it, they merge into it again, and this process goes on continuously (theory of an *infinite series of worlds*'). The earth is a cylinder poised in the center of the universe. All matter is alive (*hylozoism*); plants and animals come by progressive upward stages from the slime of the heated earth (*evolution* or *transformism*). (c) Anaximenes, of the 6 century b.c., regarded the original world-stuff as a kind of vapor, infinite and alive, which, by thickening and thinning (condensation and rarefaction) causes different things to emerge; these bodies float in the infinite vapor like leaves in an autumn breeze, (d) Heraclitus, of the 6 century b.c., made the primal world-stuff a kind of fire, infinite, alive, intelligent. This fire is not a mass of matter but a kind of all-pervading reason which operates by its inherent power (*dynamism*) to produce bodies;

the production of bodies goes on by blind necessity (*determinism*). (e) Empedocles, of the 5 century b.c., held that the world-stuff is a compound of air, earth, water, fire; these *four elements*, by their various comminglings, make up the bodily world and all things in it. Two forces play upon the elements, a unifying force called *love* and a separating and diversifying force called *hate*. The bodily world is alive (*hylozoism*), and has the power of sensing, (f) Anaxagoras, of the 5 century b.c., taught that the world-stuff is a mass of particles of every kind of body found in the universe. This mass was motionless and inert; it was put into a whirling movement by the action of a Divine Mind which is no part of the mass of matter. The whirling motion caused different bodies to "separate out." The Divine Mind knows all and rules all.

In general, the Ionians taught a *cosmogony*, or theory of the emergence of the world, rather than a *cosmology*, or theory of the nature of the world; still, they dealt proximately (and not philosophically) with the constitution of the bodily universe, and hence deserve to be called cosmologists. Their doctrine is hylozoistic, dynamistic, evolutionistic, deterministic, and sometimes (as in Heraclitus) pantheistic. Of all the philosophers of this school Anaxagoras is by far the most notable, for he alone achieved the idea of an independent Divine Mind as the original mover and ruler of the world.

2. *The Pythagoreans* (called so from their leader Pythagoras who lived in the 6 century b.c.) were of mathematical mind; they were charmed by the *order* and *harmony* of the universe, by its *regularity* and *proportion*. They felt that the world is not only expressible in mathematical terms, but that it is mathematical in nature. They taught that all things are *numbers*, and number is expressed in *harmony*. The Pythagoreans believed in an all-pervading divinity. They taught that man's soul (which is a number) is imprisoned in the flesh for some primordial sin; unless it be purified by virtuous living, it will pass, when a man dies, into another body, and into another and another, until

purification is attained or the soul is found hopelessly vile. Here we have the first appearance among the Greeks of *metempsychosis* or the transmigration of souls.

The Pythagoreans are a step higher than the Ionians. The Ionians achieved a *physical* idea to explain the world; the Pythagoreans a *mathematical* idea. This idea is very vague, but it is more abstract than that of the Ionians, and hence more suitable to serve as a focussing-point for a philosophy of the world. Philosophy could not come into its own, however, until man had achieved a *metaphysical* idea (the idea of *being as such*) ; this was first set forth and satisfactorily discussed by Aristotle in the 4 century b.c.

5. *The Eleatics* (called so from the city of Elea where notable members of this group lived and taught) were impressed by the variety and changeability of the world. They concluded that change is incompatible with substantial reality. Hence they taught that there really is no change ; all change is illusion. "All is; nothing becomes." All bodies are of the same essential nature.

The Eleatics (important among whom were Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno of Elea, Melissus of Samos, of the 6 to 4 century b.c.) were *monists*, that is, they taught that there is only one kind of bodily substance. By implication they were *pantheists*, for they made the matter of the world self-explaining, hence necessary and eternal, and therefore divine.

4. *The Atomists* thought of the world-stuff as a great mass of particles like a dust storm. All the particles have the same nature (*monism*) ; they differ only in shape, size, and weight. The particles do not cling together; they are held apart by vacuoles or intervals of vacuum. They are eternal, and have been in motion from eternity. Out of their motion come various arrangements of differently shaped atoms which we know as bodies. Man has knowledge of *sense* and of *thought*. The atom-constituted bodies throw off images of themselves, like shells, and these somehow enter man's senses and produce sense-knowledge. This knowledge is not trustworthy. The knowledge of

*thought* is reliable. Man must find his true good in tranquillity of soul; he is to obtain this by cultivating pure thought and by using all material things with great moderation.

The atomists were *materialists* for they acknowledged no reality but the bodily world. They were *monists* for they taught that matter is "all of a piece." They were *mechanicists* (or *mechanists*) for they explained the variety and multiplicity of the world by mechanical movement of atoms. By implication, they were *pantheists*, for if matter is all, then matter is self-existing and divine. In addition to the cosmological question, the Atomists discussed the critical question (nature and reliability of man's knowledge), and the ethical question (man's purpose in existing, the means he is to use). Notable Atomists were Leucippus, whose times are doubtful, and Democritus who lived in the 5 century b.c.

5. *The Sophists* (in Greek, *sophoi* or "the wise ones") took up the critical question. They concluded that no one can know anything with certainty (*skepticism*). (a) Protagoras, of the 5 century b.c., said that everything is in a state of *becoming*; there is no stable *being*. Man's knowledge is never absolute; it is relative to the subject, that is, the person who possesses it (*relativism* and *subjectivism*), so that what is regarded as true for one person at one time may be false to another person or to the same person at another time. The individual man is thus *the measure of truth*; "man is the measure of things." (b) Gorgias, of the 5 century b.c., declared that nothing exists, and if anything did exist it could not be known with certitude (*nihilism* and *skepticism*).

The sophists were skeptics, and their influence degraded the philosophical effort. They have to their credit, however, that they raised the critical question.

#### Summary of the Article

In this Article we have investigated the earliest records of human thinking to discover the sources of philosophy. We have

noticed the doctrines,—inaccurately called pre-philosophic,—of the ancient Hebrews, Chaldeans, Egyptians, Chinese, Hindoos, Persians. In the records of all these people we have discovered one constant note—*monotheism*. Thus we see that the evolutionists are wrong when they try to persuade us that the pure idea of one supreme God is a progressive development and growth out of cruder notions. Monotheism definitely came first; polytheism and other debased religious philosophies came later as a lapse and retrogression due to man's original fall and the consequent darkening of the human mind.—We have noticed various groups or schools of early Greek thinkers among whom philosophy began to take more perfect form. We have discussed the Ionians, the Pythagoreans, the Eleatics, the Atomists, the Sophists. We have seen that the chief interest of the early Greeks centered on the world about us; their main discussion turned upon the cosmological question.

Incidentally, we have learned many valuable terms used in every treatise on philosophy: *speculation, monotheism, polytheism, materialism, hedonism, deism, pre-existence of souls, metempsychosis, zodlatry, sdbaeism, pantheism, pessimism, religious dualism, hylozoism, infinite-series-of-worlds, determinism, a physical idea, a mathematical idea, a metaphysical idea, monism, skepticism, relativism, nihilism, subjectivism.*

## CHAPTER II

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The present Chapter studies the growth of philosophy after its emergence in the early Greek schools, and traces the development of philosophic thought to its relatively full expression in the magnificent synthesis of Aristotle in the 4 century b.c. The Chapter also discusses the retrogression of philosophy after Aristotle. These matters are studied in three Articles :

Article I. The Philosophy of Socrates and Plato

Article 2. The Philosophy of Aristotle

Article 3. The Course of Philosophy after Aristotle

#### Article 1. The Philosophy of Socrates and Plato

a) The Essential Question;    b) Theories of Socrates;    c) Theories of Plato.

a) The Essential Question

It is useless to employ human reason in the quest of truth unless it can be known beyond doubt or quibble that the mind is capable of attaining truth and holding it with certitude. Man cannot attain to *all* truth, for the scope of the intellect, while tremendous, is not infinite. But there is a vast domain of truth which man is competent to investigate and within which his natural" mental powers can bring him to unwavering certitude. If this fact be not recognized at the outset, no development of philosophy is possible. Without a recognition of *human power capable of knowing things with certitude*, philosophy becomes silly vaporizing and the baseless fabrication of a dream. Therefore, the essential question of philosophy is *the critical question*,



that is, the question of the value and extent of the human knowing-power; the question of knowledge, truth, and certitude as available to man's connatural and unaided efforts.

When Socrates came upon the scene, in the 5 century b.c., the ability of man to know things *for certain* was being cast into doubt by the Sophists. The doctrine of these teachers was *skepticism*, that is, the doctrine that man cannot be certain of anything and that all his knowledge is valueless or, at best, of dubious value.

It is, of course, impossible to formulate a direct proof by reason for the reliability of reason. Such a proof would involve the fallacy of "begging the question," that is, assuming at the outset the point to be established by the proof. Nor is a proof necessary. A proof is always a careful and methodical unfolding of a thing which is complicated; it is a simplifying; it is a bringing to light and evidence what is not evident in itself. But when a thing is simple to begin with, no simplifying is called for. When a thing is uncomplicated, no unfolding of complications is possible. When a thing is self-evident, external evidence is not needed. One does not need a lighted lamp to discover the noon-day sun. One does not demand proof that the eyes can see. One simply beholds the sunlight and uses one's eyes. That a man can think, and think things out by putting two and two together, is as direct and evident an experience as seeing with the bodily eyes in daylight. Proof is neither possible nor necessary.

Still it is possible to formulate an *indirect* proof of the self-evident truths of man's existence and man's ability to think and by thinking to arrive at certitude and reliable knowledge. Such proof is found in the impossible and self-contradictory character of the opposed doctrine called *skepticism*. For skepticism is the total paralysis of philosophy; it is, as G. K. Chesterton once remarked, "the suicide of thought." Like suicide, is it an insane thing. Skepticism asserts that it is certain that nothing is certain. It uses reason to show that there is no use using reason. The

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skeptic cannot speak without affirming his own existence as a certain fact, without affirming certain meaning in the words he utters, without affirming the certain existence of those to whom he speaks, without affirming the truth of his own theory that no truth of theory is possible. Therefore, the skeptic cannot open his mouth without contradicting himself and denying his own philosophy even as he states it. The skeptic has no recourse but to remain forever silent.

Socrates did not pause to analyze the error of the skeptical Sophists. To their doubts and denials he opposed a human and manly acceptance of the power of man's mind to attain truth and to hold it with certitude. This he took for granted, as every sane man must. Starting with this premise, he developed his philosophy of *the critical question*, giving his theory of knowledge, its character, its value, its purpose. He tied in his studies of the critical question with *the ethical question*, and, to some extent, with *the psychological question* and *the theological question*. But the main mark and characteristic of Socrates' philosophy is that it is *critical* and *ethical*; it deals with human knowing and with virtue, and indeed it brings these two things together in one. In much this theory is erroneous, but it marked a splendid step forward in the development of true philosophy (or true *speculation*), and it was a needed brake upon the ruinous course of the Sophists.

### b) Theories of Socrates

Socrates lived from 469 to 399 b.c. He has left us no writings, and it is likely that he wrote nothing to leave. He taught only orally, and his teachings have come down to us through the writings of his pupils, Plato and Xenophon. Thus our "sources" are *secondary*, since only a man's own writings are *primary* sources of his teachings. But these secondary sources are, in the present case, reliable.

Socrates felt a divine call to teach and to improve the lives of men. Teaching was for him a religious duty. He recognized the

fact that no improvement in men's lives and morals is possible without a solid philosophy of knowledge. For why speak of duties to men who cannot be sure of anything, and hence cannot certainly know that they have duties at all? Why talk of morals if there is no reliable knowledge that morals exist or are desirable? So intimate indeed is the relation of knowledge to right living that Socrates declared that knowledge *is* virtue. He maintained that to know thoroughly what is right is to make the doing of wrong impossible.

Now, Socrates must have known very well that we often act in contradiction to our knowledge. With the poet Ovid, he must have had experience of "seeing and approving the better things, yet doing the worse." Nor did he excuse sin and crime as the product of sheer ignorance. No, he held that *when a man knows thoroughly and realizes all the implications of what he knows* he cannot act in such a way as to make practical denial of his knowledge.

Yet Socrates stressed the knowing-power too strongly. He should have stressed free-will as well. Man's mind is not like the all-embracing daylight. What a person knows, in full setting, with all implications clearly evident, is not present to the casual mental glance as a wide and varied landscape is present to the glance of the eye. The human mind is, in its action, rather like a narrowly focussed spotlight which throws its light on one small space and leaves many available areas in darkness. And the hand behind the spotlight, turning it this way or that, to take in this consideration or to omit that other, is the free-will. Whatever proposed course of action is illuminated by the spotlight of the mind has aspects of attractiveness and aspects of unattractiveness, and the mind dwells on whichever of these two things the will decides it shall consider. No matter how good an object of consideration may be, the will can focus the mind on features of it that are unattractive and repellent. And no matter how bad an object may be, the will may turn the light of the mind upon some real or apparent phases of it that are attractive. Hence, sin

is possible, even when the sinner "knows better." To put this technically: "Man is capable of objectively indifferent judgments."

Perhaps Socrates stressed knowledge so strongly because he earnestly wished to root out the pernicious error of the Sophists who made knowledge of no value at all. At all events, he did make knowledge the one thing necessary for man's mental and moral well-being. And he held that of all knowledge *knowledge of self* is the core and the essence. "Know thyself!" was the summary of his teaching.

Why should a person strive to know himself? Because, said Socrates, all knowledge is *in* him as planted seeds are in the earth. He must labor, as the gardener labors with hoe and water-pot, to bring this germinal knowledge to birth, growth, fruitfulness.

Is this latent knowledge *inborn* in the mind? It is not certain that Socrates held this doctrine (*innatism*). If he did, he was utterly wrong, for all our natural knowledge is *acquired*; it begins with the action of the senses on the bodily world around us; from sense-findings the mind or intellect arises to knowledge that is quite beyond the reach of the senses, and forms ideas or concepts, judgments, and reasonings. But perhaps Socrates did not teach innatism. He may have taught that the seed-knowledge with which the mind is endowed was implanted by the action of the senses upon the material and sensible universe. Whatever he taught about the origin of knowledge, it is clear that he held that the finished product is to be worked out of the mind itself.

How shall a person set to work to bring to fruitfulness,—that is, to clear, certain, scientific understanding,—the seed-knowledge of the mind? By following *the Socratic Method*. This method consists of two processes, the *ironic* and the *maieutic*.—  
(a) When a youth came to Socrates for instruction, the great teacher would receive him with every mark of respect, and would ask him questions, seeming to be himself a pupil rather than a teacher. Invariably the newcomer would grow expansive under

this treatment, and presently he would begin to "show off." Now, the questions of Socrates seemed innocent, but they were most shrewdly put. Sooner or later the over-confident newcomer would involve himself in contradictory answers. Again and again he would be led into conflicting and impossible statements. Socrates would gently point out this distressing state of affairs, and before long the poor victim would be forced to make shamefaced admission that he did not know what he was talking about. This was what Socrates was working for. The *confession of ignorance* is, he taught, the first essential step in the work of achieving knowledge of self. Thus far *the Socratic irony*. It cleared and loosened the mental soil.—(&) Then came *the maieutic process*, that is, the process of "bringing to birth" the ideas and judgments of the mind. This process amounted to study and discussion,—“dialogue,” it was called. If, for example, the question, “What is virtue?” was posed for his students, Socrates would use,—if necessary,—the ironic process to disabuse the pupils’ minds of hazy, inept, inadequate preconceptions. Then he would call for examples of virtue. He would require a pupil to explain why he had named each example *virtue*. He would institute comparison of example with example, noting similarities and differences. At length, the pupils would be prepared to formulate a clear and precise *definition* of virtue. Now, once a person can clearly define a thing, he *knows* that thing. Thus, by the maieutic process, is knowledge “brought to birth.”

This method of working out a concept by studying various instances or examples is known as *the inductive method* or simply as *induction*. Socrates is rightly regarded as “the father of induction.”

The concepts or ideas worked out by the maieutic process are used by the mind in forming *judgments* and arriving at conclusions by *reasoning*. Such judgments and reasonings, said Socrates, are unchangeably *true*; they constitute *science*; they are known with *certitude*. Thus did Socrates contradict the doubts

and denials of the Sophists with a ringing assertion of the possibility of achieving truth, certitude, science.

We see, in all this, that Socrates was concerned with the critical question; we also notice that this question is intimately bound up in the Socratic system with the ethical question, since Socrates held that *knowledge is virtue*. Dealing directly with the ethical question, Socrates says that man is made for happiness, and that happiness is the fruit of goodness, that is, of virtuous living. And, since knowledge is virtue, and is to be attained by striving to develop the contents of the mind, man's great moral effort must be directed to knowledge, especially self-knowledge. "*Gnothi s' auton*, Know thyself!" was the constant cry of Socrates.

As to the theological question, it is fairly clear that Socrates believed in one supreme God. But for the sake of avoiding political troubles,—which came upon him notwithstanding,—he conformed to the polytheistic practices of his times.

On the cosmological question, it is likely that Socrates taught the production of this world out of *eternal matter*, and that he regarded the world as the best that could possibly be made (*cosmological optimism*). On both scores he was wrong. He did not identify the world with God (*pantheism*), but held that God is present everywhere in the world, ruling it in all things (*divine providence and government*).

Discussing the psychological question, Socrates held that man has a soul which is distinct from the body. The human soul, he taught, is like God inasmuch as it is *simple* (that is, not made of parts), *immortal*, and *endowed with understanding and memory*. It seems, however, that Socrates failed to realize that the cause of the soul's immortality is its *spirituality*. It will be noticed, too, that Socrates failed to mention *free-will* as a faculty of the soul, and one that makes it like to God. And he mentions understanding and memory as though they were two faculties, whereas they are one; the intellectual memory is but one function or service of the understanding (i.e., the intellect) itself.

What Socrates taught about the union of soul and body in man, is not clear. He may have held, as did Plato later, that the soul is *in* the body as a hand is in a glove; that is, he may have taught a merely *accidental* union of soul and body. The truth is that soul and body in man are *substantially* united; soul and body constitute a single substance, *the human substance*.

Such in briefest outline were the teachings of Socrates. Despite incompleteness and errors, these theories constitute *a developing philosophy* which is immeasurably superior to anything accomplished by thinkers of preceding ages.

The fame of Socrates as a teacher and his widening influence over minds, especially the minds of the young, brought him to the unfavorable notice of the politicians. These fine gentlemen managed to have him condemned to death. He drank the deadly hemlock in the year 399 b.c.

In passing, we must contradict the sentimental opinion that the suicide of Socrates was a noble deed. If it were not for the artistic and touching account of it we have from the pen of Plato, we should probably never think of it as something fine and full of dignity. Suicide is never noble. It is, in itself, a contemptible and a cowardly deed. Of course, Socrates, despite his magnificent mind, was under the sway of pagan opinion and custom; without doubt he regarded the taking of his life as a thing justified and even necessary in the circumstances. We make no attempt to fix his personal guilt. We simply point out the truth of sane ethics that a man may never take his life by direct means. No man may justly be compelled to be his own executioner. Even if he be willing to spare the hangman an ugly job, he may not kill himself. For it is manifestly an unnatural thing (and hence contrary to the natural law) for a man to take his own life, even if that life be forfeit.

One final word. While Socrates was wrong in identifying knowledge and virtue, he deserves the highest praise for his efforts to put ethics on a reasoned basis, and to show that many things are good or bad in themselves. He made moral science

more than a set of rules of etiquette, or a programme of whims, or a code of fads, or a list of likes and dislikes. A great many of our modern intellectuals would do well to ponder and to imitate this notable Socratic effort.

c) *Theories of Plato*

The name *Plato* is familiar to everyone, even to Macaulay's schoolboy. But many are unaware that the word *Plato* is a nickname. The real name of this philosopher was Aristocles. It is said that he was of stocky build, and that his broad shoulders earned him the nickname *Plato*, for *platos* is Greek for *breadth*. Perhaps the famous name *Plato* was the invention of some companion who fixed it upon the young Aristocles as a schoolboy of our day labels a comrade by reason of physical appearance and knows him thenceforth as "Shorty" or "Stumpy" or "Slim."

Plato was of noble descent. He was a splendidly gifted man, and he used his gifts with studious diligence. He was a poet, a playwright, an observant traveller, a philosopher, and,—most important of all,—a literary stylist of the first rank. Plato destroyed his plays and poems, but he retained his splendid style, and this fact (together with the other fact that many of his works survive intact to our day) has a great deal to do with his enduring fame. Many of his theories are exalted and attractive, but it may be questioned whether his essential philosophy would have lived if it had been clothed in less artistic expression. Does anyone doubt that a masterly style can be so effective as to "put a man over"? Let such a person consider Renan. Let him consider Pascal. Let him even consider Will Durant. Then let him consider Plato.

Plato (427-347 b.c.) studied under the philosopher Cratylus and then for eight years he was the pupil of Socrates. His own period of teaching was a long and notable intellectual reign. He died in Athens at the ripe age of eighty.

We have thirty-five dialogues attributed to Plato. Many of these are unquestionably genuine; some are spurious; some are



of doubtful authenticity. Among the important ones commonly accepted as genuine are: *Gorgias*, *The Banquet*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *The Republic*, *Timaeus*, *Laws*, *Theaetetus*, and most of his *Letters*.

Like Socrates, Plato was interested, first and foremost, in the critical question, but this question was, for him, intertwined with the psychological question rather than with the ethical question as in the Socratic system. The basic and unifying doctrine of Plato's philosophy is his *theory of knowledge*. This is a famous theory, and it served Plato well in his efforts to bring into a harmonious system the notable teachings of his predecessors and contemporaries. But, for all that, it is a false and futile theory.

Plato taught that each man was originally a soul. He was a spirit living in a world of things-in-themselves; a world of substantial universal ideals or forms.

The world about us is a world of individual things. We see individual trees, we speak to individual men, we hear individual sounds, we notice individual instances or expressions of beauty. And yet our intellectual knowledge is not individual; it is universal. The eye can see only individual trees, but the mind or intellect knows what *tree* means. We have knowledge of tree-in-itself or tree-as-such. We can write the definition of tree, and it defines each and every tree that has ever existed, or exists now, or will exist, or can exist. For we know and define *an essence*; we are not confined to the sense-knowledge of individual things that have that essence. How can it be that, in a world made up exclusively of *individual* things, we have this *universal* knowledge of essences in the abstract?

Aristotle was presently to give the right answer to this important question. He was to teach that the mind has the power of peering beneath the trappings of individuality and getting at the essences of things. This *abstractive power of the human intellect* was something that Plato neither recognized nor suspected. Plato thought that the only explanation of the universal

ideas in our minds is found in the fact that those minds once confronted universal things. So he taught that we have had a previous existence in a spiritual realm (*pre-existence of souls*'). There we confronted and beheld not trees, but tree-in-itself; there we saw, not a beautiful object or scene, but beauty-subsisting-in-itself; there we knew, not something good, but substantial goodness itself.

Now man, the soul, somehow sinned. The spirit that dwelt in the world of things-as-they-are, or things-substantially-subsisting-in-themselves, was somehow contaminated, and this by its own fault. For this offense, the soul was imprisoned in a body and put here on the earth. As the soul was thrust into its body-prison, it forgot all its splendid knowledge. But the body is equipped with channels of knowledge; we call them *the senses*. These can deal only with the externals of individual things, but still they do give us knowledge. And this individual knowledge garnered by the senses stirs the soul, prods it to recall what once it knew. And so, stirred by the objects of sense, a man dimly and imperfectly remembers what things are. *To know is to remember.*

Here we see that Plato taught these things: (1) the pre-existence of souls; (2) the innate or inborn character of knowledge; (3) the purely accidental (that is, non-substantial) union of soul and body; (4) the existence of a supernal realm where things exist in universal and not as individuals; (5) by implication, he denied the abstractive power of the human mind or intellect. And in all five teachings Plato was calamitously wrong.

The previous existence of souls (or pre-existence, as it is technically called) is both philosophically untenable and theologically reprobated. The moment that God creates the soul (and God immediately and directly creates each human soul) He joins it substantially with its body, though the body be but a microscopic reality in the bosom of a mother. One identical instant, unbroken, undivided, is the instant of the *creation* and the *substantial uniting* (or *infusion*) of the soul. The very first moment

in which a human soul exists without its body is the moment that comes immediately after a man's death. There is no such moment before conception or birth.

*Innatism* or the doctrine of inborn knowledge is a theory wholly indefensible, as philosophers of all ages have shown, from Aristotle to Locke. We *acquire* our knowledge. Starting with the experiences of the senses which bring us knowledge of things in their concrete and material individuality, we rise, by the abstractive power of the mind, to the recognition of what *kind* of things we sense; we recognize *essences*; we form universal ideas or concepts. And these are the elements of our intellectual knowledge.

As we have seen in discussing the theories of Socrates, the union of soul and body in man is a substantial union, not an accidental one. The soul is not merely *in* the body. Soul and body are so united as to form one single, if compound, substance. Man is not a body alone, nor a soul alone; neither is he merely a soul-in-a-body. Plato said that the soul is in the body controlling it as a rower is in a boat moving it at will by his efforts at the oars. This is wholly false. Man is an animated body, a soul-infused body, a *soul-and-body compound*. Union of soul and body is not accidental but *substantial*. The soul is indeed the most important part or element of a man; it is what the Scholastics call the substantial form of the living body; yet it is not the whole man. And while the soul, which is a spirit, can exist alone, and does exist alone when it leaves the body at death, it has a kind of connatural need for the body because it cannot exercise *all* the functions of which it is the natural principle or source unless it be joined in substance with its body. Hence we see that sane philosophy finds entirely acceptable the Christian truth of the ultimate resurrection of the body.

Plato's notion of a supernal realm where things exist as universal substances is a fanciful conception, highly poetic, pleasingly imaginative, but it is a wholly gratuitous assumption and is in no sense a philosophical truth. Indeed, reason cannot admit the pos-

sibility of any finite thing existing in universal. Plato's vague theory seems to imply the notion that all the subsisting universal forms or ideals are unified and identified in the Subsistent Ideal of The Good. A sympathetic interpreter could, with a bit of straining, bring this theory into some agreement with the majestic truth that the Infinite Goodness, God Himself, is the only Being which exists eternally and necessarily, and that in Him, identified with His Undivided Essence, are the archetypal ideas or forms of all things creatable. But, could such an interpretation of Plato's theory of ideas (or ideals) have been suggested to him four hundred years before Christ when he walked the groves of Academe, it would doubtlessly have been to him tire occasion of no little astonishment.

Of the abstractive power of the human intellect which Plato implicitly denies without having heard of it or thought of it, we have already spoken briefly and we shall have occasion to speak again in a later Article.

Plato's theory of knowledge supports, however vainly and shallowly, the important doctrines of the *changelessness of truth*, *the possibility of man's achieving certitude*, and *the possibility of science*. Like Socrates, Plato, despite his purpose of harmonizing and unifying all notable theories of philosophers, turned his face steadily against the destructive and self-contradictory skepticism of the Sophists.

"In discussing the cosmological question, Plato teaches that the bodily universe and all the bodily things in it are ultimately made of some primordial world-stuff which has the elemental forms of air, earth, fire, and water. Thus Plato borrows from the Ionians, particularly from Empedocles. We must ever remember that he was a harmonizer; he had the avowed purpose of bringing all acceptable philosophies into unity and system. The primordial world-stuff (which first appears as air, earth, fire, water) is sometimes called *the Platonian prime matter*. This term is apt to be misleading, for Plato's world-stuff was a definite kind of matter, and hence was not *primary* but *secondary*. We

shall discuss the true meaning of "prime matter" in our study of Aristotle's cosmology.

Plato believed, with Socrates, that the world is the best of all possible worlds (*cosmological optimism*) since God could make nothing inferior. And, since life is superior to non-life, the world must be alive (*hylozoism*).

God,—the Subsistent Idea or Ideal of The Good,—created the world. As Creator, God is called *Demiurge*. Before the bodily universe was made, God created certain spirits; to these He committed the work of creating the bodily world. Yet He reserved to Himself the creation of man's soul.

Plato's cosmology is full of errors. Neither his primal matter (which turns out to be secondary and not primal) nor his elements are ultimate explanations of bodies. Both are bodies themselves, and hence offer the same problem to the philosopher as the universe taken at face value. As for his cosmological optimism, the world is not the *absolutely* best world, else the inexhaustible power of the Creator would be exhausted in its making; it is *relatively* the best inasmuch as it is most admirably suited for its purpose. Nor is anything to be called inferior or imperfect which fits into its place and service for the achieving of purpose. Hence Plato's argument for optimism and for hylozoism are gratuitous and valueless.

As we have seen, much psychological doctrine is bound up with Plato's fundamental philosophy, his famous Theory of Knowledge. Coming directly to the psychological question, Plato teaches that man's soul (directly created by God) is spiritual, rational, self-moving, immortal. The body-prison in which the soul is enclosed was originally a male body. From this was drawn a female body and also the bodies of animals. Once produced, living bodies proceeded to multiply by the process of generation. In addition to the spiritual soul, man has a sensing-soul and a soul which is the source of courage. Only the spiritual soul is immortal. If a man properly purifies himself in this life and casts off the guilt of the offense that led to the imprisonment of his

soul in the body, the soul will return at his death to the realm of substantial ideals or forms from which its primal fault banished it. If, however, a man have lived ill, his soul will pass at his death into a female body (*transmigration of souls* or *metempsychosis*). If the female existence be badly spent, the soul will next appear in an animal, and eventually, if evil endures, in a plant. Hopelessly incorrigible souls will be put in a place of torment. At times Plato speaks of this hell as eternal; again he seems to suggest that all souls will eventually be purified and sent to the heaven of substantial ideals.

The idea of a primal fall of man is common to all the ancients and can be explained only as a surviving remnant of the Primitive Revelation. All the world remembers Original Sin, and that, as Mr. Chesterton points out, is one reason why so many modern intellectuals are anxious to deny it. Plato's theory of three souls in man is fantastic; perhaps we might interpret this doctrine to mean that man's soul has three notable modes of action. The doctrine of a spiritual, immortal, rational soul in man is true, and is demonstrated in the department of philosophy called Rational Psychology. The notion of transmigration of souls is oriental rather than Grecian, yet it had won the approval of those Greeks who followed Pythagorean doctrine, and so Plato puts it into his harmonized system. It is utterly false, however, and lacks every vestige of scientific or philosophical proof. The notion that existing females are only reincarnations of unworthy males should scarcely endear Plato to the devout female sex. The Platonian doctrine of heaven and hell falls short of reality but suggests it. Plato shrinks from the bald assertion of the eternity of hell as many persons do today under the mistaken impression that they are being fair and merciful. Anything short of an *eternal* sanction for the moral law cannot satisfy reason, nor can it meet the requirements of sane feeling. The eternity of hell is not only a fact, but a truly sane fact, a merciful fact, not a cruel conception involving mere revenge.

In discussing the ethical question, Plato holds that sin is in-

evitable because of the dullness of the mind which guides the will. But, says Plato, the inevitable sin is to be laid to man's charge; he is responsible for it *in cause*, inasmuch as he freely committed the primal sin which brought imprisonment in the body and consequent dullness of mind. The ultimate goal of human effort is happiness. Man does not find happiness in things that serve his earthly use (*utilitarianism*'), nor in things which flatter the senses (*hedonism*), but in the steady effort to live virtuously and to know The Good, that is, God. Earthly man is meant for life with his fellows, and human society takes on a necessary form in *the State*. The individual is necessarily a citizen. As such he exists for the State. The civil power (that is, the State) must take control of each child early in life; it must discover the child's special aptitudes and train him in accordance with them, so that the State may be a harmonious and smoothly functioning organism. The best form of government is that in which a few wise men hold the place of control (*aristocracy* or *sophocracy*). The next best form of government is military rule (*timocracy*). Less desirable and even bad forms of government are: *oligarchy* or the rule of certain families; *democracy* or the rule of the rank and file of common people; and *tyranny* or the rule of an absolute sovereign who lacks wisdom, foresight, and kindness.

Plato rightly declares that the goal of human conduct is happiness, and, surprisingly enough for a man unenlightened by Christian Revelation, he is right in teaching that happiness is to be sought in the knowledge of God and the practice of virtue. That man sins inevitably, at least venially, sometimes in life (unless he be kept from it by a special Providence) is true; it is not true, however, that man cannot avoid mortal sin if he uses the grace of God which is made available to all without exception. Of course, it would be unfair to expect Plato to know this truth for it is a matter of the Christian Faith. Plato is entirely wrong in his theory that the citizen exists for the State. Strictly speaking, the State exists for the citizen. And while the State must control the citizen in many things and exact obedience to its

laws, it does so in the interest of the body of citizens, not in its own interest as though it were a thing independent of the citizens and superior to them. For, while the State is *a natural society* and not an artificial one founded on some compact or agreement of men (as Hobbes, Rousseau, and others were to teach later in their theories of *Social Compact* or *Social Contract*'), it is not the owner of its citizens but their servant; it is not their superior but their inferior. Of course, it is not for the individual man to say that, since the State is his servant, he may order it about as he chooses; the State is not his personal servant, but the servant of all citizens together. And, while the individual man is *the* important thing (since he, not the State, not society, is the image of God), he must remember that there are many other individuals with rights equal to his own and of the same sort as his own. Hence the individual must be prepared to make willing 'personal sacrifice, to endure inconvenience, to curb anti-social impulses; he must obey civil laws, and must expect and accept punishment for the violation of these laws,—which really means the violation of other men's rights. Sane ethics thus avoids two evil extremes which actually meet in their enslavement of the individual: it avoids *exaggerated individualism* (with its inevitable enslavement of the many in the interest of the few who happen to have power), and it avoids *totalitarianism* or *State absolutism* (with its inevitable enslavement of the citizens in the interest of civil power, or, more precisely, in the interest of evil politicians who manipulate the civil power). The root of Plato's calamitously mistaken doctrine of State absolutism is found in his view of the State as an organism of which the citizen is but a cell, that is, a thing dependent, inferior, existing only for the well-being of the larger organism of which it is but a tiny part. This view (which was later to be developed by Herbert Spencer, who taught that all humanity is one organism) is full of damage to the human race. One type of such damage appears in the cry for State control of education,—a thing which Plato himself openly favored. It must be kept steadily and clearly in mind that *parents*



have the right and the duty of educating their children. And the aim of true education is the producing of good men and women, not the producing of good citizens. Of course, good men and women will be good citizens, but that is incidental to their character as good men and women. The function of the State in education is to guard the rights of parents in the matter, to supply opportunity for the realization of this right, and to help in various ways in its actual exercise. But State control of education is an unqualified evil; it works always to the ruin of sound government and peaceful social life; inevitably so, since it is a contradiction of the natural law.

#### Summary of the Article

In this Article we have noticed that the first and fundamental question of all philosophy is *the critical question*, that is, the question of the extent and reliability of human knowledge. We have seen that the truth that man can know, can reason, can have certitude, is a self-evident truth which neither requires nor admits direct proof. We have studied, in brief outline, the doctrines taught by Socrates and by Plato, finding in them both truth and falsity, sometimes strangely commingled, but discerning in them a new and penetrating philosophical effort, a more thorough and complete speculation, than the pagan world had yet known. In a word, we find in these two sets of theories *a developing philosophy*; we find that here the true and perennial philosophy begins to take form.

Our vocabulary of philosophical terms and phrases has been enriched as we learned the meaning of: *the Socratic Method* (with *ironic* and *maieutic* processes); *induction*; *optimism*; *innatism*; *sensation*; *intellection*; *substantial union*; *accidental union*; *simplicity*; *Platonic subsistent universal ideas, or ideals, or forms*; *essence*; *Platonic prime matter*; *utilitarianism*; *individualism*; *totalitarianism*; *State*; *State absolutism*; *Social Contract Theory* (or *Le Contrat Social*).

## Article 2. The Philosophy of Aristotle

a) Aristotle; b) Logic; c) Physics; d) Metaphysics; e) Ethics.

a) Aristotle

Aristotle was born in 384 b.c. at Stagira (and hence he is called "The Stagirite") in ancient Chalcis. His was perhaps the finest mind, in natural gifts, that the world has ever known. For twenty years he was a pupil of Plato, carrying on meanwhile his private researches in philosophy and in physical science. He had an interest in biological study, and it is likely that he did some dissecting under the eye of his father, Nichomachus, who was court-physician to the king of Macedon. Aristotle spent some time in travel, and afterwards he was tutor to the young Alexander whom the world was to know as "the Great." Then he set up as a teacher at Athens. His pupils about him, he lectured as they all walked slowly up and down the shaded walks of the Lyceum of Apollo. And thus his school came to be known as "the peripatetics," a name derived from the Greek *peripatein* "to walk about." After a dozen years of teaching, Aristotle incurred the displeasure of the politicians, for he had acquired far too much influence with the young men of Athens to be a safe person to have about. He quietly slipped away, and died a natural death in Euboea in 322 b.c. when he was sixty-two years of age.

We have some of Aristotle's writings, although certain critics think these are but notes taken by his more gifted pupils. No such masterful style appears in these works as graces the writings of Plato. If Aristotle really wrote them, he did not take time to edit them and set them in finished order. Yet, for all that, these writings are among the most precious pages that the world possesses.

We group the writings of Aristotle under four heads: Logic (the *Organon*, or, as he called it, *Analytic*); Physics; Metaphysics; Ethics.

## b) Logic

Logic is the science of *correctness* in the human knowing-process. For thinking must be *correct* if it is to lead one securely to knowledge that is *true* and *certain*. Today we distinguish in Logic a twofold science : one, the science of correct thinking, of legitimate procedure in reasoning ; we call this Formal Logic or Dialectics ; the other, the science of truth and certitude as achievable by thinking, that is, by reasoning ; we call this Major Logic or Criteriology. Aristotle, with perfect scientific acumen, assigned the study of truth and certitude to metaphysics.

Aristotle invented the science of Formal Logic or Analytic, and he developed it into a rounded and relatively perfect thing. Of few men and of few achievements may such a statement be made.

The mind has three major operations : it directly *knows things* (that is, it grasps essences in an abstract manner) ; it compares its findings and *judges* their agreements and disagreements (that is, it pronounces upon what it knows) ; finally, it works out further judgments by *reasoning* upon judgments already formed. The first of these operations is called *apprehending* ; the second, *judging* ; the third, *reasoning*. The purpose of Formal Logic or Dialectics (or of Analytic) is to discern the mode of procedure which the mind must follow to insure a reliable result ; it is to discern the "laws of thinking" ; it is to know how and wherein the three operations, and especially the last (i.e., *reasoning*), are legitimate and justified.

Aristotle analyzed the mental processes with enlightened accuracy. Discerning the fact that the mind, by its native power, rises from the findings of the senses to reality that lies beyond sense-grasp, and *abstracts from* the individual character of sense-objects to know things *in universal*, he goes on to set forth and prove the existence of three grades of mental abstraction, the *physical*, the *mathematical*, the *metaphysical*. These three grades or degrees of mental abstraction are important in themselves and

also as the proper bases of the classification of the sciences which deal with extramental reality.

Apprehending supplies the mind with elemental knowledge, that is, *ideas* or *concepts* which are the mental representations of *essences*. Then the mind goes to its proper work of *judging*, pronouncing, recognizing truths, connecting subject-idea and predicate-idea. Judging is the fundamental thought-process. The operation called reasoning is but a series of judgments, connected, related, leading to a final act of judging and pronouncing some *agreement*,—that is, bringing together some subject and some predicate,—or *disagreement*,—that is, denying some predicate of some subject. In a word, reasoning is a roundabout way of arriving at a judgment which is not immediately manifest to the mind. Judging is the basic, the essential process of thinking.

Now, in judging, the mind pronounces on the agreement or disagreement of ideas or concepts; the mind associates or dis-severs a predicate-idea and a subject-idea; the mind affirms or denies a predicate of a subject. Thus judging is *predicating*. Aristotle discerns five ways in which predicating takes place; every judgment is necessarily made according to one of these five ways. The Five Modes of Predicating are called *the predicates* (in Greek, *catagoremataj*). These are: Genus, Species, Difference, Property or Attribute, and Accident. To explain and illustrate:

(a) *Genus*—When the mind predicates one idea of another (applies predicate-idea to subject-idea) in such wise that the predicate expresses that part of the essence of the subject which the subject has in common with other things from which it is none the less essentially distinguished, the predicate-idea is called *the genus* of the subject-idea, and the judging or predicating is called *generic*. Thus, in the judgment, “Man is animal,” the predicate-idea “animal” expresses part of the essence “man,” but not all of that essence for man is more than animal; the predicate-idea expresses that part of the essence “man” which man has in common with other things, namely, non-rational animal beings.

(&) *Species*—When the mind predicates one idea of another

(i.e., predicate of subject) in such wise that the predicate expresses or defines the entire essence of the subject perfectly and exclusively, the predicate-idea is *the species* of the subject-idea, and the judging or predicating is called *specific*. Thus, in the judgment, "Man is rational animal," the predicate-idea expresses completely, perfectly, and exclusively the essence of the subject-idea. This predicate applies to no other subject. The predicate is an essential definition of the subject. The predicate is *the species* of the subject.

(c) *Difference*—When the mind applies predicate-idea to subject-idea in such wise that the predicate expresses that part of the essence of the subject which marks the subject off from other things with which it has a common genus, the predicate is called *the difference* (or *the ultimate difference* or *the specific difference*) of the subject. Thus, in the judgment "Man is rational," the predicate-idea expresses what distinguishes the subject-idea from another idea which has with it a common genus, that is, from non-rational animal. The judging or predicating here is called *differential*.

(d) *Property* or *Attribute*—When the mind applies predicate-idea to subject-idea in such wise that the predicate expresses what belongs to the subject by natural necessity but is no constituent element or part of its essence, the predicate is called *the property* or *the attribute* of the subject, and the judging or predicating is called *proper*. Thus, in the judgment, "Man is a-being-that-can-laugh" the predicate-idea expresses what belongs by nature to the subject although it is no part of the essence of the subject.

( $\langle$ ?) *Accident*—When the mind applies predicate-idea to subject-idea in such wise that the predicate expresses what *may* belong to the subject, although this is no part of the essence of the subject, nor does it follow naturally upon the nature of the subject by any necessity, the predicate is called *the accident* of the subject, and the judging or predicating is called *accidental*.

Thus, in the judgment, "Man is a-being-that-can-read" the predicate-idea expresses what may *happen* to be true of the subject, but is not necessarily so.

Notice carefully that *the predicables* are *modes of judging in the mind*. They are in no wise classifications of things. Nor are they, strictly speaking, classifications of ideas. They are modes or ways in which one idea may apply to, or be predicated of, another.

Now, the things or realities which are represented in the mind by ideas, are classified, according to their intelligibility or reference to the mind, under ten heads called *the predicamentals* or *the categories* (in Greek, *categoriai*). Aristotle resolved all knowable things into these ten supreme genera or master classes. There are, indeed, certain points of fact that the mind can consider which do not directly fall under any of the categories or predicamentals; these things are called pre-predicamentals and post-predicamentals. Yet, indirectly, or analogously, everything to which the mind of man can turn its attention is ascribable to one of the ten categories. Literally, they are classifications of understandable *finite* being; yet, by analogy, even the infinite Being is viewed as pertaining to the first of the categories or predicamentals. To determine these classes, and so to construct a workable plan for the philosopher whose task is the deep investigation of reality, Aristotle reasoned out a list of the basic questions that the mind must ask in its effort to know all that can be known of anything. These questions are ten and only ten. Two thousand years and more of incessant testing have proved beyond quibble that none of the questions is superfluous and that no additional questions need be asked, or, indeed, can be asked. The answers to the ten fundamental questions are *the categories* or *the predicamentals*. Notice carefully that the predicamentals are not merely a list of things, but a list of the supreme classes of things as understandable. Questions and categories are these :

QUESTIONS	THE CATEGORIES or PREDICAMENTALS
1. What (is the thing itself) ?	1. <i>Substance</i> or <i>one of Nine Accidents</i>
2. How much?	2. Accident of <i>Quantity</i>
3. What sort?	3. Accident of <i>Quality</i>
4. In what comparison or reference?	4. Accident of <i>Relation</i>
5. What doing?	5. Accident of <i>Action</i>
6. What undergoing?	6. Accident of <i>Passion</i>
7. Where?	"j. Accident of <i>Place</i>
8. When?	8. Accident of <i>Time</i>
9. In what position or attitude ?	9. Accident of <i>Posture</i> or <i>Position</i>
10. With what externals or vesture?	10. Accident of <i>Habit</i>

As we have seen, judging is the basic thought-process. But judgment is very often balked by insufficient clarity of knowledge (or, more precisely, of ideas or concepts), and it becomes necessary *to reason out* the judgment. Two ideas may not, in themselves, be so clear in the mind that it can say that they are in agreement or in disagreement. In this case, the mind uses a third idea which is known in its reference to the original two, and through the medium of *this common third idea* the relation (of agreement or disagreement) of the original two ideas may be recognized. Such is the process of reasoning. And its expression (in the mind, or outwardly in speech or writing or other sign) takes the shape of what is called *a syllogism*.

A judgment is expressed (mentally or verbally) in a *proposition*. A syllogism consists of three propositions or expressed judgments. The first two (which express the relations of two ideas to a common third) are called *premises*. The last (which expresses the relation of the original two ideas, known by their relations to the common third idea) is called *the conclusion*. Here we have a syllogism :

*First or major premiss:* Every tree is a plant

*Second or minor premiss:* The oak is a tree

*Conclusion or consequent:* Therefore, the oak is a plant

Reasoning is the syllogism and the syllogism is reasoning. Those shallow critics who scoff at the syllogism, are forced to express their scoffing in syllogisms. For this is the way the mind works, and there can be no quarrel with it. This is its nature. This is its fixed mode of action. There is no other way to think things out. A man might as well quarrel with the structure and action of his feet, and expect them to hear or speak, as to find fault with the "mental triangulation," that is, the syllogism, by which the mind works out truths that are not immediately evident.

Reasoning is either *deductive* or *inductive*. When (as in the example just given) the reasoning process or syllogism proceeds from a general or universal truth to a particular or individual application or expression of it, the process is *deductive reasoning* or simply *deduction*. The principle (i.e., the basic guiding truth) of deduction is this : Whatever is true of all members of a class is true of each member ; whatever is to be denied of all is to be denied of each. When the reasoning process or syllogism proceeds from individual instances to general or universal conclusion, the process is *inductive reasoning* or simply *induction*. The principle of induction is this : Whatever is true of each member of a class is true of all members ; whatever is to be denied of each is to be denied of all. Deduction and induction are complementary, not opposed, methods of reasoning. The nature of the investigation and the state of the mind's information to begin with, indicate which method is to be used.

Since induction is the only instrument available to the laboratory scientist, it has come to be called "the scientific method." Yet the whole purpose and drive of this method is to arrive at general or universal truths which will enable the investigator to *deduce* conclusions. If induction is used to determine the nature of water, and it is discovered that water is H<sub>2</sub>O, then deduction



is thereafter used to determine that if the stuff under consideration is water it is necessarily H<sub>2</sub>O.

Students whose knowledge of the history of philosophy is inadequate have hit upon Roger Bacon, a philosopher of the 13 century, as the inaugurator of the inductive method, especially when it is smugly called “the scientific method.” Yet Aristotle is the true “father of induction.”

### c) P h y s i c s

The term “physics” means, as a department of philosophy, the philosophical science of mobile or changeable being. It is not to be confused with the experimental science of physics which the name usually indicates in our day. Physics here is a department of philosophy ; it seeks *ultimate* causes and reasons. It is the philosophy of the universe of bodily things around us. It is Natural Philosophy.

Aristotle accepts the reality of change or “becoming.” Thus he opposes the fantastic and unreal theory of the Eleatics (*see Chap. I, Art. 2, b. 3*). Now, the most manifest sort of change or movement is found in the bodily world around us, of which we are a part. Thus Aristotle’s physics deals primarily with *the cosmological question*, the question of the root-constitution, and the activities, of bodily things. Since man is bodily, despite the fact that his most important element is spiritual, he falls under the consideration of Aristotelian physics ; thus we have also here a discussion of *the psychological question*, the question of life and of living bodies.

A body, lifeless or living, is *bodily*. All bodies are at one in this point, no matter how great their essential differences in other respects. And bodies do differ essentially. There is an essential difference between the body called a boy and the body called a dog ; between the body called a tree and the body called a rock. As bodies they are at one ; each is as truly *body* as the others. But they are not the same *essential kind* of body.- Aristotle

teaches that the identity of all bodies in *bodiliness* is owing to the fact that all bodies have a substratum of *primal matter*. And each body is constituted in its essential kind, each is made an existing-body-of-this-specific-sort, by its *substantial form* or substantifying determinateness,—for “form” is not to be taken lightly as a word meaning mere shape or outline or something accidental; it is here *substantial form*. An existing body is ultimately (i.e., philosophically) explained as *the substantial union of primal matter with substantial form*. This doctrine came to be known as *hylomorphism* (sometimes spelled *hylomorphism'*), a term which derives from the Greek *hyle* “matter,” and *morphe* “form.”?

“Primal matter (or, as it is more commonly called, prime matter) is the wholly passive substantial substrate of all existing bodies. It has no proper existence of its own. It exists only in existing bodies, that is, in bodies in-formed by substantial form. Prime matter is a substance, but not a complete substance; it requires the co-substance called substantial form to give it existence in existing bodies' Prime matter is the most imperfect of things ; it has no determinateness at all (for determinateness is a “form,” substantial or accidental) ; it is “form-less” in itself. It might be called the substantial *capacity* for bodily existence, but it is not an independently existing capacity./A body comes into actuality, into real existence, when substantial form in-forms (or is fused with) prime matter. And (after first creation) this prime matter already existed in another body or other bodies before becoming substantially fused with the present substantial form. Thus prime matter is not a *kind* of bodily stuff (for *kind* is a form) ; it is not an existing mass of matter out of which bodies emerge in determinate individuality under action of the substantial form. It is wholly *potentia* i.e., aptitudinal ; a capacity), and it is described as “pure potentiality.” This potentiality is actualized (i.e., made an existing body) by substantial form, and the substantial unit of matter-and-form is an existing body. The

identity of all bodies in bodiliness is owing to prime matter (not actively but passively) ; the essential differentiation of bodies is due to their respective substantial forms.

Substantial form is the actuating, substantifying, principle of a body. It is the substantial constituent principle which makes a body exist in its essential kind? Substantial form is a substance,—that is, it is a reality suited to exist itself and not to be merely the mark of something else; it is no mere accident,—that is, a reality unsuited to exist itself and suited to exist as the mark of something else. But substantial form (unless it be spiritual) is not a complete substance; it requires the co-substance called prime matter with which to fuse substantially to constitute an existing body) And yet, it does not stand to prime matter as something separate; for it does not (unless it be spiritual) exist by itself, nor does prime matter exist by itself. The two exist in substantial union ; both are partial or incomplete substances ; together in substantial fusion or unity they constitute a complete substance, that is, an existing bodily substance.

When a body is substantially changed,—as food, for example, is changed when it is turned into the very substance of the being that digests and absorbs it,—the old substance is not annihilated and a new substance created. Prime matter, in-formed as one body, loses the substantial form of that body, and instantly, without lapse of time, is in-formed by a new substantial form. The instantaneous cessation of the old form is called “corruption” ; the simultaneous emergence of the new form is called “generation” ; or, more precisely, the former substance ceases to be or “corrupts,” and the new substance appears or “is generated.” Corruption and generation are but two views of the one instantaneous substantial change: the corruption of one body is the generation of another or others, and the generation of one body is the corruption of another or others.

Unless a substantial form be spiritual, it is said to be “*educed from the potentiality of matter*” when a body is generated; and it is said to be “*reduced to the potentiality of matter*” when a

body is corrupted. Prime matter is the bridge, so to speak, which supports substantial change. It is "in potentiality" (or has the capacity) for union with any substantial form that can make it an existing body; when this potentiality is actualized, the form is said to emerge or *to be educed* from the potentiality of matter. And when a body "corrupts," that is, loses its substantial form to gain another or others, the ceasing substantial form falls back, so to speak, into the aptitude of matter to have such a form; it is "reduced to the potentiality of matter."

Prime matter and substantial form are *ultimate* constituent principles of bodies. Bodies, said Aristotle, are *proximately* reduced (or analyzed into) certain *elements*; these are four: air, earth, water, fire. These proximate elements of bodies, by their varied unions, make up the different kinds of bodies we find about us here on earth/But the elements (air, earth, fire, water) are themselves bodies, and are constituted *ultimately* by prime matter and substantial form.h Aristotle's "elements" are, of course, now known to be inadequate. But the discovery of such proximate elements is the task of laboratory science, not of philosophy.

Aristotle thought that the heavenly bodies are made of a purer and superior kind of material than that which enters the constitution of earthly bodies; he thought that the heavenly bodies are naturally incorruptible. The earth, in his opinion, is the most imperfect of bodies, and naturally tends to corrupt, that is, to undergo substantial change. Aristotle held that matter has been produced or caused; it is not self-existent; but he believed it has been produced *from eternity*.

Aristotle taught, and rightly, that the human soul is the substantial form of the living human being. Indeed, the life-principle (or *psyche*) is the substantial form of every living body, plant, animal, man. He discerned the fact that man has the activities of plant, of animal, and of reasoning creature; yet he taught that man has but one soul, and that this is the rational soul. Whether Aristotle held that the soul is truly spiritual and immortal is a

matter of dispute. It is certain, however, that he denied the pre-existence of souls.

d) *Metaphysics*

The word *metaphysics* is not Aristotle's own. It was used by Andronicus of Rhodes (about 70 b.c.) as a label for those works of Aristotle which were arranged *to follow after* his treatises on physics; for the Greek *meta* means "after." *Metaphysics* deals with reality, not as limited to this nature (*physics*) or that, but as viewed apart from material limitations. Its proper scope includes spiritual being and also *all* being in so far as it can be considered as free from every material determinant and restriction, from all that makes it this or that class or kind. Thus *metaphysics* does come "after" (or reaches beyond) the more special studies in philosophy which consider (a) material being, as physics does, or (&) logical being, as logic does, or (c) moral being, as ethics does. *Metaphysics* is the science of non-material *real* being. It is no airy or imaginative philosophizing about abstractions that no one can understand; it is not something "away up in the air"; it is the deepest philosophy of *reality*; it is the very heart of philosophy.

The basic idea of *metaphysics* is that of *being fens* in Latin; *on* in Greek). In this idea all others are rooted, for every idea is the idea of some *thing*, that is, of some *being*. Anything that can be *thought of as existing in the order of reality*, independently of the creatural mind, is *real* being. Anything that can be thought of as existing in the mind and dependently on the mind (such as, subject, predicate, species—as *predicable*) is *rational* or *logical* being. Anything that can be known in reference to the law which marks the boundary between right and wrong, is *moral* being. Now, logical being and moral being have place and value only in a world of real being. And it is with this world of real being, universally and most penetratingly considered, that *metaphysics* deals.

The idea of being (and of real being) is *transcendental*. That

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF ARISTOTLE

is, it soars over the fences of classification. For the idea of being is the idea of *being as such*, and knows not *kinds* or *sorts*. Every being is being, and even the distinction that marks *off* one class of thing from another is being.

Still, the meaning of *being* is not precisely the same in all references. God is a being, man is a being, a tree is a being, the color of a rose is a being, the distinction between man and tree is a being. But God is infinite, self-existent, necessary being. Creatures are not necessary beings; they are *contingent* beings, that is they are *produced* beings and as such are dependent or contingent upon their causes. Of contingent beings, some are *substantial* (man, tree, rose); some are *accidental* (color of a rose). Hence, while all things are beings (and *real* beings in so far as they are *existible* in the extramental universe) all things are not identical in possessing every implication of the term *being*. The philosopher expresses this truth in some such way as this: The transcendental idea of *being* does not apply to its inferiors or subjects (that is, to the things it designates or denotes) in a *univocal* manner (that is, in precisely the same sense in each case), nor in an *equivocal* manner (that is, in a manner utterly different and unrelated in any two cases), but in an *analogous* manner (that is, in a manner partly identical and partly different in various cases). In a word, while all conceivable things are *beings*, there are classifications of beings on the score of necessity, contingency, substantiality, accident.

Out of the root-idea of *being* Aristotle draws certain self-evident truths or "first principles." The truly *first* "first principle" in the order of all thought and knowledge is called *the principle of contradiction*. Now, a principle is a source, in any sense; and a source of knowledge and thought is a *guiding truth*. The basic guiding truth is this: that a thing cannot be, at one and the same time and under the same aspect, both existent and non-existent. This is the principle of contradiction. It emerges from the idea of *being* when it is considered as *something* which cannot simultaneously be *nothing*. Unless this principle be ac-

knowledged (and it is perforce acknowledged even by those who try to doubt or deny it), all thought and all expression of thought become impossible. For if this principle be fallacious, the very word "fallacious" might also mean "true."

Out of the principle of contradiction come other self-evident principles, such as *the principle of identity and difference* ("What is, is ; what is not, is not"), and *the principle of the excluded middle state* ("A thing either is or is not; there is nothing midway or neutral between being and non-being").

In his metaphysics Aristotle also considers being *as cause*, being *as effect*, being *as one* or in unity; being *as true*; being *as good*; being *as predicamental* (i.e., as classified in the categories) ; being *as actual* (or *existing*) ; being *as potential* (i.e., capable or apt for existing).

Being *as actual* (or being *in actu*) is existing being. Being *as potential* (or being *in potentia*) is existible being. A thing is *actually* what it is ; a thing is *potentially* what it may become. The potentiality of a being is either sheer possibility, and then the being is *objectively* potential ; or the potentiality is the capacity of an existing thing to realize its capabilities which actually exist, and then we have *subjective* potentiality. A boy is actually a boy; potentially he is a grown man, and this potentiality resides in the boy as in its *subject*; here we have subjective potentiality. Again, the boy is potentially President of the United States ; this is objective potentiality or sheer possibility, for there is not in the boy any natural or arranged direction or drive tending towards such an end.

The more actuality a thing has, the more perfect it is. For the more it is *actual* the more it *is*, and the more, so to speak, it *has*. In other words, the greater the actuality of a thing, the less is its capacity for being perfected. Still more briefly, the greater the actuality, the less the potentiality. Now, as reason sees, there must be a First Being that is *entirely* actual, with no perfectibility or potentiality about It. Thus *Pure Actuality* is a name and a definition of God.—At the other end of the scale of per-

fection is unmixed potentiality or *pure potentiality*; this is a definition of prime matter.

Aristotle indicates that God is *the final cause* of the universe (that is, the end or goal of all things), and he uses this truth to show further that God is also the first effecting or producing cause of things. Aristotle mentions creatural causes (or *secondary causes*'), and notable among these are certain "separate intelligences" (which we might call spirits or angels) who have charge of the heavenly bodies.

Our sketch of Aristotle's metaphysics is a very thin sketch indeed; in the nature of things, it cannot be complete or very detailed even as far as it goes. It is presented merely to give the student a general grasp of the scope and character of the science of metaphysics, and to afford him some opportunity of appreciating the notable work achieved by Aristotle in rounding that science into acceptable form.

#### e) E t h i c s

The Greek word *ethos* which gives us the term *ethics* is the same in meaning as the Latin *mos* (stem *mor-*) which gives us the term *morals*. It means *that which is characteristic of man*. Now, the real characteristic of man, his hall-mark so to say, is found in the fact that he can act freely, self-directingly, and responsibly. In a word, the distinctive mark of human activity is this: *it comes from a free-will*. Thus ethics is the science of "free-will actions."

Now, free-will actions will lie in line with reason or will conflict with reason; they will, in other words, fit harmoniously with the purpose for which man exists, and for which free-will is given to him, or they will clash with that purpose. Accordingly, such actions will be *right* and *good*, or they will be *wrong* and *evil*. Ethics, therefore, deals with the *morality* of freely-willed human conduct.

The end and purpose of man's existence, and the end and purpose to which all his deliberate action ought to be directed, is



*the good*, that is, the boundless good. In the achieving of that good, man is to find the completion of himself, the filling up of every rational tendency and appetency; and this will be his beatitude, his happiness. For the achieving of the boundless good (the *summum bonum*) and beatitude man must seek to know and love truth and to act in conformity with it. In particular, man must rightly know and appreciate his own character and place and duty as *man*. An important item in this knowledge is the fact that man is by nature a *social* being; he lives with others of his kind and has rights and duties in their regard. Man is inclined towards conjugal society or marriage; he requires civil society or the State. As to the form of government in the State, times, circumstances, and temperaments will be the determinants. There is also a master-and-slave society which is useful (and perhaps necessary, Aristotle seems to say) but which does not involve slave-ownership. Master and slave should be friends; slaves must never be subjected to cruel treatment.

Aristotle's ethics is not a perfect moral science. He omits the necessary *eternal sanctions* for the moral law. He wrongly supposes that the mastery of slaves is a good, and perhaps a naturally necessary thing. But he is worlds ahead of Plato in his clear discernment that the State is the instrument of the citizens, not their owner. He rightly holds that some civil rule (i.e., the State) is naturally required by men living in society, but that its *form* is for the citizens to determine.

#### Summary of the Article

We have outlined, in this Article, the philosophy of Aristotle, prince of philosophers. We have seen that Aristotle is the inventor of Logic and have noticed that he also rounded this science into completeness.—In Physics, we have seen the matter-and-form doctrine, known as hylomorphism, as Aristotle's philosophy of the bodily world. No more acceptable theory of matter (that is, cosmology) has as yet been formulated. Aristotle was,

of course, very deficient in point of experimental physics. His times did not afford the opportunities and the instruments for accurate physical and chemical research. He assumed as his hypothesis in the matter of experimental science the doctrine of Empedocles on the "four elements," and so did all philosophers and scientists up to the Middle Ages. Still, Aristotle's philosophy of matter is not to be undervalued because of his inadequate knowledge of experimental physics; philosophy does not depend upon the laboratory, even though it uses the findings of science for telling illustration and for direction in its investigations. Aristotle was not, after all, directly or deeply concerned with the proximate principles of bodies; his was a philosophic quest; he sought ultimate principles. And the Aristotelian cosmology, while often challenged and questioned, has managed to outlive all objections and objectors; it has held its own for over two thousand years. Hylomorphism may not be the last word in the philosophy of bodies; it may come to suffer modification and even essential change. It leaves things to explain, it is not without many difficulties; but its difficulties and deficiencies are neither so many nor so baffling as those involved in the several theories of matter which have tried to supplant it.—In metaphysics Aristotle is on undebatable ground; here true philosophy suffers neither doubt nor hesitation. We have seen that metaphysics is the philosophical science of non-material real being. We have noticed the first principles involved in the very concept or idea of being, and we have seen that these principles are the indemonstrable but necessary and indubitable truths upon which all knowledge and all the sciences ultimately depend. We have discussed the doctrine of actuality and potentiality in being.—In our brief consideration of Aristotle's ethics we have noted his doctrine of man's purpose in existence and of the means available for the achievement of that purpose. We have seen that Aristotle taught,—with perfect truth,—that man is, by his very nature, a social being; that he is in natural need of civil society or the State; that the State is not the owner of the citizens nor the



world is the only reality (*cosmological materialism*), and that God is *the soul of the world*; He is a kind of fire, and of this fire the human soul is, so to speak, a spark (*pantheism*). Everything exists and happens by fixed law and necessity; neither God nor man has any freedom (*determinism*). Man's business is to find happiness. But, since man, like everything else, is subject to the sway and buffetings of changeless fate, the only way to happiness is that of stolid and passionless endurance. "Bear and forbear" is the Stoic motto. This motto is capable of a splendid and Christian interpretation, but, as is manifest, the Stoics did not understand it in any such light. Man, said the Stoics, must be apathetic, neither giving way to pleasure in the things of sense nor acknowledging the pressure of sorrow and pain.

2. *The Epicureans*—named for Epicurus, an Athenian philosopher,—held that man can have no true intellectual knowledge, but only the knowledge that comes through the senses (*sensism*). The action of the senses, that is, *sensation*, is either pleasurable or painful. Man must avoid what is painful and indulge what is pleasurable. Yet man must not wallow in sense-pleasures, for excess is always productive of subsequent pain. Hence man must live with great moderation; he must hold desire in check; he must cast off all worry and all fear. Thus shall he achieve *serenity of mind and heart*, and this is the true pleasure for which man is made.—All this amounts to *hedonism*, or quest of what is sweetly pleasing; and some *pessimism* or the conviction that the best life has to offer is the avoidance of pain.—The Epicureans thought that the bodily world is a kind of cluster of particles, variously united by sheer chance to constitute the different things we see about us. Here we have *materialistic atomism* and *casualism*:

3. *The Skeptics*,—variously classified as the Pyrrhonians, the Neo-Pyrrhonians, the Academians,—held that man cannot attain to certain knowledge of anything; he cannot surely and positively know truth. Some skeptics admit the possibility of attaining probability, and some say that even this is beyond man's

powers. Hence philosophy and science are illusory. And no moral duties exist, for if man can know nothing for certain, how can he know that any duty certainly binds him? The best a man can do is to seek quietness and imperturbability of mind; in this lies his happiness.—It is manifest that the view of the skeptics is *pessimistic, amoral, and stoical*.

4. *The Eclectics*,—named from the Greek *eklegein* which means “to choose out,”—thought that true philosophy is scattered piecemeal throughout all existing theories, and it is the business of the philosopher to sift it out. The “test” for the authentic philosophy is, according to the Greek Eclectics, a person’s direct experience plus a kind of “inner voice” or instinct which proclaims truth or indicates its presence.

It is manifest that these later Greek schools worked a damage to philosophy. They represent a “throw back” to crass materialism and pantheism. Despite the doctrine of moderation which they generally recommend, they represent a surrender to sensualism. Their ignoring or denial of philosophical certitude is the suicide of thought; they make all science and all philosophy utterly impossible.

There is a dead and pessimistic sameness in these schools. This is due to the fact that their ethical theory is wholly divorced from reality. Ethics, as a human science, is the fruit of the sound philosophy of reality, indeed of true metaphysics. When it is severed from this true source or principle, ethics becomes a subjective theory of flabby sentimentalism and invariably degenerates (as history shows) into dull and dreary pessimism.

#### b) Greco-Jewish Philosophy

The so-called Greco-Jewish philosophy was the result of an attempt to draw into a harmonious system the Greek philosophy (especially that of Plato) and the Old Testament Scriptures. The effort was made by certain Jews of Alexandria in Egypt,

chiefly by Aristobulus (2 century b.c.) and Philo (born about 25 b.c.).

Aristobulus is notable as the inaugurator of the system. Philo is the one great name associated with this syncretizing or amalgamating effort.

Philo was a contemporary of Our Lord. He was known as an eminent scholar with an unbounded love for the philosophy of Pythagoras and of Plato. Like Aristobulus, Philo was convinced of two things : first, that Holy Scripture is the source of *all* truth ; true philosophy derives from Scripture, and therefore the function of the philosopher is the interpreting of Holy Writ; second, the Greek philosophy is the best that man has done in his quest for wisdom ; it is the true philosophy ; therefore, it must be fundamentally at one with Scripture and indeed, rightly understood, must be seen as something derived from Scripture. Philo sets to work to harmonize and unify philosophy and revelation.

Philo teaches that God is an inexpressibly perfect Being. God begets the Logos or Word which contains in Itself patterns of all creatable things as well as the power to produce them and to interpenetrate them as their soul. The Logos does Its work by impressing *forms* upon matter. Matter is wholly imperfect; it exists eternally; it is independent of God. The souls of men existed before their bodies, and were imprisoned in bodies in consequence of some offense. Release from the body-prison is achieved by conquest of fleshly tendencies and cultivation of serene contemplation of God. Unless a man take the one means of release, his soul passes from body to body in a continuous transmigration which is the only hell. The study of philosophy is a splendid aid in quelling passion and setting up the spirit of contemplation.

Philo is manifestly *eclectic* in tendency, for he “picks and chooses” the elements of his doctrine from Greek philosophy and Holy Writ. He is, in many points, Platonic : thus he holds to the subsistent forms of things resident in the Logos; to the pre-

existence of human souls; to the transmigration of souls (although his transmigration is ever from one human body to another and never downward through animals to plants, as in Plato) ; to the merely accidental union of man's soul and body. We notice, too, that Philo adopts the Stoical idea of a world-soul. And he borrows (as the Greeks had borrowed before him) the ancient oriental notion of rapt contemplation or ecstatic absorption in God.

Like the later Greek schools just discussed, Philo represents a retrogression in philosophy, not an advance. His system is more Greek than biblical. It contains deeply erroneous doctrines on *the theological question, the psychological question, the cosmological question, and the ethical question*. Based as it is on the gratuitous assumption of Scripture as the only source of knowledge, it also errs on *the critical question*. Throughout, Philo makes Scripture conform to his conception of Greek philosophy ; he seldom, if ever, puts pressure on his philosophy to bring it into line with Scripture. His system is, among other things, materialistic, pantheistic, and pessimistic.

### c) Neoplatonism

Neoplatonism, like the Greco-Jewish philosophy, is an attempt at "blending." It is an amalgam of Plato's philosophy and ancient oriental doctrines ; with these are mingled some almost forgotten doctrines of the earliest Greeks. Neoplatonism is not a single or clear-cut system; various Neoplatonist theories were taught at Alexandria, at Athens, and in Syria. The Athenian "school" of Neoplatonism was the most worthy of note because it had the one philosopher of importance whose name is associated with this syncretizing and eclectic movement. This was Plotinus (204-269).

Plotinus taught that there is a formless Supreme Being. This being he calls *The One*. From this Being emerges mind or intelligence; that is, *Notts*. From *Nous* comes *The World-Soul*. Here we have indubitably a pagan's mistaken interpretation of the

Christian doctrine of The Blessed Trinity.—The human soul, while radically identified with The One, with Nous, and with World-Soul, is nevertheless a sort of individual; it existed before it had a body, in which it is unhappily and unnaturally enmeshed; it is immortal. The soul must struggle to be free of the trammels of the flesh and to rise to contemplation of The One in conscious union with Nous and World-Soul. Perfect attainment of this glorious contemplation (which is one of direct or intuitive vision) is only to be attained in the life to come. Souls that fail to free themselves of subjection to the body will have to endure a succession of transmigrations until they have finally attained to purification.

Plotinus borrows from strangely assorted sources. From the Christian faith he takes (and distorts) the notion of the Trinity, and the doctrine of the Beatific Vision. From Pythagoras (and Plato) he takes transmigration, and from Plato he takes the pre-existence of human souls. From the old Ionians he borrows the notion of a living world (for the World-Soul, or Demiurge, makes the world a living thing); and the notion of a world-soul itself is borrowed from the Stoics.

Plotinus is pantheistic, hylozoistic, and materialistic. It is interesting to note in passing that Henri Bergson (1859-1940) who was converted to the Catholic Faith some five years before his death, attributed his conversion, under God's grace, to his devoted study of Plotinus. The Neoplatonism of Plotinus is a far cry from Christianity. Divine Providence leads sincere minds to truth from the most unlikely beginnings.

#### d) Gnosticism

Certain heretics of early Christian times called themselves by the Greek name of *gnostikoi* or "the enlightened ones." These folk are known in history as the Gnostics, and their doctrine is Gnosticism.

The Gnostics claimed to have a special divine illumination (or *gnosis* "knowledge" or "enlightenment") which is denied to



ordinary men. By aid of the *gnosis* they claimed to understand all fundamental truths. Their doctrine is a sad mixture of Neoplatonism, badly twisted Christian doctrine, and plain paganism.

The Gnostics taught that God cannot come into contact with matter, for matter is wholly vile and God is all-perfect. God created spiritual beings; these created others less perfect than themselves; these created others still less perfect, and so on until *the least perfect spiritual beings* created the bodily world.

Matter, or bodiliness, is the source-of all evil. The human body is the source of evil in man. Man must free the soul from the influence of the body which imprisons it so that death may restore it to its pure and pristine state.

Among the spiritual beings that intervene between God and the material world is one called *Christ*. Another is *Jesus*. These are two beings, not one. Jesus assumed an apparent human body and Christ was united with Him at the baptism by John in the Jordan. Jesus and Christ, in union, worked for the deliverance of mankind from pains. At the Crucifixion, Christ withdrew from Jesus, and Jesus suffered pain and death in His apparent human body.

Gnosticism is an example of what prideful ignorance can do. As philosophy it is meaningless, for it is wholly gratuitous, baseless, and grotesque. It died quickly; by the end of the 3 century it was extinct. But something like Gnosticism is always recurring in the world, and notably in times of intellectual exhaustion or decadence. In our own day such vagaries as Theosophy and Rosicrucianism, and other quackeries which promise to “unleash the divine power within each man” suggest the Gnostic error.

Valentinus, Marcion of Sinope, and Basilides of Alexandria, —all of the 2 century,—were notable Gnostics.

#### e) Manichæism

Manes or Mani,—whose name is Latinized as *Manichæus*,—was a Persian reformer of the 3 century. He taught a mixture of

doctrines taken from Zoroaster, the Neoplatonists, the Gnostics, and the Christians.

Manicheism holds the theory of two first principles, one of goodness and light, the other of evil and darkness. These are God and Satan. Each produced creatures of his own, and the world is made up of these ; hence the world is a mixture of good and evil. Each human being is also a mixture of good and evil. Man must seek to make the good in him triumph over the evil that is there. He achieves this victory by contemplation of the truth and by bodily austerities. Still, since the average man is very weak and consequently unable to wage the constant exacting warfare against evil, he need not concern himself too much about the effort.

Manicheism, like all decadent philosophies, is full of a great weariness together with a wistful longing for ideals and a pathetic half-attempt to set forth a system of guiding truths.

#### f) P a t r i s t i c P h i l o s o p h y

The Fathers of the Church (that is, *Patres Ecclesiae*, whence comes the adjective *Patristic*) were those holy and learned men of the first Christian centuries who wrote notable treatises in explanation or defense of the Catholic Faith. In their work of uprooting heresy and planting true doctrine, the Fathers came constantly upon false philosophical theories which had to be met and answered on philosophical grounds. Thus many of the Fathers were, perforce, philosophers, and some of them filled the office with eminence. Among these we must mention St. Clement of Alexandria (2-3 century) ; Origen (3 century) ; Minucius Felix (2 century) ; Tertullian (2-3 century) ; Lactantius (3 century) ; Arnobius (4 century). We must mention also the great Greek and Latin Fathers who flourished after the Council of Nice (a. d. 325). The "Big Four" among the Greek Fathers were Saints John Chrysostom, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzen, and Basil. Among the Latin Fathers, the "Big Four" were Saints Jerome, Ambrose, Gregory the Great, and Augus-

tine. Of all the Fathers, by far the most notable in philosophy was the illustrious African, Aurelius Augustinus, whom we know as St. Augustine of Hippo.

St. Augustine (354–430) was not only a great philosopher; he was one of the very greatest that the world has ever known. To a genius approaching, if not equalling, that of Plato or even that of Aristotle, he joined the light of knowledge that comes with the Christian Faith. In the cast of his philosophy he is Platonian rather than Aristotelian, for in his day Plato was universally regarded as the king of philosophers. Aristotle was not recognized at his true worth until a much later day, although he was always held in reverent esteem. It was left for two great Dominicans, William of Moerbeke and St. Thomas Aquinas,—the former by a pure translation and the latter by his interpretation and application of Aristotelian philosophy,—to bring Aristotle to his true place as far and away the greatest philosopher of ancient times, and indeed of all times.

St. Augustine taught that the mind of man is adequate to attain to truth with certitude; he held that the mind is much aided in its work by endeavoring to have as clear an idea of God as it is possible to achieve; for to know God is to have some concomitant knowledge of God's creatures and of all knowable things.

St. Augustine proves the existence of God from the contingency of the world; from the nature of the human soul; and from the character of human knowledge. He shows that God is infinite, eternal, changeless, and absolutely free; that God creates in goodness, unimpelled by any stress or necessity. He says that, in the beginning, God made all living bodily creatures (excepting man) in *germ*; that is, God gave to certain particles of matter a kind of seed-force (or *ratio seminalis*) to develop into determinate plants and animals at a time set beforehand by God. Man, however, is not explained by this theory of *rationes seminales*.

Man's soul is a spiritual and immortal substance, wholly present in every part of the living human body. As to the origin of

the soul, St. Augustine felt that the inheritance of Original Sin indicates the fact that the soul is somehow drawn from the souls of parents (*traducianism*). In this he is wrong. Each soul is immediately created by Almighty God at the moment it is joined with its body in the bosom of the mother (*creationism*). The doctrine of Original Sin does not necessitate the traducianist theory. We take our *nature* (that is, our complete working essence), under God, from our parents, although we do not take our *souls* from them; and it is *human nature* that is infected in its source by Original Sin; it is our individual *human nature* that incurs this evil heritage.

Man, says St. Augustine, is endowed with free-will. He tends of necessity towards beatitude or happiness, but he freely chooses the means whereby he seeks to attain this beatitude. Man's freedom of choice is in no way hindered or hampered by God's foreknowledge of human acts. The object that will perfectly fill up man's capacity for happiness is God alone; St. Augustine cites and interprets Plato in proof of this truth. God is to be known, loved, and served in this life, and He is to be possessed in heaven by an immediate intuition or direct vision of the Divine Essence (*the Beatific Vision*).

The law or norm of morality for man is the Eternal Law. The Eternal Law is God Himself inasmuch as He ordains the order He has set up in nature to be conserved and forbids it to be disturbed (*the natural law*). Man's normal and natural grasp of the natural law is effected by *reason*, that is, by the thinking mind, and in this service reason is sometimes called *conscience*.

God is in no sense the cause of moral evil or sin. Sin is possible because of the abuse of free-will by man, and God, having bestowed free-will, does not take it away again even when it is abused. In His loving Providence, God draws good out of evil, even of moral evil. God may be called the cause *per accidens* (that is, *the accidental cause*) of physical evils in the world; yet these evils, rightly undergone, prove to be blessings to man.