

The Thirteenth Century

Chapter I

The Background

What Freud said of the life of an individual can be applied to history at large: in retrospect it takes on an inevitability and natural progression that it does not possess when one is at the beginning or in midstream. When we consider the thirteenth century as the point of arrival of what had gone before, it is possible so to arrange the data that the rise of universities, the full development of Scholastic theology as against philosophy, and all the rest seem to flow almost effortlessly from their antecedents as if any other outcome would be unthinkable. The contrary view leans rather heavily on the much overworked term "renaissance." We are confronted first with the Carolingian Renaissance, next with the twelfth-century renaissance, then with the renaissance of the thirteenth century, and finally with the Renaissance with the resultant picture of discontinuous bootstrap efforts which bear little positive relation to one another, though each points back in various ways to classical times. It would be difficult to decide definitively for either view, particularly if we advert to the original analogue, the life of the individual. Our lives may seem at once a continuum of deeds culminating in what we now are and a discontinuous succession of turning points at each of which we refashioned ourselves. Neither view alone would be sufficient; each has an interpretative value.

In the present chapter we want to look at the thirteenth century both as the *telos* toward which earlier efforts in the philosophy of the Christian West tended and as something surprising, unforeseeable, and quite *sui generis*. The first viewpoint is valuable in discussing the rise of the universities, which can be regarded as evolving out of previous modes of instruction; the second seems called for when we consider the impact on the West of Islamic philosophy, which was the vehicle whereby the integral Aristotle first came into view. Islamic philosophy and its influence on the West force us to see the need for both of the viewpoints we have mentioned. On the one hand, the Arabian Aristotelians represent a threat to the Augustinian tradition which was dominant in theology and, on the other hand, their Aristotelianism must be viewed with relation to the Aristotle already known and influential in the West. Furthermore, the Neoplatonism of the Islamic philosophers provides a common note with that operative in Augustine and Boethius, and yet because Islamic philosophy brings with it closer contact with Neoplatonic sources, there is an element of strangeness and difference. In short, Islamic philosophy and its influence on the West demand that we see the ambiguity of the thirteenth century with respect to what had gone before. There is both continuity and disruption, a modification of an ongoing effort and quite fundamental changes in the conception of the nature of that effort. Finally, we will make some general remarks about the sources of the philosophizing of the thirteenth century.

A. The Universities

The preceding chapters have acquainted us with the palace school begun by Alcuin as well as with the fact that Alcuin was already associated with a cathedral school when the invitation from Charlemagne came to him. During the Carolingian Renaissance, as we have seen, great emphasis was put on the establishment of cathedral and monastic schools, and during the twelfth century the men we have considered were associated with one or the other of the latter types of school. At Paris there were schools on Mont Ste. Genevieve, at the monastery of St. Victor, and at the cathedral; it was from the last, the cathedral school, that the University of Paris evolved. The thirteenth century saw the rise of a great many universities, those of Salerno, Bologna, Paris, Montpellier, and Oxford. We shall study this phenomenon in terms of the University of Paris if only because so many of the men to be considered in the following chapters were associated with that university.

The cathedral school of Paris first came into real prominence with William of Champeaux, and the city's importance on the educational map was further enhanced by Abelard's tenures there. It is generally recognized that the University of Paris did not exist at the time of Abelard. The first statute of the university dates from 1215, though this seems to be a confirmation of something already established however inchoatively. But what is it we are talking about when we talk of a university?

The model of the university was the medieval guild; the university is a society of masters and scholars. Sometimes the guild was made up of the students, as in the south; sometimes, as was the case at Paris, the guild comprised the masters. In the latter case students can be regarded as apprentices who are candidates for full membership in the guild, that is, to the society of masters. It is thought that the masters formed a corporation because of a struggle with the chancellor of the cathedral school at Paris. With the recognition of the autonomy of the university, or society of masters, control of the granting of licenses to teach passed from the chancellor to the rector of the university, who was elected by his peers; at Paris the rector of the faculty of arts was also the rector of the university.

There were four faculties at Paris -- arts, law, medicine, and theology -- with the faculty of arts serving as preparation for the others and thus as the undergraduate college, so to speak. The principal purpose of the university was to train future masters who, after prescribed courses of studies and the successful passing of examinations, were granted degrees. The degree arose quite naturally out of the license to teach. However, not all those who received a degree became teaching masters at the university, thus the distinction between the *magistri regentes* and *magistri non regentes*. The striking thing about the medieval university as it came to be constituted was its autonomy, its freedom from pressure of both an ecclesiastical and a political sort. The University of Paris was from the outset an international university; indeed, besides the division into faculties there was a division of the masters into nations. Of course, since the masters were members of the clergy, both secular and regular, freedom from religious pressure often amounted to little more than freedom from the local bishop. Moreover, since the masters were believers, the constraints of faith on their work, if "constraint" is the right term, could scarcely be considered as emanating from an external source. It is safe to assume that no master wanted or intended to teach anything contrary to the received doctrines of the Church; often it was judged that he nonetheless was so teaching, and condemnation was certainly not unknown. Academic freedom in its most responsible sense was surely

present in the medieval university; a master was answerable to his peers, and free and open debate, public occasions when he would defend his views against all comers, both students and fellow masters, were frequent. For sheer hurly-burly of debate and disputation there has probably been nothing to equal the medieval university.

As has been pointed out, the chief purpose of the society of masters was to train others to become masters in their subject. The student entering the faculty of arts was thirteen or fourteen years old, and he embarked on a course of studies which continued for something over four years (even more at universities other than Paris). The curriculum of the arts faculty can conveniently be thought of in terms of the trivium and quadrivium, and the basic mode of instruction was the *lectio*, which was a lecture, not in the modern sense, but in the older sense of a reading. Stated books were read and commented on: in grammar, Priscian; in logic, Porphyry and subsequently the entire *Organon* of Aristotle. Some of the *Nicomachean Ethics* was also read; in the quadrivium no particular books were prescribed in the statutes of 1215, but the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle as well as his natural writings, newly introduced in the West, are excluded from consideration and may not be read. This prohibition was later lifted -- certainly it came not to be heeded -- and with the passage of time other books were prescribed for the arts course.

To finish the arts course was to obtain a license to teach in that faculty and to pursue studies in one of the others. The hours of instruction in theology, for example, were such that a master from the faculty of arts could do his teaching and then attend lectures in theology. As a student of theology one followed lectures on Scripture for four years, after which two years were spent attending lectures on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. When one had finished this course and had attained the age of twenty-six, he received the baccalaureate and himself lectured on Scripture for two years and subsequently on the *Sentences*. The doctorate of theology could then be awarded if one had achieved the age of thirty-four and fulfilled other requirements such as holding public disputations.

Besides the *lectiones* there were two kinds of disputation or inquiry, the *Quaestio Disputata* and the *Quaestio Quodlibetalis*. The former could be a fairly regular classroom feature. The procedure was as follows. A thesis was proposed, objections to it were entertained, and finally a resolution was given and the objections resolved. In the classroom the *baccalarius* might make the first attempt at replying to the difficulties proposed, to be followed by the more magisterial resolution of the master. Disputed questions swinging around a common theme could be entertained in the course of a year and be productive of the sort of thing we have in Aquinas' *Disputed Question on Truth*, which is a series of *quaestiones*. The written form of such classroom disputations was sometimes the report of a student, sometimes the composition of the master himself. The quodlibetal questions were just that, on anything at all, and they were entertained at specific times during Advent and Lent when the participants or interlocutors could be other masters. These seem to have been very arduous affairs for the master who undertook them; they were certainly occasions when he would have to prove his mettle or suffer a diminution of prestige. It was not incumbent on a master to subject himself to this ordeal, however; the master was also free in setting the number of disputed questions he would handle.

The style of the *quaestiones* gradually made inroads on the *lectiones*, so that commentaries on the *Sentences*, for example, quickly became a suite of questions. The style of the *Summa theologiae* of Aquinas (but not of his *Summa contra gentes*) reflects that of public disputations, though this was from the outset a written work. The style of the schools, the Scholastic method, exhibits, even on the printed page, the flavor of inquiry, disputation, and dialectic that animated the medieval university. A *quaestio* of the *Summa theologiae*, for example, is first articulated into a number of subsidiary questions or articles. An "article" of the Summa begins with a question and is followed by an answer which is the thesis for what follows. Immediately after the statement of the thesis a number of reasons for not accepting it are given; these are terminated by the *sed contra*. There follows the *respondeo*, or sustained answer, to the question, after which each objection to the initial thesis is taken up in turn. Debate is easily controlled in writing, of course, but when we consider that this literary style reflects the debate of the classroom or open disputation, we get some inkling of what the medieval university was like.

Commenting on set texts in the lectures was an effort to expound what an admitted authority had to say on a given subject; indeed, the very term "authority" suggests, in Latin as well as English, reference to an author. The principal concern of the reader or lecturer would be to expound what the author had to say. But we need not think of this as slavish adherence to the text. What animated the effort was the search for truth, and the exposition must be seen in terms of this larger quest. We are of course speaking of the ideal, and we can surmise that in the medieval, as in modern universities, the very good teacher was a rare entity and that a mode of instruction which, in the hands of a talented teacher, might soar would, in lesser hands, bore. The clue to this mode of instruction was inquiry, questioning, disputation which took their rise from received authors (whether directly or indirectly) as well as from the difficulties the subject matter suggested to master and student. The dangers inherent in the system are clear: authorities might block the way to inquiry; debate can become overly stylized; the mere repetition and manipulation of available material can replace serious and independent research; and so forth. When the system became rigid and an impediment, "Scholasticism" became a pejorative term. This should not lead us to forget that in its heyday it simply covered the method of the medieval schools, a method which was open and lively, disputatious and dialectical, striving for an ideal blend of respect for tradition and openness to novelty. Scholasticism, intimately linked with the medieval university, is, when all is said and done, that out of which modern university instruction arose.

B. Translations

In the previous part, in discussing Dominic Gundisallinus, mention was made of the translation into Latin of the works of Greek and Islamic authors. Toledo in Spain was one of the centers of this effort. In that city Muslim, Jew, and Christian were in contact with one another, and under the patronage of Archbishop Raymond (1126-1151) the task of the translators was given impetus. Among those engaged in this work in the twelfth century, besides Gundisallinus, were John of Spain, Gerard of Cremona, Michael the Scot, and Herman the German. Already in the twelfth century efforts at commentary and assimilation are apparent, and, once more, Gundisallinus is a major example.

Naples was another scene of translation work; the Emperor Frederick II (1197-1250) invited Islamic and Jewish philosophers to his court. The Emperor also founded the University of Naples, where Aquinas was to attend the faculty of arts and where Peter the Irishman commented on Aristotle and Porphyry. Michael the Scot came to Naples and with a team of translators rendered Averroes into Latin about 1230. The papal court was also the locus of translating, notably by William of Moerbeke; during his sojourn in the papal court Aquinas urged William on. Thus, translations into Latin were being made from the original Greek as well as through the medium of Arabic.

Almost the entire Aristotelian corpus was available in the West when the thirteenth century began, but the versions of the *Metaphysics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* were partial ones. Of Plato, part of the *Timaeus* was translated; the *Phaedo* and *Meno* were translated into Latin about the middle of the twelfth century. The Neoplatonism which was part of the patrimony of the West was augmented by translations of Neoplatonist commentaries of Aristotle, the *Liber de causis*, and the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*, derivative from Proclus and Plotinus, respectively. In the thirteenth century the spate of translations increased, and largely through the efforts of William of Moerbeke the complete Aristotle together with the Greek commentaries on him were turned into Latin. William also translated a number of works of Proclus as well as his commentaries on the *Timaeus* and *Parmenides*. The result of his labor was an Aristotle who had been freed from the interpretation of the Islamic commentators.

C. Islamic Philosophy

Now that we have some notion of the academic setting in which the men we are soon to consider lived their lives, we must say something about the impact of the Islamic philosophers on the thought of the thirteenth century. It is only under this aspect that we propose to say a few things about a number of thinkers, for the most part Arabs, who lived prior to the thirteenth century but who exercised a considerable influence on the masters of the universities. Our knowledge of these men is in a considerable state of flux, and it increases almost daily. For this and other reasons the following sketch is attempted with more than the usual trepidation.

We are already aware of the fragmentary way in which Greek thought came into the Latin West. Of Plato little was known directly, apart from the *Timaeus*; for a long time Aristotle was represented only by portions of his *Organon*, then by all of it as well as by the first three books of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Meanwhile, Greek thought was traveling a circuitous route that would eventually bring it into contact with the Christian West in Spain, a route through Syria and Persia and Arabia. As it traveled this route, Greek thought underwent translation from one language into the next with all the dangers that are involved with respect to fidelity to the original Greek. Furthermore, there was not simply transmission but interpretation, and the thinkers of Islam, like their Christian counterparts, were bent on establishing a harmony between pagan philosophy and their religious beliefs. When Aristotle finally came into the West, he came together with the writings of his Arabian interpreters. This had consequences of an interesting kind.

Al-Kindi (c.801-873). The first Muslim philosopher was al-Kindi. He is said to have written 270 works, but most of them are lost, and it is probable that sections of works have been counted as whole works. His writings, as they are described, are

encyclopedic in scope, ranging from logic through medicine and science to theology. Some of al-Kindi's works were translated into Latin by Gerard of Cremona, and, until recently, he was known only through these Latin translations. He revised the Arabic version of Plotinus' *Enneads*, a work he thought to be one of Aristotle's.

It was owing to al-Kindi that philosophy became part of Islamic culture; he became known as the "philosopher of the Arabs," and his task as he saw it was to reconcile the wisdom of the Koran with Greek philosophy. This will be the continuing task of al-Farabi, ibn-Sina (Avicenna), and ibn-Rushd (Averroes). Philosophy, al-Kindi observed, depends upon reason, religion upon revelation; logic is the method of the former, faith of the latter. Al-Kindi's view of philosophy is quite comprehensive; it embraces the whole of human science. The divisions of it that he offers are Aristotelian, distinguishing speculative and practical philosophy and subdividing the former into physics, mathematics, and divine science, the latter into ethics, economics, and politics. The fact that divine science, or theology, is a part of speculative philosophy provided al-Kindi with one of his reasons for the compatibility of philosophy and religion, though this reason led to an ambiguity. He also suggests a common source, ultimately, of the prophet's revelation and philosophical truth and goes on to speak of religion as the ultimate ordination of philosophizing.

Al-Kindi's use of the term "theologian" varies. Sometimes he uses it to describe those who opposed the study of philosophy and argues against them in a manner reminiscent of Aristotle's *Protrepticus*. Either the study of philosophy is necessary or it is not. If it is necessary, it should be pursued; if it is said to be unnecessary, one must show why this is the case, and to do this he must engage in philosophy. Thus, willy-nilly, philosophy is necessary. Further, although he sometimes seems to identify Aristotle's metaphysics and divine science without qualification, al-Kindi makes the following contrast between the divine science of the Koran and that of the philosophers. That of the Koran is strictly a divine science, while that of the philosophers is finally a human science. The knowledge of the prophet is immediate and inspired, whereas that of the philosophers is reached by way of logic and demonstration. Confronted with Aristotle's view that the world is eternal, al-Kindi will deny this because of his faith. Only God is eternal; everything else is created and finite. The denial of infinitude of anything other than God is found in the *De quinque essentiis*, a work which holds that matter, form, space, movement, and time attach to every physical body. Holding that any body must be finite, al-Kindi argues that the sum of finite magnitudes must be itself finite. In his *De intellectu* al-Kindi argues that man has four intellects: the agent intellect, the passive intellect, the latter as actuated, and the use of knowledge already had. We can take it that he is distinguishing four senses of "intellect."

Al-Farabi (c.870-c.950). Al-Farabi was a Turk by birth and of the Islamic faith. He came to the study of philosophy late in life, perhaps at fifty years of age, and half of his writings deal with logic and consist of commentaries on the works of Aristotle's *Organon*. One of the striking things about al-Farabi's conception of philosophy is that he holds that the various philosophical schools teach, not many philosophies, but different aspects of the one philosophy. He shares the Neoplatonic hope, expressed by Porphyry, that the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle can be reconciled and shown to be complementary. The fact that Porphyry, Plotinus, and Proclus, together with Neoplatonic commentaries on Aristotle by Alexander of Aphrodisias, Ammonius, and

Themistius, had been translated into Arabic doubtless gave fuel to this hope of synthesizing the great philosophers of antiquity.

In al-Farabi we find a picture of the universe which is quite clearly Neoplatonic, one relying on a doctrine of emanation and insisting on a hierarchy such that God acts on lesser orders only through the medium of intervening orders. The picture of the universe is contained in al-Farabi's theory of the ten intelligences. First, there is God, the One, who in thinking of himself produces a first intelligence which emanates from him. God is necessary, but the first intelligence is possible in itself, though necessary with respect to another, that is, to God. When the first intelligence thinks about God, this is productive of another intelligence, and the chain of emanations continues, reaching the tenth intelligence, called the "agent intellect," which directs the sublunar world. As with Neoplatonism, *esse est percipi*, in the sense that to be thought is to be created; the first nine intelligences hierarchically ordered are productive of the souls of the nine celestial spheres of the astronomy of Ptolemy. Prime matter issues in some way from the tenth intelligence, and prime matter underlies the four elements out of which all physical things are ultimately made; the forms of bodies also emanate from the tenth intelligence, and it is here that room is found for Aristotle's teaching on the hylomorphic composition of physical bodies. Al-Farabi's writings on the intellect were translated into Latin and are influential in the West; his interpretation of Aristotle's agent intellect, an interpretation reflecting the influence of the school of Alexandria, will have an impact on the University of Paris in the thirteenth century. The various senses of intellect we have seen distinguished by al-Kindi have their counterpart in al-Farabi, but there is the further note of illumination from superior intelligences, a kind of infused knowledge, which enabled al-Farabi to make a rather smooth transition from philosophy to religion. The counterpart of the Neoplatonic emanation is the theory of return to the One, and al-Farabi, like Plotinus, speaks of this return as it is effected by the human intellect in religious and even mystical terms.

Avicenna (980-1037). Perhaps the greatest of the Islamic philosophers, ibn-Sina, or Avicenna, was known by the men of the thirteenth century chiefly through his *Sufficientiae*, whose parts are devoted to the principal divisions of philosophy -- logic, physics, mathematics, psychology, and metaphysics. Avicenna's vision of the world is essentially that we find in al-Farabi, and his procedure in treating of God is reminiscent of the ontological argument, as Fazlur Rahman has pointed out. God is a necessary being and cannot not exist; from him, considered as premise, creation emanates as if it were a conclusion. In knowing himself, God effects the first intelligence, which is not a necessary being considered in itself but only possible. Any being other than God is not necessary of itself, in its nature, but receives its necessity from God. It is here that Avicenna develops a thought of al-Farabi, who, taking up a distinction Aristotle had made in the *Posterior Analytics* between knowing what a thing is and knowing that it is, had maintained in creatures a difference between essence and existence. Essence here stands for nature, which is possibility, which does not include existence. If a nature exists, this must be explained by something other than itself. In short, existence is accidental to essence or nature. By accident Avicenna did not mean what would be meant if red were said to be an accident of a thing, for the thing might continue to be while ceasing to be red. His point is simply that if existence is not part of what a thing is, part of its essence, when it exists existence befalls it; it happens to exist. Existence seems to identify the created

nature's dependence on God and would be, if Rahman is right, a relational notion. God is existence, is necessary existence. Avicenna intends to say, not that in God essence and existence are the same, but that God has no essence or nature. This denial can doubtless be explained in terms of the Neoplatonic notion that nature or essence is a limitation or restriction on existence.

The difference between essence and existence in creatures provides Avicenna with the great ontological difference between creatures and God. Like al-Farabi, Avicenna interpreted a remark of Aristotle's in the *Metaphysics* to mean that God is wholly aloof from the world, neither knowing things other than himself nor caring about them, and perhaps not the cause of other things either. No doubt inspired by his religious beliefs here, Avicenna wants both to insist on the ontological difference between God and creature and to put God into contact with the world. This contact or relation introduces the problem of the one and the many, and the doctrine of emanation commends itself to those who feel that by placing God at the top of a hierarchy, the first of whose constitutive members he accounts for directly, God's immediate influence can be kept to a minimum, while his mediated influence has total scope. Just as with al-Farabi's theory of the ten intelligences, Avicenna's theory of emanations is productive of angels and of celestial spheres, to the tenth intelligence, the agent intellect, whose name is the angel Gabriel.

The agent intellect is the giver of forms (*dator formarum*), responsible for forms not only in the sense of the substantial forms of physical bodies but also in the sense of man's mental concepts. Our glance at al-Farabi has already acquainted us with this projection of a faculty of the human soul into the status of a separate entity, an angel. As for man himself, Avicenna denies that the human soul is the form of the body. Rather the union of soul and body is the union of two substances. This doctrine is based on Avicenna's reflections on the difference between mental and corporeal activities, which he sees to be heterogeneous and which he then concludes cannot pertain to one and the same substance. However, if soul and body are two substances, their link is something so intimate that the soul retains after its separation from the body in death a relation to the matter which entered into its body. For this and other reasons Avicenna will deny that souls coalesce into one in their separated state; *a fortiori* he rejects the Neoplatonic conception that the ultimate goal of the return to God which complements emanation will be the fusion of the soul with God. Unlike al-Farabi, who had made immortality an achievement of good men, Avicenna maintains that every human soul is immortal.

A matter that elicited criticism within Islam was Avicenna's inability to account for creation in time. The emanation from God of creatures cannot be understood as something willed by God in the sense that this is a process which takes place but might not have taken place. When Avicenna speaks of God willing the emanation of creatures, he means little more than that God consents to its necessity. Rahman's image of premise and consequence is helpful here: creatures are thought of as emanating from God with a kind of logical necessity such that their not emanating would be unthinkable and contradictory.

In speaking of God's "nature" and attributes Avicenna will use terms like "will" and "knowledge" and "power," but it is his opinion that all such terms are either negative or relational and finally coincide with existence, which is what God is. He will speak

of all things preexisting in God as Ideas or forms, but this is not taken to be a denial of his basic claim that God knows only himself; it is in knowing himself that God knows whatever emanates from him. Avicenna wants to say that God knows individuals as individuals, not merely types or universals, but his way of maintaining this left him open to the criticism of al-Ghazzali. It must be said that Avicenna's teaching on universal nature is a difficult one in itself and has been the topic of much comment. Avicenna can speak of a threefold existence of a nature: in God's knowledge, in the created mind, and as it exists. The first two differ for reasons already hinted at, but further because human knowledge, indeed created knowledge, is discussed in terms of an illumination from above. In the case of man the proximate illumination comes from the agent intellect, that is, the angel Gabriel. As for the difference between the nature as known (by man) and as it exists in nature, Avicenna will say it is universal in the former, singular in the latter, and he goes on to say that neither mode of existence pertains to the nature in itself. This is the *natura absolute considerata* that we encounter in Aquinas' *De ente et essentia*. Some present-day critics of this doctrine have seen in it a claim that a nature exists absolutely apart from the various kinds of existence it can enjoy, which would of course be an absurd claim. But it is not what Avicenna is trying to say. We must no doubt return to his position that in creatures essence and existence are distinct; when we do this, the present point is little more than a corollary. When we consider a nature, a whatness, we need make no reference to its status as being thought by us nor to the accidents which attend it in an individual, and even when such references are made, we are adverting to what is accidental to, not a part of, the nature in question. A consideration of manness, for example, need not advert to accidents which accrue to that nature insofar as we think of it (for example, universality) nor of accidents which accrue to it because of Socrates who is a man (for example, being bald). Aquinas quite rightly sees this Avicennian doctrine as part and parcel of his distinction between essence and existence; it is highly surprising, therefore, to find Thomists criticizing Avicenna on this point with no apparent awareness that their criticism, if valid, would undermine their confidence in what Aquinas has had to say about *esse* and *essentia*.

Averroes (1126-1198). Averroes was born in Cordova and, unlike Avicenna whose works had a more independent cast, expressed himself most influentially through commentaries on Aristotle. For the medievals of the West he became simply the Commentator, and his direct association with the writings of Aristotle make his influence more palpable than that of Avicenna and a good deal more controversial. There are three sorts of commentary Averroes wrote on a given work of Aristotle, for example, the *Metaphysics*, but they seem to differ largely in terms of quantity and detail.

The closeness to the text of Aristotle that his role as commentator demanded of Averroes led him to separate himself from the more Neoplatonic views of al-Farabi and Avicenna. Thus, he will deny the theory of emanation, though he retains the notion of a hierarchy of intelligences. Furthermore, he will accept as true Aristotle's doctrine that the world is eternal. His treatment of the human soul is also markedly different from that of Avicenna. For Averroes the human soul is the substantial form of the body, and as the form of a body it has whatever existence it has as a bodily form. This was taken to mean that the soul of Socrates does not survive the death of Socrates in any meaningful way.

An attitude characteristic of Averroes' procedure, fidelity to the text of Aristotle despite the apparent conflict between his understanding of it and his religious faith, got Averroes into trouble in Islam. Al-Ghazzali was highly critical of him (as well as of philosophers generally), and Averroes attempted to reply to this criticism in *Destructio destructionis*. What emerges from his attempts to explain the relation between philosophy and faith becomes definitive of Latin Averroism as well, the so-called two-truth theory. By this Averroes seems to mean that the statement of truths in the Koran is not as exact and accurate as might be, and this is only fitting since the Koran addresses itself to all, not merely to the learned. For a clear and distinct statement of a truth we must turn to philosophy. Philosophy thus becomes the measure of faith, and revealed statements are considered not to be in straight conflict with philosophical ones (they are, again, couched in a different, more symbolic language), but to be inadequate as they stand. As adequately expressed, revealed truths come to say something apparently different from what they are taken to mean in their original habitat, and it is not surprising to learn that Averroes was sent into exile and his books proscribed and even burnt.

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There were other Islamic philosophers whose works became known to the medievals and were influential on their thinking. What is generally important about all these men, for our purposes, is that they modified the appearance that Greek thought had for the men of the medieval universities. Among the Arabs there was an unfortunate confusion of Plotinus and Aristotle; a portion of the *Enneads* came to be known as *The Theology of Aristotle*, and the *Liber de causis*, which consists of borrowings from Proclus, was not associated with its true author. Al-Farabi and Avicenna gave a version of Greek philosophy which appeared to be a restatement of what Aristotle had taught, and Averroes as the commentator on Aristotle was taken to be unpacking the text and revealing what Aristotle had really taught. Sometimes this is what he was doing; on other occasions his and other Islamic versions of Aristotle's doctrine were wide of the mark. In many cases the Aristotle they presented to the Christian West was a teacher whose tenets were in sharp contrast to revealed truths. Thus, the first reaction is one of caution. Aristotle's writings were proscribed at Paris in 1210, but later a commission was set up to study and evaluate the Aristotelian corpus. This was in 1231, and from that time the earlier prohibition seems largely to have been ignored. Along with the translations which had been made in Spain newer translations, made directly from the Greek, were becoming available. Resistance continued to this influx of a strange and different Aristotle, a thinker whose range, like that of the Islamic philosophers, was significantly greater than that of anyone in the West. Aristotle was thought to be a threat to the great tradition of Western theology, to be inimical to the faith, to be wrong on significant points. The assessment of Aristotle was surely in large part an assessment of the Aristotle interpreted by the Arabs, particularly by Averroes, but even the unadorned text of Aristotle presented massive difficulties for the Christian thinker. Fortunately there were some, most notably Aquinas, who held themselves to the task of getting at what Aristotle really meant and assessing the result of that inquiry in terms of both natural and supernatural criteria of judgment.

Besides Islamic philosophy, brief mention must be made of the influence of Jewish thought on the thirteenth century. Avicenna, mistakenly thought to be an Arab, lived from 1021 to about 1070; his work *The Origin of Life (Fons vitae)* is often cited.

Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) was born in Spain and died in Egypt. His *Guide for the Perplexed* is an attempt to make use of the philosophy of Aristotle to interpret Scripture. Rabbi Moses, as Aquinas refers to him, was well acquainted with Islamic philosophy, and we may surmise that his effort to effect a concordance of philosophy and faith was influenced by their similar effort. Whatever the principles that guided his interpretation, Maimonides comes up with rational defenses of items of religious faith which his Islamic counterparts tended to call into question on the basis of philosophy. For example, since it is clearly revealed that the world has not always existed and the philosophical arguments for its eternity are inconclusive, Maimonides concluded that we must accept the position of Scripture. Maimonides stands ready to abandon an item of belief if it can be disproved by philosophy, but this led to no wholesale housecleaning of religious tenets.

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Intellectual culture reached a crest in Islam long before it did in the Christian West. The medicine, the mathematics, the science of the Arabs surpassed what was known in the West; more importantly for our immediate purposes, there was in Islam a long tradition of study of the Greek philosophers, a study which led to assimilation, interpretation, appropriation. The finest fruits of two intellectual cultures, the Greek and Islamic, entered Europe with what can only be described as suddenness and at roughly the moment when the universities were assuming the shape that would define them for centuries. The diet was extremely rich against the background of the Western tradition, and it is not surprising that caution was exercised by some, while adulation of an uncritical kind was displayed by others, and that only gradually the medievals became equipped to assimilate and appropriate in their turn.

Bibliographical Note

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On the Arabs see *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, edited in two volumes by M. M. Sharif (Wiesbaden, 1963); A. M. Goichon, *La Philosophie d'Avicenne* (Paris, 1951); F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam* (London, 1958); DeLacey O'Leary, *Arabic Thought and Its Place in History* (London, 1922); É. Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto, 1952); R. Walzer, *Greek Into Arabic* (Harvard, 1962); G. F. Hourani, *Averroes* (London, 1961).

The Thirteenth Century

Chapter II

The Beginnings

Before turning to progressively more important responses to the influences just mentioned, we want in the present chapter to give some sense of the initial efforts to cope with and profit from the new influx of philosophical literature. The men we shall presently mention -- William of Auvergne, Alexander of Hales, and Robert Grosseteste -- though subsidiary figures in the broad sketch we are trying to give, are, when considered for themselves alone, a good deal more interesting than the following may suggest.

A. William of Auvergne (c.1180-1249)

William was a master of theology at the University of Paris, who in 1228 became bishop of Paris. Since William was a member of the commission appointed by Pope Gregory IX to study and correct the writings of Aristotle, his works take on a special interest. William writes at a time when the attitude toward Aristotle is at least wary, and what William has to say gives us a fair indication of an early thirteenth-century response to the inundation of new philosophical literature.

The first thing that must be said about William's treatment of Aristotle is that he seems imperfectly aware of the line of demarcation between Aristotle's doctrine and the doctrines of the Islamic thinkers. Often criticisms are made of Aristotle and his followers when the point at issue is one that Aristotle emphatically did not hold. For example, William attributes to Aristotle the view that from the one God only one effect can immediately proceed and that that first creature, the first intelligence, goes on to create its own effect, and so on to the constitution of the ten intelligences, with the tenth the creator of matter, corporeal forms, and human souls. We are familiar with this Neoplatonic emanation theory in Islamic thinkers, but it is possible that William attributes it to Aristotle as well because Gerard of Cremona, the translator of the *Liber de causis*, had called that work a work of Aristotle's. Furthermore, William often cites specific works of Aristotle and accurately identifies Aristotelian doctrines. Consequently, if some of William's criticisms of Aristotle are misconceived, others are not.

The mode of William's critique is interesting. Whenever he encounters a philosophical doctrine contrary to Christian belief, he will label it an error. But he does not leave the matter there. He will go on and try to show by argument that the position is false or ill-founded. An error that particularly incenses William is the contention that there is but one human soul, that the present diversity of souls is merely a function of matter, and that when death comes, the distinction between souls disappears. He says that this error should be countered not only by proofs and arguments but also with steel and torments! This problem raises the question of the principle of individuation. William's discussion of the matter is critical of the doctrine of Boethius, found in the *De trinitate*, according to which it is the "variety of accidents" which individuates members of the same species. William transfers the question to the angels and goes on to criticize the identification of the nine intelligences and the choirs of the angels, since in each choir there is a plurality of angels. It is difficult to know whether William is suggesting a plurality of angels of the same species or not.

Let us consider William's treatment of the eternity of the world, a question he takes up in his *De universo*, the second part of the first principal part, chapters one to eleven, especially chapter eight.

Some have tried to suggest extenuating reasons for Aristotle's claim, William observes, but it is quite clear that Aristotle held the world to be eternal, that it did not begin to be, and that he held the same to be true of motion; Avicenna followed him in this and added reasons and arguments to sustain the claim. The first reason the philosophers give is as follows: either the creator precedes the world or he does not; if he does not, there would be neither creator nor world, since the creator is the creator of the world and the world is the effect of the creator. We might want to say that they come to be simultaneously (*incoepit esse cum mundo*), but this will not do since the first cause cannot come to be.

William's resolution of the difficulty is to free the relation of eternity to time of the temporal sense of before. Eternity is not just endless time; its priority to time is a priority of nature. To say that God is eternal and before the world is not to say that he is older than the world in the usual sense of older which is temporal. To ask what is before time sounds as funny as it would to ask what is beyond the world. Time like space is intramundane; therefore, to speak of God as before the world is not to speak of a time before time.

William criticizes the view, associated with Avicenna, to the effect that all creatures are composed of matter and form, even angels. In order to sustain that position, it was necessary to speak of a different kind of matter in angels, a spiritual matter. For William, matter means what it meant for Aristotle: it is a principle of generable and corruptible things. Thus, he holds that angels are not composed of matter and form. Matter of course is the cause of the contingency of material things, that because of which they can cease to be. Would not a creature which was not composed of matter and form, a creature who was pure form, be a necessary being?

The Islamic view that creation is necessary was one that William of Auvergne strongly contested. Despite this opposition, William took over from Islam the distinction between essence and existence, finding in this the fundamental ontological difference between creator and creature. In God there is no distinction between essence and existence: what God is is necessary existence. The existence of any creature is other than what it is and thus relates to its essence or nature as an accident. The composition of essence and existence calls for a cause and thus is the basis for the contingency and dependence on God of every creature.

It is in the first eight chapters of his *De trinitate* that William develops his doctrine on essence and existence. First, he distinguishes between essential being and participated being. He draws an analogy between the predication of "good" and of "being": some thing may be essentially good, be goodness, while other things participate in goodness. These different modes, being and having, are explained by Boethius in his *De hebdomadibus*, William observes, and he goes on to construct a general rule. Whatever is predicated is predicated either essentially or accidentally, that is, the predicate expresses what the thing is or something other than what the thing is. Such a predicate as being cannot be an accidental predicate of everything of which it is said; it must be predicated essentially of something. "Ens igitur de unoquoque aut

substantia aut participatione dicitur. Dicitur autem de quodam substantialiter, de quodam participatione dicetur: et quoniam non potest dici de unoquoque secundum participationem, necesse est ut de aliquo dicatur secundum essentiam." William underpins this move by saying that we must either accept it or get involved in an infinite regress. Let A be said to be good by participation, that is, by having good; call the good it has B, and then if B is good by having good, call that good C, and so on to infinity. To avoid this we must say that something is good in the sense of being goodness, not having it, and the same must be said of being.

The Latin infinitive "esse" that we have been translating as "existence" has two senses, according to William. It can mean essence or nature: the residue left when all accidents are removed, the substance, what the defining notion rather than the specific name expresses. In another sense "esse" means something other than essence: it is not part of the essence or nature of any creature. It is, however, the essence of what is said to be essentially. Given these two senses of "esse," we can say that in God they are one, in creatures they differ. Only that being whose essence is existence is truly called being, and being is its proper name. God is the only being of whom it can be said that it is impossible to think of him without thinking of him as existing. Such a being is uncaused; every being which is such that existence is other than its essence must be a caused being.

William goes on to draw the corollaries of this doctrine. The being in whom essence and existence are identical is simple, unique, and so forth. With William of Auvergne's discussion of essence and existence we have a first contribution to what will be a continuing discussion of his century and beyond. The influence of Islamic thinkers is palpable here, but the doctrine is also referred to Boethius. Islamic thinkers, as we have seen, trace the distinction back to Aristotle. We stress its importance for a further reason as well, for it reveals that William of Auvergne was not merely a critic of the new philosophy, but a judicious borrower from it. His obvious acquaintance with the new sources of philosophy was bound, we should think, to leave its mark on him; and so it did.

The Aristotelianism that William never ceased to oppose can be conveniently summed up in the point suggested by Pierre Duhem. (1) It contends that the whole of creation is necessary and exists from all eternity; that it necessarily issues from the first cause. (2) It holds that God creates directly but one creature, which, though created, in turn creates; of these further creatures God is only a mediate cause. (William's major objection to this is that it suggests that God can do more things in conjunction with creatures than he could do on his own.) (3) Human souls are not really distinct from one another save in their bodily existence and thus must coalesce into one after death. In treating these points William does not merely label them heresies; he seeks arguments to refute them.

As for the philosophical teachings he accepts, it is difficult to say what larger whole they become parts of. With William we are not yet at the point where the structure of Aristotelian philosophy is accepted as fundamental, with the errors it may contain refuted in terms of its own principles. Perhaps we must conclude that William remains very much an *ad hoc* philosopher; his *De universo* is reminiscent of earlier writings bearing that same title which were more or less random collections of everything

under the sun. Nevertheless, in many ways William is the herald of an emerging style both in theology and philosophy, a style that developed with astonishing rapidity.

Bibliographical Note

The 1674 edition of William of Auvergne's works was reproduced in 1963: *Guiliemi Alverni opera omnia*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Minerva). See too, Pierre Duhem, *Le système du monde*, vol. 3, pp. 249-260; É. Gilson, "La notion d'existence chez Guillaume d'Auvergne," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age*, 21 (1946), pp. 55-91.

B. Alexander of Hales (c.1185-1245)

Alexander was an Englishman who came to Paris, where he was a master of arts prior to 1210 and went on to become a master of theology probably around 1220. He went home for several years (1229-1231), where he was named archdeacon of Coventry, but he reclaimed his chair in theology at the University of Paris in 1232. He joined the Franciscan Order in 1236.

Alexander was the first master of theology to employ the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard as the text for his courses. His commentary on it, discovered in 1945 and recently published (1951- 1957), was written prior to his entrance into the Franciscans. Several volumes of *Disputed Questions*, published in 1960, contain work done by Alexander before becoming a Franciscan. He continued to teach in the university as well as in the Franciscan house of studies after he had entered religion; indeed, it is held that he taught until the time of his death. His *Summa theologica* is in many ways a Franciscan effort, since it is generally agreed that the *Summa* consists of a compilation from Alexander with contributions by other hands, all of them Alexander's confreres in religion. The recognition that the *Summa* is not in every sense a personal work does not lessen its interest or importance.

Alexander's explanation of the *Sentences* clarifies the text principally by appeals to Scripture and St. Augustine, but he cites Aristotle both in his logical writings and in the *Physics*, *On the Soul*, and *Metaphysics*. References to other philosophical writings are infrequent, and Van Steenberghen sees in Alexander's commentary on the *Sentences* the first tentative effort at speculative theology in the presence of Aristotelianism. So too, the *Disputed Questions* thus far published exhibit a modest interest in the new influx of philosophical writings. The *Summa* is something else again. Its attitude toward the new literature is open but critical, though questions have been raised as to the extent of the acquaintance with the new literature that the *Summa* exhibits. The general attitude of the *Summa* has been compared with that of William of Auvergne, but there are many substantive differences of judgment about particular points of doctrine. Let us mention some salient points of the teaching of the *Summa* attributed to Alexander of Hales.

We find a discussion of the nature of the human soul and human intelligence. Aristotle is said to have distinguished a material, a potential, and an active intelligence. Though it is usually held that the material intelligence is the potential intelligence for Aristotle, the *Summa* takes them to be distinct and identifies the former with the sensitive soul. The role of the active intelligence is abstraction; it

illuminates and actuates the potential intelligence. As for the status of the active intelligence -- is it a part of the human soul or separate from it? -- the *Summa* suggests that the reason for maintaining that it is separate is that there are intelligible forms nobler than those attained by means of abstraction. In order for the mind to grasp such divine forms, it seems necessary that it be aided by something other than and apart from it. The agent intellect is assigned this role. In discussing this position, the *Summa* distinguishes between the form and matter of the soul. The agent intellect relates to the form of the human soul whereby it is spirit; the possible intellect relates to the matter of the soul, and the use of the term "matter" here is suggested by the fact that the soul is in potency to knowable things. Thus, the *Summa* would deny that the agent intellect is something apart from soul. The reason for suggesting that it is, alluded to above, is contested by saying that the agent intellect is said to be in act, not in the sense that it actually knows all forms, but in the sense that it receives from the first agent an illuminating power which relates to forms. The agent intellect is thus a participated light. However, if the agent intellect is not considered to be a power separate from the human soul, both the possible and agent intellects are held to be separable in the sense that they can continue in existence apart from the body.

A point of difference between the *Summa* and William of Auvergne lies precisely in this talk of the matter and form of the soul. Indeed, the *Summa* holds to a universal hylomorphism: every creature is composed of matter and form; hylomorphic composition is the mark of the created. Boethius' distinction between *quod est* and *quo* is invoked in this connection, and Albert the Great, who denied hylomorphic composition of the soul, is explicitly contested. The matter which enters into the composition of spiritual creatures is, of course, a spiritual matter and not to be confused with the component of physical things. Thus, there is not one and the same matter present in all creatures; if there were, transmutation between spiritual and physical things would be possible, and it is not. The term "matter," that is, covers any and every potentiality, and it must be recalled that the motive for universal hylomorphism is to retain a distance between creator and created. Speaking of this initially surprising claim, Aquinas will say that while it is misleading to say that angels, for example, are composed of matter and form, once one understands the intention of those who say this, it is possible to agree with them without admiring their vocabulary; but, in the final analysis, *sapientis non est curare de nominibus*.

Mention should also be made here of John of Ia Rochelle, a disciple and contemporary of Alexander of Hales, who is probably the one most responsible for the *Summa* attributed to Alexander, although he wrote other things as well and indeed was a master of theology at the same time as Alexander. The Augustinian doctrine of illumination, employed in the *Summa*, was a favored doctrine of John's and was to receive even greater development at the hands of Bonaventure.

C. Robert Grosseteste (1175-1253)

William of Auvergne, Alexander of Hales, and John of Ia Rochelle give us a rather good indication of the initial reaction to the influx of new philosophical writings at the University of Paris. Meanwhile, at Oxford the example of Robert Grosseteste is an indication of a quite different response to the new literature. Robert, who was later to become bishop of Lincoln, was well acquainted with the works of Aristotle. Roger Bacon, whose admiration for Grosseteste knew no bounds and whose contempt for

such Parisian masters as Alexander of Hales was equally unrestrained, liked to portray Grosseteste as the easy equal of the likes of Aristotle and indeed as one who opposed the Greek philosopher on all important points.

The thing that strikes the reader of the philosophical writings of Grosseteste, edited in 1912 by Ludwig Baur, is the preponderance of mathematical and scientific topics. It is easy to feel that here is independence and originality of a sort unknown in William of Auvergne and Alexander of Hales. Further consideration leads, however, to the judgment that, despite the mathematics, Grosseteste is actually representative of a conservative mentality, that in him Augustinianism lives on in a less adulterated form than in his continental contemporaries. It is customary, convenient, and fitting that the flavor of Grosseteste's work be exhibited by his contribution to Augustine's theory of illumination.

Among the philosophical writings of Grosseteste is one entitled *De luce seu de incarnatione formarum* (*On Light and the Beginning of Forms*). The following amounts to a rough translation of the beginning of that essay. I think, Grosseteste writes, that the first bodily form, what some call corporeity, is light, for light of its very nature (*per se*) diffuses itself in all directions such that, given a point of light, a sphere of light of whatever size is immediately generated unless something opaque (*umbrosum*) impedes. Matter's extension in three dimensions follows necessarily on corporeity, but matter itself is a simple substance lacking dimensions. So too, form is a simple substance also lacking dimensions, and it cannot account for the dimensions matter comes to have. To account for the extension of matter, Grosseteste says, I nominate light. Extension in all directions is a *per se* property of light; it diffuses and multiplies itself everywhere. Whatever performs the task of introducing dimensions into the compound of form and matter must therefore be either light or something that does this just insofar as it participates in light. Corporeity, bodily extension, is either light or a participation in light: something which acts through the power of light. Grosseteste's own opinion is simply put. Light is the most noble form of bodies and is that in bodies which makes them most akin to separate substances.

If light is employed to explain the extension of bodies, it is also used to explain the constitution of the universe. We mentioned earlier that the diffusion of light can be checked by the interposition of an obstacle; Grosseteste also holds that any given point of light has an intrinsic limitation on the extent of its diffusion. As for the constitution of the cosmos, then, he can begin with a single body which may be thought of as light and matter, a compound of form and matter: its diffusion to the extent of its intrinsic power will produce a sphere which is finite and whose limit is the heaven. Then, by thinking of that outer limit of light reflecting on the center from which it radiated, Grosseteste speaks of the generation of the celestial bodies. The picture that results is quite geocentric. The degree or intensity of light provides Grosseteste with a scale on which he can compute the ontological status of entities, so that the universe for him is a hierarchy of lights or a hierarchy based on degrees of participation in light.

Thus far Grosseteste's use of light to explain the cosmos may seem only the inspiration of one who had been impressed by the application of mathematics to natural phenomena, like the distribution of light from a source and like the rainbow. Bacon was to laud Grosseteste for having views about the natural world which

derived not simply from what he read but from his own careful observations. Historians of science dispute the importance of the contribution Grosseteste made to the emergence of scientific method as we know it. At any rate, beyond his attempt to interpret the physical world by means of light as his basic concept, Grosseteste's theory must be seen as a continuation of the Augustinian doctrine of illumination. St. James spoke of God as the Father of lights and St. John of Christ as the light of the world, and it may not be too much to say that what Augustine had developed from such scriptural remarks as these is as important for the development of Grosseteste's universe of light as anything of an observational nature.

In speaking of the relation of creatures to God two of Grosseteste's philosophical essays are of particular importance. One asks if God is the single form of all things (*De unica forma omnium*), and the other deals with the emanation of creatures from God (*De ordine emanandi causatorum a deo*). In discussing the first point Grosseteste employs Augustine's reinterpretation of the Platonic Ideas and is careful to deny that God is the form of all things in the sense of their constitutive or inherent form. The second point deals with the need to distinguish the difference between the procession of the Son from the Father and the emanation of creatures from God. In the course of the essay he distinguishes between the measure of God's duration (eternity) and that of creatures (time) and removes some of the confusion that surrounds the claim that a creature might be eternal. The text Grosseteste seems to be commenting on here is taken from proposition two of the *Liber de causis*. Only the Son is coeternal with the Father; angels and soul are measured by something other than time, which is the measure of the duration of corporeal things. When God is said to exist before every creature, the adverb must not be understood as temporal, since God is not measured by time. (Cum dico creator est quando non fuit creatura, illud quando significat aeternitatem . . . et est sensus: creatorem esse in aeternitate, in qua non est vel fuit creatura. . . .) The truth of things, Grosseteste maintains in *De veritate pro positionis*, consists in a conformity with the creative Idea of God. To know the truth, consequently, involves ultimately knowing that conformity. This is the twist Grosseteste, in the familiar Augustinian manner, will give the dictum that truth resides in a conformity of thing and mind. Grosseteste wants no more than Augustine to hold that when we know the truth, we are attending both to things and to the divine pattern, the Word of God, and seeing the conformity between the two. Rather, he suggests that our mind is a participation in the light that is the Word and that as a participation in light our mind is capable of knowing the truth.

Bibliographical Note

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The Thirteenth Century

Chapter III

Albert the Great

A. The Man and His Work

Albert was born in Lauingen, in Bavaria, in 1206 and died in Cologne in 1280. His long life, superimposed on three-quarters of the thirteenth century, makes him a particularly interesting figure since he was very much a part of the intellectual developments of his century, of his order, and of his country. Thomas Aquinas studied under Albert, and although it is no easy matter to compare the doctrine of master and pupil on many points, it is safe to say that Albert's indefatigable energy and the scope of his interests inevitably had their impact on Aquinas. It is a tempting thought that the influence might in some cases have gone in the opposite direction, though there is as yet no scholarly agreement on the extent of such influence. In some ways the interests of Albert were broader than those of Aquinas, a fact that does not seem explicable merely in terms of Albert's longer life. There is little or nothing in Aquinas that echoes Albert's concern with what he called experimental knowledge. Aquinas will insist that our knowledge of nature arises only out of experimental contact with it, but we do not find any of the detailed natural descriptions in Aquinas that we find in Albert; nor do we find in Aquinas, as we do in Albert, such judgments passed on classical texts as "I have tested this," "I have not tested this," "This does not accord with experience."

Albert began his university studies at Bologna and Padua, but he seems to have spent scarcely more than a year in the Italian schools. In 1223 he joined the Dominican Order and was sent to the convent at Cologne to make his novitiate and pursue his studies. One of Roger Bacon's complaints against Albert was that the latter had not pursued the study of philosophy in the university. With the exception of his brief sojourn in Italy as a boy, this charge is accurate. From 1228 to 1240 Albert taught theology in various Dominican convents in Germany; in 1240 he was sent to the University of Paris. After two years of study he occupied one of the two Dominican chairs (1242-1248). He was then sent to Cologne to set up the Dominican *Studium generale*; he was Dominican provincial of Germany from 1254 to 1257; he returned to teaching at Cologne for three years and became bishop of Ratisbon in 1260, remaining in the post for two years. After resigning his see, Albert devoted the last eighteen years of his life to teaching, preaching, research, and writing.

It is convenient to consider the writings of Albert from the point of view of chronology, and the chronological periods distinguished by Van Steenberghen and the location of writings within these periods serve our purposes ideally. A first period, what Van Steenberghen calls the first theological period, extends from 1228 to 1248 and comprises Albert's first teaching in Germany and the Parisian sojourn (1240-1248). Apart from many of the biblical commentaries, three important works may be assigned to this period. First, there is the *Tractatus de natura boni* (*Treatise on the Good*). Second, there is the *Summa de creaturis* (*Summa on Creatures*), perhaps written in the first half of Albert's stay in Paris and containing five parts: (1) On the Four Coevals, (2) On Man, (3) On Good and the Virtues, (4) On the Sacraments, and (5) On the Resurrection. Finally, there is Albert's commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard.

A second period, extending from 1248 to 1254, is called by Van Steenberghen the mystical, or Dionysian, period. In this period, of course, are located Albert's commentaries on the entire corpus of Pseudo-Dionysius. Furthermore, Albert's first commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* was written during this time span.

Albert's so-called Aristotelian, or philosophical, period is located between the years 1254 and 1270. To this period are assigned his paraphrases of Boethius as well as of a vast number of works of Aristotle. It may be noted here that Albert is quite insistent on the fact that his own views do not appear in these commentaries or paraphrases; his task, he claims, is simply to set forth the tenets of the Peripatetic philosophy. His description of the philosophy he is relating is significant, for what we find in these writings of Albert is not simply a restatement of the works of Aristotle, or Boethius, which give them their titles. Albert draws on the various commentators on these works and is thought to show a marked preference for the interpretations of al-Ghazzali and Avicenna. To show a preference is, of course, to make a judgment, and to make a judgment is to reveal one's criteria as a judge; thus, a good deal of Albert inevitably gets into these works. In his exposition, or paraphrase, of the *Liber de causis* Albert is partidillarly drawn by the views of al-Ghazzali.

As Duhem has pointed out, we find Albert addressing himself in these writings to issues which must vex the Christian thinker. For instance, in his exposition of the *Metaphysics* (bk. XI, treat. 3, chap. 7) Albert brings up the matter of the relationship between philosophy and theology. He describes the two disciplines in a manner consonant with his treatment in his *Summa theologiae*, as we shall see below, but adds here that we cannot discuss theological questions in philosophy. Moreover, Albert suggests that in philosophy we merely follow the argument, not concerning ourselves with what religion teaches. This suggestion of the autonomy and neutrality of philosophy vis-à-vis faith becomes quite explicit when Albert asks what results when philosophy arrives at positions contrary to faith. Albert uses the specific example of Peripatetic philosophy's contention that from one only one proceeds and that not all things are direct effects of God, but only one thing. Well, he will say, theology contradicts the "one-from-one" principle, and, besides, the philosophy he is setting forth is not his own; for his personal opinions we will have to consult his theological writings. Despite this disclaimer, however, Albert attempts to adjudicate such divergences from faith within the context of his philosophical writings. In presenting the doctrine of book eight of Aristotle's *Physics* and its arguments that motion could not have begun absolutely in some past time, Albert interjects that he holds that everything has been simultaneously created by God and that, anyway, one well acquainted with Aristotle will know that Aristotle has nowhere proved the eternity of the world, has nowhere shown that the beginning of time and of motion are one with the beginning of the heavenly movements. Albert will even review natural or philosophical arguments which attempt to show that the world and motion and time had a beginning, but, like Maimonides, he is not much impressed with these, holding that none is completely cogent.

We will, as we have already indicated, return to Albert's views on the relation between faith and reason, theology and philosophy, but it seemed appropriate to say something here about Albert's curious insistence that what he is doing in his philosophical writings does not engage his personal thought and amounts to nothing

more than a neutral relation of the contents of an ambiguous aggregate dubbed Peripatetic philosophy.

The fourth and final period of Albert's career is called by Van Steenberghen the second theological period. It extends from 1270 to 1280. The major work of this period is Albert's *Summa theologiae*, which was composed after that of Aquinas and which, like that of Aquinas, was not completed. It shows little, if any, influence on Albert of his most important student.

Albert was a prodigious writer, and the length of his life and active career makes his collected writings an imposing, even intimidating, edifice. It will be appreciated that in the present sketch we have referred to his writings largely by way of class and type rather than by individual title. To do the latter would amount to giving a very long list indeed.

B. Faith and Reason

The relationship between faith and reason is most profitably discussed, as far as the bulk of thirteenth-century authors is concerned, in terms of the nature of theology, its relation to philosophy, and so forth. We have already said that Albert indicates something of his views on this matter in writings that are billed as ignoring the relation involved, and that even when some glimmer of his own thought is seen, he directs us for his definitive stand to his overtly theological writings. In following this advice we now turn to Albert's *Summa theologiae*, which, as the foregoing makes clear, is a late work and should provide us with Albert's mature and developed thoughts on the matter in question. Obviously, a full understanding of Albert's doctrine would involve comparing the doctrine of the *Summa theologiae* with earlier explicit as well as oblique treatments, but the narrower procedure we shall follow, while not aiming at such a complete statement, nevertheless sketches what would have to be a significant component of the wider treatment.

At the very outset of the *Summa* Albert asks if theology is a science and, if so, what kind of science it is, what its subject matter is, and so forth. He has little doubt that theology is a science; indeed, beyond being a science it is also a wisdom. He gives the following definition of it: *theologia scientia est, ea quae sunt ad fidem generandum, nutriendam, roborandum considerans* (theology is a science that considers whatever pertains to generating, nourishing, and strengthening faith). Referring to Paul's Epistle to Titus (1:1), he emphasizes that theology is concerned with what is knowable, though not with every knowable thing, but only with the knowable as it inclines to piety. Piety is defined as the cult of God which is perfected by faith, hope, and charity, prayers and sacrifices. (*Summa theologiae*, first part, treat. 1, quest. 2, sol.) Theology, in short, is knowledge of those things which pertain to salvation, and for this reason it is concerned with those things from which faith is generated and by which it is nourished and strengthened in us with respect to our assent to the first truth. What unifies theology, for Albert, is its end, namely, salvation. But what precisely is the subject of theology? Albert remarks that the subject of a science can be understood in several ways: thus, God is the subject of metaphysics in the sense that knowledge of God is what is principally sought in that science; being is the subject of metaphysics in the sense of that whose properties and causes are sought. So too, the subject of theology can be variously designated. God is its subject since

knowledge of God is principally sought and intended by the theologian; theology's subject in the sense of that whose properties are sought is Christ and the Church, or the Incarnate Word and all the sacraments with which he perfects the Church. That is to say, the subject of theology is the work of reparation. (*Ibid.*, treat. 1, a. 3) The comparison of theology and metaphysics in this passage leads us to ask in what they differ, and Albert states the difference succinctly. "Ad secundum dicendum quod prima philosophia est de Deo secundum quod substat proprietatibus entis primi secundum quod ens primum est. Ista autem de Deo est secundum quod substat attributis quae per fidem attribuntur." (*Ibid.*, q. 4) In metaphysics God is known in terms of being and its properties because he is the first being; theology considers God in terms of attributes known to be his through faith. The difference in mode of access to a common concern of theology and metaphysics is accompanied by another difference, namely, that theology is more certain than metaphysics. "Certior est scientia quae magis primis innititur, quam quae secundis, et sic deinceps. Theologia autem innititur primac veritati incircumscriptae et increatae et aeternae: aliae vero scientiae veritatibus creatis, et ideo non primis, nec immutabilibus, nec aeternis: quia omne creatum, ut dicit Damascenus, vertibile sive mutabile est. Theologia ergo certior omnibus est." (*Ibid.*, q. 5) If we range the sciences and assess their certitude in terms of the ontological hierarchy of their objects, then theology, which is concerned with and founded on what is first, immutable, and eternal, is the most certain science. We will come back to this comparison and claim later.

The foregoing suggests that theology is knowledge of God which, as knowledge, is in some way comparable to other sciences, the philosophical sciences, but with the difference that God is studied in theology in terms of those attributes of his which are revealed to faith. Moreover, the term of the study is not knowledge as such but salvation. In the *Summa theologiae* Albert spends a great deal of time discussing the knowability of God, and the contrasts and similarities already mentioned are further elaborated. Let us consider the way in which Albert handles the question Can God be known on a purely natural basis? He replies by saying that God can be known in many ways: positively, by knowing that he is, what he is, and so on, or privatively, by knowing what he is not, how he is not, and so forth. "Dicimus igitur quod ex solis naturalibus potest cognosci quia Deus est positivo intellectu: quid autem, non potest cognosci, nisi infinite. Dico autem *infinite*: quia si cognoscatur, quod substantia est incorporea, determinari non potest quid finite genere, vel specie, vel differentia, vel numero illa substantia sit. Et remanet intellectus infinitus, qui constituitur ex negatione finientium ad nos ex constitutione infiniti. Dicimus enim, quod cum dicitur *substantia* Deus, non est substantia quae nobis innotescit finite genere, vel specie, vel differentia, vel numero: sed est substantia infinite eminens super omnem substantiam." (*Ibid.*, treat. 3, q. 14, memb. 1) On a natural basis, then, we can have positive knowledge that God is, but we can know what God is only "infinitely," that is, in a manner that leaves undetermined what precisely God is. Albert uses the example of our saying that God is an incorporeal substance; to know this about God is not to know him as a finite substance may be known, a finite substance whose genus, species, difference, and so forth are known. Rather, when we know God is substance, our knowledge is of a substance more perfect than any we can determinately know, and we fashion our notion of the divine substance by negating the characteristics of finite substance.

To know God privatively is to know that he is not a body and is not measured by any corporeal measures, that is, God is not measured by place and time and so forth. The kind of natural knowledge Albert is discussing here is, he suggests, that indicated by Paul in his Epistle to the Romans (1:20), where we read that the invisible things of God can be known by knowledge of what God has made. Later (*ibid.*, q. 15, memb. 1) Albert expatiates on the discursive knowledge suggested by the Pauline text.

"Dicendum, quod in praesenti vita cognitio Dei sine medio esse non potest: quod medium effectus Dei est in natura, vel gratia, in quo Deus monstratur. Talis enim cognitio per medium ad viam pertinet, et *cognitio viae* vocatur. . . . Notandum tamen est, quod medium est duplex: ex parte visibilis, et ex parte videntis. *Ex parte visibilis* formaliter et effective medium est, quod ut actus visibilium, invisibilia potentia actu facit esse visibilia. *Ex parte videntis* medium duplex: commune scilicet, et speciale. Commune est illud, quod sub uno vel duplice situ formam visibilis ad visum est deferens. Specialis est, quo utitur visus ad excellens, sicut ad solem in rota videndum. . . ." In this life all knowledge of God is through knowledge of something else, through some mean or medium, whether a natural mean or grace as the mean. The natural mean can be considered either from the side of the known or the knower. What are the means whereby God can be naturally known? Albert invokes the Augustinian notions of vestige and image. The vestige is an imperfect similitude of creature to God, the image a less imperfect similitude. Albert's development of the way in which God is diversely known through his vestiges and images in creatures, besides recalling Augustine, is reminiscent of Bonaventure rather than of Aquinas, though the latter too employs this Augustinian distinction. As for knowledge of God through his image, we find that man or the human soul is treated as what gives us the best access to God. Thus, the vestige of God is found in all creatures, his image in some, and both these means of knowing God are distinguished from the way we know God through faith. "Dicendum quod fides medium est in cognitione viae, sive sit fides informis sive formata. . . . Et cum supra multiplex medium est distinctum, fides est medium dicens in scientiam crediti, et coadjuvans credentem ad intelligendum: per quod medium quaeritur et invenitur intellectus crediti." (*Ibid.*, treat. 3, q. 15)

In comparing the knowledge of God gained through natural means and that had through faith, Albert returns to the comparison of philosophical and theological knowledge in terms of certitude, this time distinguishing kinds of certitude. "Certitudo multiplex est. Est enim certitudo simpliciter et certitudo quoad nos: et certitudo quoad nos duplex, scilicet certitudo inclinantis ad actum, et certitudo rationis quasi arguentis. Et quaelibet istarum certitudinum dicit ad alterum minus certum. Certitudine ergo simpliciter nihil est adeo certum sicut Deus et divina. . . . Hoc modo certissima cognitionum est cognitio divinorum facie ad faciem, et sub illa cognitio per fidem, infima vero cognitio per naturalem rationem. . . . Certitudo autem quae est quoad nos, ex notioribus est quoad nos, secundum quod animales sumus enutriti sensibus. . . . Et hoc modo nihil prohibet cognitionem per naturales rationes esse certissimam, et post hoc cognitionem fidei, et minime certainam quae est facie ad faciem." (Treat. 3, q. 15, memb. 3, a. 2) What Albert now compares is the knowledge of vision in the next life when God is known face to face and the knowledge through faith and the knowledge of God through natural reason in this life. Certitude is said to be of two kinds, absolute and relative (to us). Albert does not here say what constitutes certitude in the absolute sense, but we can get a glimmer by recalling the earlier passage where it is a function of our mode of access to an object as well as the perfection of the object. Since in all cases being compared here it is God who is known, it must be the

way he is known that produces the variation in certitude. Knowledge of vision would seem to be God's unmediated presence to the blessed; the other two kinds of knowledge are through a medium, and faith is more certain than reasoned knowledge of God in that the former is explicitly based on the authority of the first truth. In terms of the mode of knowledge most in tune with our nature, that intimately related to sense perception, the scale of certitudes is exactly reversed. It must be said that Albert's handling of this issue does not have the clarity of Bonaventure's or Aquinas' treatment.

When Albert turns to the precise manner in which God's existence can be naturally known, he sets down his own *quinque viae*, but these five ways of proving God's existence are quite distinct from the more famous five found in Aquinas. Indeed, it is only after Albert lists five proofs taken from Ambrose, Augustine, and Peter Lombard that he adds two others, one from Aristotle, the other from Boethius. The proof taken from Aristotle is that of the prime mover. "His viis ego addo duas. Una quae sumitur ex octavo Physicorum, in cuius principio probatur, quod motor primus non potest esse motus ab aliquo. Deinde probatur, quod movens motum nec movere, ne moveri habet nisi per influentiam a primo per omnia media moventia et mota usque ad ultimum quod est motum tantum. Propter quod si cessaret motus in primo secundum quod est actus moventis, cessaret in omnibus mediis in quibus est actus moventis et mobilis, et cessaret in ultimo in quo est actus mobilis tantum. Destruatur ergo consequens: quia videmus, quod non cessat in mediis, nec in ultimo. Ad sensum enim patet esse multa mota; et multa esse moventia et mota: ergo necesse est esse unum primum movens, in quo non cessat motus, secundum quod est actus moventis et non mobilis." (*Ibid.*, treat. 3, q. 18) This is a rather bland summary of the proof of the light of the controversies Albert alluded to in his philosophical commentaries. No mention whatsoever of real or apparent conflicts with truths of faith; no mention, for that matter, of the eternity of the world or of the "one-from-one" principle Albert had attributed to the philosophers. The proof, as he presents it, relies on a distinction between what is only moved and what is moved and moves, and the question becomes, Is there something which only moves and is not moved? A moved mover cannot move save under the influence of the first mover, something true of the whole range of such movers between the unmoved mover and what is moved alone and does not move something else. Thus, if the activity of the first mover ceased, all activity subsequent to it would cease. This of course does nothing toward proving that there is a first mover. In fact, it is difficult to say that Albert, even indirectly, has set forth the premises of the Aristotelian proof. One is shocked by the apparent indifference of Albert in this regard, and it is tempting to suggest that we are faced here with the effort of an aging man, that, ironically, the promissory notes issued in those impressive philosophical works are not too persuasively redeemed in the later theological works.

C. Conclusion

Although we found it necessary to conclude the preceding section with a criticism of the manner in which Albert presents an important and much discussed Aristotelian doctrine, and this in a work where we have reason to expect a nuanced study, we must end by saying that the massive effort Albert undertook in endeavoring to present in a narrative fashion the Peripatetic philosophy in its full scope did as much as any other single thing to make respectable the study of Aristotle. That Albert himself tended to favor the lead taken by al-Ghazzali and Avicenna in interpreting Aristotle has its

significance; insofar as the philosophers of Islam were heavily influenced by certain tenets of Neoplatonism, we should expect to find the same influence in Albert. Many students of Albert's writings have insisted that there is much Neoplatonism there.

Bibliographical Note

The collected works (*Opera omnia*) have long been available in the Borgnet edition in thirty-eight volumes (Paris, 1890-1899), but a new and better edition is currently in preparation, several volumes of which have already appeared (Munster, 1951 -). See as well James A. Weisheipl, OP., "The Problemata Determinata XLIII Ascribed to Albertus Magnus (1271)," *Mediaeval Studies*, 22 (1960), pp. 303-354.

The Thirteenth Century

Chapter IV

Roger Bacon

A. His Life and Work

Roger Bacon was born in England about 1219. He may have studied the arts at Oxford and then gone on to Paris to teach, or he may have begun his studies at Paris; at any rate, he began his teaching career at Paris, in the faculty of arts, and prided himself on the frequency with which he commented on the works of Aristotle. This is the first phase of his career, and the writings of Bacon representative of this phase, while of interest, do not prepare us for what he was to become. It is often said, perhaps unjustly, that they are indistinguishable from the philosophical efforts of the typical lecturer at Paris at the time. About the year 1247 Roger returned to England, where at Oxford he came under the influence of Robert Grosseteste. Bacon was a man of violent likes and dislikes, and for Grosseteste he conceived an almost unbounded admiration. His own work took a dramatic turn. For ten years Bacon devoted himself to scientific studies, though his conception of the scope of such studies must temper the judgment that in Bacon we have a forerunner of modern science. Alchemy and astrology fascinated Bacon, and his interest in mathematics, pure and applied, carried him back and forth across the border between magic and science. He was heavily influenced by a pseudo-Aristotelian work, *The Secret of Secrets*, and was charged with necromancy. The picture Bacon sketches of the ten years of study he undertook in the wake of his contact with Grosseteste may seem overdrawn, but his whole career was one of such intensity and indefatigable energy that it must be accepted. In that picture Bacon comports himself in the shifting role of mad scientist, dedicated scholar, and a university master who is progressively less patient with the usual academic fare. The disputes of the schools seemed to him airy and ungrounded; he was shocked by the spectacle of men without training in philosophy occupying chairs of theology. (Bacon himself must for a time have been a student in the faculty of theology.) In approximately 1257 Bacon joined the Franciscan Order.

As a Franciscan, Bacon seems to have stopped teaching; furthermore, because of a nile of his order, he could not write for external publication without obtaining

permission. Another decade went by and reached its culmination when Bacon contacted the future Pope Clement IV, seeking patronage for a work he wanted to compose in which a reform of university education would be set forth. The sequel to this contact has its bizarre moments. Guy de Foulques, the cardinal Bacon contacted, was elected pope. He seems to have had the impression that the work Bacon mentioned was completed and needed only to be copied before being sent to him. He requested that Bacon send it on, enjoining him to do so secretly. The Pope is sometimes described as Bacon's patron and benefactor, even as being enthusiastic about the writings Bacon eventually sent him. This is all conjecture. The most that can be said is that the Pope accepted the offer of Bacon's book and that he received what Bacon sent him. The claim that the Pope was on the verge of introducing Bacon's proposed reforms when death cut him down is pure fable. Were one to permit his imagination a bit of leash here, it would be just as easy to imagine the Pope chuckling over the inflated offer of the friar, concealing his mirth as he writes that he will accept the book, and being alternately overwhelmed by the four huge parcels that contained the *Opus majus* and miffed when Bacon tried to dun him for expenses. The fact is, we simply do not know what the Pope's attitude in this matter was. We know he received the *Opus majus* since it is still in the Vatican library.

Bacon was upset when he learned from the Pope's letter that the impression had been created that he had already written a work he had simply proposed to write. Indeed, there is some basis for thinking that what Bacon had in mind was something like an encyclopedia by several hands rather than a personal work. Nonetheless, he took the papal letter as a mandate enjoining him to secret composition, and he set to work on what became the *Opus majus*. This was followed shortly by the *Opus minus* and the *Opus tertium*. The Pope is thought to have received these works in 1267; in 1268 he died. Bacon turned to other works then, but he was now an object of suspicion in his own order. His teachings were condemned by the minister general, and Bacon was put in prison by the Franciscans. We do not know how long he was in prison, only that he was out before 1292, when he wrote his last work, a *Compendium of Theological Studies*. His death may be placed in that same year.

Roger Bacon is a polyvalent figure -- dedicated, irascible, caustic, vain, credulous, and critical. With few exceptions he despised his contemporaries, and he voiced his views in untempered language. His jeremiads become tedious, his promissory notes seem unredeemable, his self-importance is comic. And yet, and yet . . . Bacon himself would not have been content to bring home half a loaf, but what he had to say about university education in his time had its merit. He saw the danger in a theology unanchored in philosophy and science; he knew the book of the world had not yet been reduced to books. The final irony is that it was likely his abrasive personality more than his ideas that denied him the hearing he craved.

B. The *Opus majus*

The writing of the *Opus majus* occupied a very small portion of Roger Bacon's scholarly life. Yet it represents a period when he was at the height of his powers, had done a good deal of the research which set him off from other masters of arts, and was quite unrestrained with respect to the scope of his vision and ambition. This work provides us with a convenient source to give something of the spirit and character of Bacon's thought. As we have seen, it was followed by other writings, writings whose

importance is undeniable; nonetheless, the *Opus majus* is vast and representative of the mature Roger Bacon.

It should be said at once that Bacon conceived the work to be a program rather than an accomplishment; it points beyond itself and seeks to summarize not so much what has been done as what must be done. The work is divided into seven parts and is written with an urgency, directness, and forcefulness that make it quite personal. One would not go far wrong in describing it as a voluminous letter to the Pope. This is not to say that it lacks some of the common features of the scholarly style of the day, but even when familiar stylistic notes are present, their familiarity is dimmed, and intentionally so, by Bacon's conviction that the times called, not for encyclopedias, but for a vast concatenation of scholarly efforts. It would be both an anachronism and a disservice to Bacon to say that his work reads something like a prolonged and prolix appeal to a foundation for funds to support research -- but the parallel does suggest itself.

Part one of the *Opus majus* discusses the four general causes of human ignorance. These causes are subjection to unworthy authority, the influence of habit, popular prejudice, and false conceit of our own wisdom. It is noteworthy that Bacon is concerned here with moral faults rather than with what might be called intrinsic causes of human error. His choice is of course dictated by the fact that he is launching a general critique of his milieu. Thus, though Bacon prided himself on his own sustained attention to the writings of Aristotle during his tenure as master in the faculty of arts at Paris, he points out that while Aristotle was undoubtedly one of the wisest of men, he is not without his defects. Thus, while deference to Aristotle may bring one to the truth, it may lead one into error. Indeed, Bacon holds that it is only rarely that authority, habit, and popular prejudice have positive effects in the search for truth. But the most prominent target of Bacon's criticism, and the one from which he considered himself to have suffered the most, is popular prejudice. He goes on to make a number of very useful remarks having to do with the attitude of the student, who must question authorities and enter into discussion with them, for a later generation can often detect flaws in a great man which were concealed from his contemporaries. Though his ire mounts most noticeably when discussing the deleterious effects of popular prejudice, Bacon holds that false conceit of one's own wisdom is the most injurious factor in the pursuit of truth. In the first place, knowledge must always be of less scope than religious faith; second, the sum total of what is known and of what has been revealed is as nothing when compared with what can be known. A boy of today may know more than the wisest men of yesteryear, Bacon observes, and thus how stupid to be puffed up if one is abreast of the present status of knowledge. Addressing the Pope directly, Bacon says that his point is not that anything of substance now being taught in the universities should be proscribed; rather, he is directing attention to the vast areas of inquiry which are presently ignored.

The first part of the *Opus majus* is thus quite moralistic in tone; Bacon chides, laments, urges, prescribes, pleads. Nor should we think that Bacon's concern with the morals of the intellectual is a rhetorical device. He was of the opinion that moral philosophy is the aim and goal of speculative philosophy. The moral philosophy he advocates is continuous with pagan ethics but goes far beyond it because of the influence of Christianity. This poses the problem of Bacon's conception of the

relationship between philosophy and theology, a problem to which he devotes part two of the *Opus majus*.

Bacon sees the search for truth as divided into three avenues: Scripture, canon law, and philosophy. All truth is contained in Scripture, but to elicit it we need canon law and philosophy. Wisdom, however, is one. Canon law is an articulation of what is contained in Scripture, and so is philosophy. Bacon is not suggesting that all the scholar need do is pore over the Scriptures in order to arrive at the truth. His point is rather this: no truth can be incompatible with Scripture because wherever truth is found it belongs to Christ. It is at this point that Bacon, although he makes reference to Augustine, takes a stand on one of the vexed points of Aristotelian interpretation. The agent intellect, Bacon says, is not a part of our nature, not a faculty of the human soul. Avicenna is right in this interpretation of Aristotle: the agent intellect is outside us, something to whose influence we are susceptible, something divine. And since all human knowledge requires the influence of this separated agent intellect, knowledge is something divine. The effective source of all knowledge in God indicates the ultimate goal of knowledge, which, again, is God, God as final cause. Bacon accepts an Augustinian suggestion, also made by Abelard, that the giants of pagan philosophy were recipients of a revelation from God. What then of the distinction between philosophy and theology? Philosophy and theology are parts of one whole. The whole purpose and function of philosophy is to lead us to the threshold of divine truth; across that threshold would seem to be Scripture. Bacon guards against the view that philosophy is something to be gotten through hastily in order to arrive at revelation in Scripture. The task of philosophy is one that never ends, for what do we indeed know? The Christian must not simply borrow bits and pieces from the philosophers; he must engage in philosophy, in the ceaseless pursuit of truth, with a constant eye for its relevance to what God has revealed in Scripture. Bacon's conception of philosophy and theology, while obscure, seems clearly distinct from that held by Aquinas, for example. The notion of a theology fashioned on the model of Aristotelian science is absent from Bacon's writings. What we find is the much earlier notion that in some vague and *ad hoc* way all human knowledge serves to illustrate the truths God has revealed in Scripture. The appeal to illumination, the interpretation of the status of the agent intellect, serves to blur the distinction between faith and knowledge, although Bacon frequently mentions such a distinction. What Bacon seems most concerned with is that human knowledge, philosophy, be open with respect to revealed truth and see it as its complement. The very limitations of philosophical knowledge enable the philosopher to devise an argument to the effect that God must have revealed to man truths which are of the greatest importance.

It was said earlier that Bacon does not refer to the truth contained in Scripture in such a way that he is contemning the need for philosophical research. That is true, but it must be added that Bacon does tend toward the view that the totality of truth was known by the Patriarchs and has been lost because of the moral defects of men. The Scriptures then come to seem repositories of esoteric knowledge which must be elicited by the appropriate means. Since philosophy is a principal means of eliciting this truth, Bacon can at one and the same time hold that in a hidden fashion everything is contained in Scripture and that we must bend our best efforts to discover knowledge.

Although it is difficult to establish an order among Bacon's enthusiasms, since he went all out for anything he favored, his recommendation of the study of languages is impassioned and is the subject of part three of the *Opus majus*. He expatiates on the difficulties of accurate translation and urges the study of Greek and Hebrew. The obvious advantages of knowledge of these languages for grasping the meaning of Scripture are dwelled on, but Bacon points as well to the advantages for ecclesiastical diplomacy and for preaching the Gospel to all nations to be gained from the study of languages.

Parts four, five, and six constitute the bulk of the *Opus majus* and treat, respectively, mathematics, optics, and experimental science. Bacon considers mathematics to be the key to all the other sciences; consequently, having said something of mathematics itself, he will show its importance not only for other human knowledge but to divine knowledge and to the governance of the Church. Bacon makes a teasing remark on the affinity of logic to mathematics, and speaks of the greater cogency of mathematical demonstrations and the tendency we show, in other domains, of selecting examples from mathematics to illustrate our points. The discussions which ensue are, from the outset, devoted to applied mathematics, its use in astronomy, in understanding the propagation of light, and so forth. It becomes clear that in part four it is precisely the utility of mathematics in other sciences that Bacon is out to show. Its application to sacred subjects is of particular interest.

Bacon reverts to his point that knowledge of nature is needed if we are to unpack the message of Scripture. Distinguishing between the literal and spiritual meanings of Scripture, Bacon says that we need to grasp the former to get at the latter and that to grasp the literal meaning of Scripture mathematical knowledge is necessary. He illustrates this by appealing to astronomy; this enables us to see the relative insignificance of the earth in the universe. Geography enables us to determine the exact location of the places mentioned in Scripture. The chronology of Scripture can be established by appeal to astronomy. Furthermore, what we know about the rainbow is particularly fruitful for understanding the literal and then the spiritual meaning of Scriptural passages. It is in this section of the *Opus majus* that Bacon proceeds with the most gusto. When he begins to discuss the terrestrial effects of celestial bodies, Bacon does not go immediately to astrology. Rather he goes on at great length to relate character traits, and even religious profession, to regional and climatic conditions. Only afterward does he insist that the stars exercise an influence on the affairs of men, an influence that can be understood and thus can become a powerful force in human foresight and governing.

Part five, which deals with optics, is thought to be the section that best illustrates Bacon's own work. He begins with the physiology of eyesight, the eye, and the brain, and goes on to discuss the conditions of seeing: light, distance, position, size. There are other conditions as well, and, after considering them, Bacon relates what he has said to Aristotelian psychology. He goes on to discuss direct vision, reflected vision, and refraction. Typically, after a quite lengthy treatise, whose scope and content may surprise one whose opinion of medieval science is dictated by myth rather than history, Bacon typically discusses the spiritual significance of optics. Here he considers, for example, the meaning of the prayer in which we ask God to guard us as the apple of his eye.

Bacon's discussion of experimental science in part six must be correctly understood. Although he begins with the observation that there are two ways of acquiring knowledge, reasoning and experience, he goes on to divide experience into sense experience (our own or that of trustworthy witnesses) and internal experience. Internal experience has as its object spiritual things and is aided by grace; a by-product of internal experience is often knowledge of earthly things. Bacon lists seven grades of spiritual experience and, in one of those asides that make the *Opus majus* the singular work it is, tells the Pope that the young man who has carried the book to him is a good example of the intellectual benefits to be derived from a spotless life. Although he distinguishes these various meanings of "experience," the experimental science Bacon wishes to discuss is that which tests tentative judgments about natural things. Bacon discourses on various experimental apparatuses and goes on to picture the inventions that may be expected if studies are turned in the direction he advocates.

The culminating discussion of the *Opus majus* is to be found in part seven, which is devoted to moral philosophy. We have already mentioned that for Bacon knowledge is ordered to virtue, an opinion that dictated the structure of his work. The study of our practical conduct, that due to which we are adjudged good or bad, deals with the final purpose of all human wisdom. The conclusions of the other sciences are the starting points of ethics. That is to say, in moral philosophy we try to set forth the practical implications of all other knowledge.

The task of moral philosophy is threefold, dealing with duties to God, duties to our neighbor, and duties to ourselves. A recognition of the nature of the universe and its dependence on God is the basis for maxims having to do with worship of and reverence for God. Civic morality commences with reflections on the propagation of the species and moves quite naturally into matters of the state, the functions of the citizens, reward, punishment, and law. It is in the third part of moral philosophy that Bacon explicitly joins the discussions of Aristotle and that he treats of virtue and vice in general and then of the special virtues. His discussion of the moral virtues leans heavily on the fact that until our sensual desires are reined, the mind is not free for its pursuit of the truth. Bacon, who seems to have been a most irascible man, dwells on the topic of anger: its sources and remedies and, predictably, the way it impedes the intellectual life. His discussion of the proper attitude toward death and the way to peace of mind exhibits the influence of Stoicism on Bacon. The section on moral philosophy concludes with a discussion of the sacraments, placing special emphasis on the Mass and on the Eucharist.

C. Conclusion

The life of Roger Bacon almost spans the thirteenth century. Perhaps it can be said that he was typical of that century precisely in not being typical of it. The man to whom he would seem to be closest in spirit, Albert the Great, was a man Bacon professed to despise; his distance from the spirit of Aquinas, and even from that of Bonaventure, does not require emphasis. It seems necessary to say that Roger Bacon was at one and the same time a very traditional figure and a daring innovator. That kind of phrase, lacking as it does all sharpness and precision, could be applied to almost any figure in whatever time who excites our interest. It does, nonetheless, have a somewhat illuminating application to Roger Bacon.

Bacon's conception of the task of the Christian thinker was in fundamental continuity with St. Augustine. All truth, wherever it might be found, must be seized by the believer as rightfully his. All knowledge illuminates and is illumined by what God has revealed in Scripture. Like Augustine, Bacon does not seem to have drawn a sharp distinction between philosophy and theology. This is due to the manner in which he compares knowledge and faith. Theology is taken to be the content of Scripture, but at other times it seems to consist of the application to revealed truth of human knowledge. The influence of Aristotle is seen in men like Aquinas in the conception of theology as a science which derives its principles from Scripture and by reasoning relates what is believed to what is known by natural powers. The model of theology, in short, is demonstrative science in the Aristotelian sense. It is not here that the influence of Aristotle on Roger Bacon is evident; rather it is in his passion to know the natural world.

The student of Aquinas finds that Thomas knew the natural writings of Aristotle and that he wrote commentaries on many of them, but he will search in vain for any contribution Thomas has made to our knowledge of the world around us. This is one of Bacon's complaints. Let us, he urges, carry on the work that Aristotle had begun. Let us study the natural world. Aristotle is not the last word here. Islamic thinkers who came into contact with Greek thought assimilated it and tried to continue it with their own work in mathematics and astronomy. Bacon's fear that the universities of his day would become too bookish, too tied down to authors and authorities, was not unfounded. No doubt he underestimated the value of the speculative work his contemporaries were doing, but he did so because he was so impressed by the promise of other studies, studies more experimental, studies that could correct and prolong what earlier thinkers had discovered. If his own vision of philosophy involves much credulity and fancy, it must nonetheless be said that Roger Bacon, though certainly not alone, was insisting on the quest for a certain kind of knowledge that could never be attained by the developing Scholastic method. There is no need to exaggerate his achievements, no need to deny his unlovableness, to recognize the importance of Roger Bacon for the history of human thought.

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The Thirteenth Century

Chapter V

Saint Bonaventure

A. The Man and His Work

The saint we know as Bonaventure was born John Fidenza about 1217 near Viterbo. It is thought that he studied the liberal arts in Paris from 1236 to 1242. In 1243 he entered the Franciscan Order, and it may be that he had begun studying theology before becoming a Franciscan; at any rate, he studied theology until 1248 under Alexander of Hales and others. Bachelor of Scripture in 1248, Bachelor of the Sentences in 1250, he received the *licentia docendi* in 1253 and was master of the Franciscan school in Paris from 1253 to 1257. Because of the opposition of the secular masters, Bonaventure was not admitted as a master of the faculty of theology in the university until 1257, being admitted at the same time as Thomas Aquinas. Some months before, Bonaventure had been elected master general of the Franciscan Order -- which effectively ended his university career, although he did lecture at the convent in Paris on several occasions. Bonaventure became a cardinal in 1273 and died in Lyon in 1274 while attending the ecumenical council which was held in that city. He was fifty-seven.

Bonaventure's commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard and disputed questions on the knowledge of Christ, the Trinity, and evangelical perfection, together with the *Breviloquium* (which Van Steenberghen has called a kind of summa which résumés substantially Bonaventure's commentary on the *Sentences*), the *De reductione artium ad theologiam*, and the *Itinerarium mentis in deum* are among his most important works. There are also commentaries on Scripture, of course, and the publication of his lectures in the Paris convent after he became the head of his order: *De decem praeceptis* (1267), *De donis spiritus sancti* (1268), and the *In Hexaemeron* (1273).

Despite their proximity in time and place, it is doubtful that Bonaventure and Aquinas were close friends. Although Aquinas was successful in avoiding the active life and Bonaventure was not, the two men seem complementary, each representative of the spiritual and intellectual life of his order, and both looming above the other giants of the thirteenth century.

B. The Nature of Philosophy

"Philosophical knowledge is a preparation for other sciences and he who wishes to stop there falls into error." (*De donis*, col. IV, 12)

It is an extremely difficult matter to determine what for Bonaventure the nature of philosophy is. The point has been debated by Gilson and Van Steenberghen, but we shall address the question without explicit reference to the views of these leading medievalists. Can a philosophy be isolated from the theological writings of Bonaventure and, if so, how much autonomy does it have? Further, what kind of philosophy would such a constructed system be? To say that it would be Augustinian presupposes that St. Augustine's conception of the nature of philosophy is clear and easily grasped. Before we can possibly adjudicate the differences of opinion between the scholars mentioned, we must of course turn to Bonaventure himself. When we do this, we find that while it is difficult to maintain that any one of Bonaventure's works is specifically philosophical, in many of them he does say things about philosophy.

Let us begin with the division of knowledge into four kinds, a division Bonaventure makes in his commentary on the *Sentences*. First of all, knowledge may be purely speculative and founded on principles of reason: this is the science of human philosophy. Second, there is a knowledge which resides in the intellect insofar as it is inclined by appetite: when founded on principles of faith, such knowledge is the science of Sacred Scripture. Third there is a science or knowledge which resides in intellect inclined by appetite toward operation: such knowledge is founded on the principles of natural law. Finally, there is a kind of knowledge which is in the intellect considered both as inclined and inclining, that is, inclined by faith and inclining to good works. This knowledge is founded on principles of faith and finds its source in the gift of grace. Such knowledge is called a gift of the holy Ghost. (*III Sent.*, d. 35, q. 2, c.)

We find in this passage a distinction of philosophy (the first and third members) from theology (the second and final members of the division), and in both philosophy and theology there is a distinction between the speculative and the practical. Philosophy is based on principles of reason (*principia rationis*), theology on principles of faith (*principia fidei*). Elsewhere Bonaventure compares philosophy and theology in the following fashion. Sacred doctrine, or theology, is principally concerned with the First Principle, that is, with God as one and three; nevertheless, theology is concerned with other things as well. "The reason for this truth is that since sacred doctrine, or theology, is a science giving knowledge of the First Principle sufficient for our present state, insofar as it is necessary for salvation, and since God is not only the principle and effective exemplar in creation but also the restoring cause in redemption and the perfective cause in reparation, this science treats not only of God the creator but also of creation and the creature. . . . Thus, it alone is perfect science because it begins at the beginning, with the First Principle, and proceeds to the term, which is the eternal reward; it begins with the highest, the most high God, creator of all, and descends to the least, which is the punishment of hell. That alone is perfect wisdom which begins with the highest cause, that is, with the principle of caused things -- which is where philosophical knowledge ends." (*Breviloquium*, p. 1, cap. 1, 2-3) This passage clarifies the grounds for the distinction between philosophy and theology. The former, being based on what is naturally known to us, must begin with creatures and ascend to knowledge of God as to its term. Theology, since it is based on faith, begins with God and considers everything else in the light of revealed truth.

In discussing the subject of theology in his commentary on the *Sentences* Bonaventure distinguishes a variety of meanings for the phrase "subject of a science." In effect, he says, this phrase may mean either (1) that to which all else in the science is referred as to its radical principle, or (2) that to which everything in the science is referred as to an integral whole, or (3) that to which everything is referred as to its universal whole. Thus, the subject of grammar, following these three possibilities, is either the alphabet, or perfect and correct speech, or articulated sound capable of signifying something as itself or in another. In geometry the three subjects are, respectively, point, body, and immobile continuous quantity. As for theology, the subject to which it reduces everything as to its cause is God; the subject to which everything is reduced as to an integral whole is Christ, who unites in himself human and divine, created and uncreated nature. "The subject to which all things are reduced as to a universal whole can be named in two ways, by a disjunction, and then it is reality and sign, where sign means sacrament; or it can be named by one word, the credible, insofar as the credible

takes on the note of intelligibility by having reason brought to bear on it [*prout tamen credibile transit in rationem intelligibilis et hoc per adductionem rationis*]; properly speaking, then, the credible is the subject of this book." (*I Sent.*, proemium, q. 1, c.)

Theology and philosophy are different ways of considering things, and things are named differently because of the different light in which they appear to the theologian and to the philosopher. We will be seeing more of Bonaventure's use of the metaphor of light; for the moment consider the following remark concerning an innate and infused light. "The innate light is the natural light of the judging faculty or reason; superinfused light is the light of faith." (*De donis*, col. IV, 2) The first is impressed by the creator on the rational creature: it is the possible and agent intellects. In this context Bonaventure speaks of philosophical knowledge, theological knowledge, the knowledge which is the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the knowledge of the blessed in heaven. "Philosophical knowledge is nothing other than certain knowledge of the truth as what can be investigated [*ut scrutabilis*]. Theological knowledge is loving knowledge of truth as credible. The gift of knowledge is holy knowledge of the truth as lovable [*ut diligibilis*]. The knowledge of glory is semiperternal knowledge of truth as desirable [*ut desiderabilis*]." (*Ibid.*, 5)

To sum up our findings thus far: (1) philosophy is based on principles of reason, theology on principles of faith. (2) The former sees things under an inborn light, something belonging to the nature of the rational creature; the latter is dependent on an infused light, the gift of faith. (3) The subject of theology is the credible; the subject of philosophy is the naturally knowable. (4) Philosophy begins with creatures and arrives at knowledge of God as its term; theology begins with God and considers everything else in the light of what God has revealed to us about himself.

Speaking of the philosophical sciences, Bonaventure says: "All these sciences have certain and infallible rules which are as lights and rays descending from the eternal law into our mind." (*Itinerarium*, cap. 3, n. 7) Given this participation, it is possible for us to be led to contemplation of the eternal light. Things are the object of philosophy insofar as they can be investigated in the light of principles naturally known; they are objects of theology insofar as they are credible in the light of faith. From these considerations there seems to emerge a picture of philosophy as an autonomous science having its own light, principles, and certitude. What is more, philosophy is more certain than theology. "That concerning which no doubt is possible is known more certainly than that about which we can doubt; but what is known by scientific knowledge [*scientiali cognitione*] is so known that it cannot be doubted, as is obvious." (*III Sent.*, d. 23, a. 1, a. 4, a. 2) When something is seen in the light of those principles naturally inserted in the mind, absolute certainty is attained. (*De reductione*, n.4) "Someone can know something so certainly through science that he can in no way doubt nor disbelieve it nor in any way contradict it in his heart, as is clear in knowledge of axioms [*dignitatum*] and first principles." (*III Sent.*, d. 23, a. 1, q. 4, c.) Thus, not only are philosophy and theology distinct but philosophy is more certain than the faith on which theology is founded. This greater certitude of natural reason has to be correctly understood, however. No science is more certain than that which the blessed enjoy in heaven. "In another way, science means knowledge had in this life and is of two kinds: either it concerns things which are objects of faith or it concerns other knowable objects. If it is concerned with objects of faith, then absolutely speaking faith is more certain than knowledge. Hence, if some philosopher

knows a given article [of faith] by reason, for example, that God is the creator or that God is the rewarder, he can in no wise know it more certainly through his science than the true believer through his faith. If however we are speaking of knowable objects other than those of faith, then in some ways faith is more certain than science and in other ways science is more certain than faith. For there is the certitude of seeing [*speculationis*] and the certitude of adherence [*adhaesionis*]: The first pertains to intellect, the second to the affections."

"In terms of the certitude of adherence the certitude of faith is greater than that of the habit of science, since the true faith causes the believer to adhere more firmly to what is believed than science causes the knower to adhere to any known thing. If, however, we speak of the certitude of seeing, which pertains to intellect and bare truth [*nudam veritatem*], then it can be granted that the certitude of any science is greater than that of faith insofar as someone can know a thing so certainly in a science that he can in no way doubt or disbelieve or gainsay it in his heart, as is clear in the case of first principles." (*III Sent.*, d. 23, a. 1, q. 4, c.)

We have here a very nuanced position, since a distinction between objects and modes of certitude is implied. When the objects of philosophy and theology are different, then of course the certitude with which they attain truths about them will differ. But Bonaventure seems to begin with an instance of the same object simultaneously known and believed. This is particularly intriguing, and we must pursue it since it will lead us to call into question our earlier tentative conclusion that philosophy, for Bonaventure, is a quite autonomous enterprise.

C. Simultaneity of Knowledge and Belief

Is it possible for the same truth to be known certainly with reference to the principles of reason and to be believed on divine faith? Bonaventure, in speaking of knowledge of God as creator and belief of this same truth, could, of course, be referring to different men, for example, to the pagan pre-Christian philosopher and the simple faithful of the Christian era. Such a "simultaneity" of knowledge and belief would present no problem. In the area of secular knowledge the teacher may know what the student for a time only believes. But it would seem odd to say that the same man simultaneously knows and believes the same truth, particularly if the following Bonaventurian distinction is accepted. "We must say that what is true is an object of faith differently from the way in which it is an object of knowledge: the object of knowledge, I say, is the seen truth [*verum visum*], whereas the object of faith is truth not as seen but as salutary. (*III Sent.*, d. 23, a. 1, q. 1, ad 2) On this basis, to say that the same thing can be simultaneously known and believed is like saying that the same thing can be simultaneously seen and not seen. In short, such simultaneity seems contradictory. Nevertheless, Bonaventure is quite commonly represented as maintaining such a simultaneity. Thus, we must examine the relevant passages to see if he does indeed do this and, if so, in precisely what manner.

St. Bonaventure asks whether faith bears on the same objects as does scientific knowledge, and he approaches the question with a fine feeling for useful distinctions. (See *III Sent.*, d. 24, a. 2, q. 3, c.) He first points out the difference between knowledge which is of open comprehension" and that which results from reasoning (*duplex est cognitio, scilicet apertae comprehensionis et inanuductione*

ratiocinationis). If we speak of that open comprehensive knowledge whereby God is known in heaven, then faith is not compatible with it such that the same thing could be simultaneously known and believed, for such knowledge absolutely excludes any darkness (*aenigma*). With respect to this knowledge it is the view of the saints and the common opinion of masters of theology that here the same thing cannot be simultaneously known and believed.

With respect to the knowledge which results from reasoning there is, Bonaventure notes, a division of opinion. Some hold that it is incompatible with faith, since with such knowledge the intellect assents because of an argument, necessarily, and to a thing inferior to itself. Faith, on the other hand, is an assent to the first truth for its own sake and voluntarily, which elevates reason above itself. Thus, science and faith mutually exclude one another.

Others are of the opinion that with respect to one and the same thing it is possible to have science as the result of reasoning and faith. St. Augustine and Richard of St. Victor are invoked as authorities, and the upshot is this: "Hence, someone believing God to be one and the creator of everything, if he begins to know the same thing by necessary arguments, does not thereby cease to have faith; nor, if he first knew, would the advent of faith destroy his knowledge, as is clear from experience." The reason such science can be had simultaneously with faith concerning the same thing, neither destroying the other, is that science, which results from reasoning, although it gives some certitude and evidence about divine things, is not in every way clear as long as we are in this life. For though one be able by necessary reasons to prove that God is and that God is one, to discern the divine being itself, the very unity of God and the way in which that unity does not exclude a plurality of persons, is impossible until one is cleansed by the justice of faith. The illumination and certitude of such science are not so great that, science being had, the illumination of faith becomes superfluous. On the contrary, given that science, faith is all the more necessary. A sign of this, Bonaventure feels, is in the fact that some philosophers, while they knew many truths concerning God, committed many errors because they lacked faith. In short, Bonaventure holds that knowledge and belief are simultaneously possible concerning the same object.

Now, as will be seen, it is the view of St. Thomas that one cannot at the same time know and believe the same truth. It is often said that this is a point of open conflict between him and Bonaventure. But is this really the case? Is Bonaventure claiming that it is precisely the same thing that is known and believed? Let us consider the example he gives. A contemporary of Christ looks at him and sees a man; his divinity is hidden to every sense and is an object of faith alone. Bonaventure says that this makes it perfectly clear that doubt and certitude concerning the same thing are simultaneously possible. I can be certain that this is a man: I see that he is. But that he is God -- that I cannot see. 'Therefore, it must be conceded that faith and vision can bear on one and the same thing, although not in the same respect [*quamvis non secundum idem*].' (*III Sent.*, d. 24, a. 2, q. 1, c.) It is that final phrase which is all important. Bonaventure is not saying that the same thing can be simultaneously known and believed where "the same thing" would mean same in every respect. The propositions "Christ is a man" and "Christ is God" are about the same thing, but they do not say the same thing about it. So too, the philosopher who proves that God is one knows that about God; what he does not know and cannot know in this life by natural

reason is that the unity of God admits of a plurality of persons. In other words, faith and knowledge do not bear unequivocally on the same thing, since the thing is an object of faith insofar as it is not seen and an object of knowledge insofar as it is seen. Thus, while the same thing may be a *credibile* and a *scibile*, to be a *credibile* and to be a *scibile* are not the same. One cannot simultaneously know and believe the proposition "God is one" unless the predicate is made to bear two meanings. For example, (1) there is not a plurality of gods, and (2) the one divine nature admits of a plurality of persons. In conclusion, the position of Bonaventure, while complex, seems to be the same as that maintained by Thomas Aquinas: the same man cannot at the same time both know and believe the same truth. However, if the philosophical as opposed to the theological understanding of a proposition admits of certitude, it is not thereby wholly autonomous for Bonaventure. For the great Franciscan philosophical truth all by itself is dangerous; indeed, it is its own kind of error.

D. Is Philosophy Autonomous?

There are things which to a certain degree and in a certain respect are evident to sense and in another fashion and respect are hidden; owing to this complexity there can be vision or knowledge, in part, and credulity or faith, in part. Knowledge will bear on what is evident, faith on what is hidden. With respect to divine things Bonaventure grants that philosophers can know with certitude, because of necessary arguments, some truths concerning God. For example, that God exists and is one. Bonaventure says that such philosophical proofs cannot be resisted. (*In Ioannem*, proemium, n. 10)

Does this mean that philosophy can enjoy a life of its own quite apart from faith? The following somewhat lengthy passage gives a first approach to Bonaventure's thought on this matter. "To the objection that faith concerns what is above reason and science what is below, it must be said that just as nothing prevents one and the same thing from being both evident and hidden, so nothing prevents the same thing from being above and below reason according to different modes of knowing and thus being both known and believed. For though 'the semipiternal power and divinity' (Romans 1:19) can be known either through acquired or even innate science, yet, as compared with the plurality of persons or with the humbleness of our humanity which God assumed, it is wholly above reason and science. For should someone base himself on the judgment of reason and science, he would never believe it to be possible that the highest unity could admit a plurality of persons or that the highest majesty could be united with our humility or that the highest power should from not acting come to act without any change in itself, or other similar things which seem to go contrary to the most common concepts of the mind according to philosophy. Thus it is that science attains precious little in the way of knowledge of divine things unless it is based on faith, because in one and the same thing what is most obvious to faith is most hidden to science. This is clear in the highest and most noble questions, the truth of which is hidden from philosophers, for example, concerning the creation of the world, concerning the power and wisdom of God -- matters that were hidden from philosophers but are now manifest to simple Christians. Because of this Paul writes, 'God has made foolish the wisdom of this world,' since any faithless wisdom concerning God in this life is stupidity rather than true science. For it will drag the inquirer into error if he is not directed and aided by the illumination of faith; it is not destroyed by faith, consequently, but rather perfected." (*III Sent.*, d. 24, a. 2, q. 3, ad 4)

While maintaining that science and faith can coexist, Bonaventure makes it clear that philosophy is not sufficient to itself; it needs the aid and light of faith lest it be turned into foolishness. It is difficult to express Bonaventure's thought accurately here. He has shown that science and faith, philosophy and theology, are distinct, that from one point of view science is more certain than faith, although from another point of view faith is more certain than science. If these can coexist, can they exist separately? Bonaventure wants to deny that they can. First of all, theology without philosophy does not seem to be possible. We remember from earlier considerations how Bonaventure described the subject of theology. That subject is not the credibile as credibile -- this is the object of simple faith, and faith is presupposed by theology. Theology is concerned with the credible, with the believed, to the degree that it can take on the note of understandability. In order for this to come about, philosophy is presupposed. "Since the teachings of philosophers are often useful for understanding truth and refuting error, there is nothing to be feared from the study of it, particularly since many questions concerning the faith cannot be resolved without it." (*De tribus quaestionibus*, n. 12) "Philosophy is concerned with things as they are in nature, or in the soul, according to knowledge naturally inserted or even acquired, but theology as a science founded on faith and revealed by the Holy Ghost deals with things pertaining to grace and glory and even to Eternal Wisdom." (*Breviloquium*, prologue) But these are not wholly separable pursuits. First of all, the theologian must employ philosophy. The simple faithful accept revealed truths owing to an infused and gratuitous light. So does the theologian, but, having accepted what God has revealed, he reflects on these truths, bringing to bear on them the findings of the philosophers. This results in an organization of articles of faith according to a pattern not followed by Scripture itself. The theologian defends the truths of faith against his own and others' doubt, and philosophy is an apt instrument for this task.

The credible, in short, can be looked upon in three ways. "For the credible insofar as it has in itself the note of First Truth to which faith assents for its own sake and above all else, pertains to the habit of faith; insofar as the note of authority is added to that of truth it pertains to the teaching of Holy Writ, of whose authority Augustine said that it is greater than any insight of human genius; but insofar as to the notes of truth and authority the note of being susceptible of proof [*probabilitas*] is added to the credible, it pertains to the consideration of the present book." (*I Sent.*, proemium, q. 1, ad 5) It is out of love for what is believed that man naturally seeks arguments on behalf of what has been revealed. (*Ibid.*, q. 2, ad 6) Thus, theology cannot exist without philosophy.

This would seem to indicate that philosophy must be able to enjoy a separate existence. And yet, the very fact of theology seems to call philosophy into question. "Beyond philosophical science God gave us theological science, which is a pious knowledge of credible truth, because the eternal light which is God is a light inaccessible to us as long as we are mortals and have the eyes of owls." (*De donis*, IV, 13) The reference is to Aristotle, who had pointed out the weakness of our minds with respect to divine things. On this very point, however, Bonaventure deals somewhat harshly with Aristotle. Of what good is it to recognize the weakness of the human mind and be unable to understand the cause of it, to recognize the illness and be unable to provide the remedy? "This, then, is the medicine: the grace of the Holy Ghost. This aid and this grace philosophy cannot attain." (*In Hexaemeron*, VII, 11) The weakness of the human mind is an effect of original sin. This weakness is present

in the theoretical as well as the practical intellect, and Bonaventure will point out the errors into which philosophers were led, errors they might have avoided if they had had the grace of faith, which is the cure for original sin.

In his lectures on the work of the six days (*Collationes in Hexaemeron*) Bonaventure gives us a veritable catalogue of the errors of philosophers. The philosophical doctrine on virtue is unsatisfactory: no philosophical doctrine can provide the means for healing our wayward affections. (IV, 12) Philosophical moral doctrine fails to recognize man's true end, which is supernatural; consequently, it is mistaken about the sufficiency of the merit for acts done and cannot cure the weakness of our faculties. "Only faith can divide light from this darkness." (IV, 13) Bonaventure's charge here is not that philosophy failed to do what it could and should do, but that philosophy is radically inadequate in matters of morality. "We must then go on to the light of faith, which the philosophers did not have, for they knew only by the natural light. The most perfect virtues, however, are known by faith and lead on to the end." (III, 32)

As for Aristotle, Bonaventure summarizes his defects in the following manner. Asking how philosophers fell into darkness, he answers, "For this reason, that while all recognized a first cause, the principle and end of all things, they disagreed about the in-between. For some denied that the exemplars of all things were in God, the chief being Aristotle, who, at the beginning and the end of his *Metaphysics* and in many other places, rejects the Ideas of Plato. Hence, he says that God knows only himself and has no need of knowledge of other things and moves as what is desired and loved. From which it follows that he knows nothing of particular things. Aristotle execrates the Ideas in his *Ethics* as well, denying that the highest good can be an Idea. But his arguments are worthless and are disproved by the Commentator. Now from this error another follows, namely, that God has neither foreknowledge nor providence since he has not the notions of things in himself whereby to know them. Moreover, they say there is no truth concerning the future except in necessary events, the contingent having no truth. From which it follows that all things come about either by chance or by fatal necessity; and since it is impossible that everything come about by chance, the Arabs held for the necessity of fate, saying that the substances which move celestial bodies are necessary causes of all events." (*In Hexaemeron*, VI, 2-3) Thus, a rejection of exemplars, of the Platonic Ideas, leads inexorably to a rejection of providence and thus to a fatalistic view of the happenings in the world. (Bonaventure betrays no acquaintance here with the discussion of fate and providence in the fifth book of *The Consolation of Philosophy* or of Boethius' handling of chapter nine of Aristotle's *On Interpretation*.) The opinion that the world is eternal, that there is but one intellect for all men, and that, consequently, there is neither punishment nor reward for deeds done in this life -- these too follow from the rejection of the Ideas. The unicity of the intellect was maintained to avoid having to affirm an actual infinity of human souls, which would seem to follow if the world and time had no beginning. And if there is but one intellect, only it survives the demise of particular men, and no personal immortality is possible, nor, of course, personal reward or punishment. (*Ibid.*, 4; see VII, 2)

It is a melancholy picture that Bonaventure paints of the philosophy of Aristotle. Since the whole sorry story has been made to hang on the rejection of the Ideas, we would expect to see Plato treated somewhat more kindly. And so he is. "Other enlightened philosophers posited the Ideas, and they were worshippers of the one

God, for they placed all good in God as the best good." (VII, 3) Plato, Plotinus, and Cicero are cited and praised in this regard. Nevertheless, Bonaventure feels constrained to go on to enumerate the deficiencies of these men, which were due to their not having the faith.

Bonaventure does not seem to be saying that the philosophers just happened to commit errors. Rather, his point is that a man who does not have grace and faith will inevitably make philosophical mistakes; he has not the remedy with which to cure the disorder and weakness of his natural powers, and as long as there is not faith the malady lingers on. Thus, while Bonaventure holds that theology needs philosophy, he wants also to maintain that philosophy has need of faith if it is to achieve its own ends. We might wish to object to this position in the following manner. Granted that philosophers made mistakes (though I, for one, cannot accept the Bonaventurian estimate of Aristotle), the history of philosophy is not simply a catalogue of errors; indeed, the errors there are stand out precisely because of the background of truth. Now Bonaventure himself is willing to concede that philosophers, even Aristotle, recognized the existence of God; moreover, Plato and others are commended because they recognized the Ideas. Immediately after listing the three great errors of Aristotle, Bonaventure adds, "But some, seeing that Aristotle was so good in other matters and had said so much that was true, could not believe that in these instances he was not speaking the truth." (*In Hexaemeron*, VI, 5)

Can we not then accept the truths philosophers offer and reject their errors? This is just what theology must do. "Hence, making use of philosophical knowledge and taking from the nature of things what it needs to construct a mirror in which divine things are reflected, it erects a ladder the foot of which rests on earth and whose head reaches heaven." (*Breviloquium*, prologue) Theologians must take from philosophers in the way the sons of Israel took from the Egyptians, following the counsel of Augustine. (*De tribus quaestionibus*, n. 12) What criteria enable us to recognize the errors of philosophers? Not a more adequate philosophy. Bonaventure says that the simple faithful, knowing that in the beginning God created heaven and earth, see the falsity of the claim that the world is eternal. It is in the light of faith then that philosophical errors are recognized as such -- and presumably philosophical truths as well. But if a philosophical truth is the conclusion of an argument, to accept that truth because it is also revealed is not to accept it as philosophically established. An examination of the proofs and a philosophical assessment of them is a different undertaking altogether, and it seems difficult to hold that Bonaventure urges us to refrain from such activity. He has said that philosophical arguments are irresistible, and he will recognize a good number of them as valid. But these arguments demand a fairly wide context. In that sense Bonaventure recognizes the existence of philosophy. But philosophy is completed by faith and the theology based upon it. Moreover, philosophy is best carried on under the extrinsic control of faith, which warns against blind alleys and guides us toward the truth. But since faith provides no proofs, it does not constitute philosophy. Perhaps one could say that for Bonaventure faith has an important role to play in philosophizing, though not in philosophy as such. The openness of philosophy to a truth above reason would save us from thinking that the philosophical conclusion "God is one" is opposed to the truth of faith "the one God is three persons."

Perhaps something can now be said of the controversy mentioned earlier. First of all, no one maintains that Bonaventure ever devoted himself to a specifically philosophical work. The question is, Can we find a philosophical doctrine in what he has written? Our answer must be in the affirmative. Bonaventure's whole view of the nature of theology indicates that it must make use of philosophy. But did he himself contribute to philosophy or only borrow from it? I think we must say that for the most part he only borrowed, though he did make contributions.

It is often said that Bonaventure was primarily a theologian. While true enough, this remark could be misleading. We feel prompted to observe that most theologians are primarily theologians, particularly when they are doing theology. The remark is made to establish the point that insofar as Bonaventure dabbled in philosophy, he did so with a view to the ends of theology. But of course theology was no more an end in itself for Bonaventure the man than was philosophy. Theological knowledge was to lead to mystical union and that to the beatific vision. The perspective in which something may be seen, the subjective reason for doing it, need not alter what is seen or done. In making use of philosophy the scholastic theologian may or may not find ready at hand the philosophical doctrine he requires. If none exists and he elaborates one and then goes on to employ it to explicate or defend truths of faith, the historian of philosophy will be able to examine the doctrine elaborated in legitimate isolation from the theological context and from the theological purpose it is made to serve. Some medieval masters of theology, and Bonaventure is in this class, do whatever philosophy they do in the context of works which are formally theological; others not only do this but also engage in philosophy within the limits and dictates of natural reason itself. Thomas Aquinas falls into this second class. The great difference between these two classes, as represented by Bonaventure and Aquinas, is the following. When we find philosophical doctrines elaborated in theological works of Aquinas, we know what for him is the wider philosophical whole to which they are contributions. The same is not true of Bonaventure. Consequently, it must always be a work of some daring and imagination to try to make a coherent whole of Bonaventure's philosophical doctrines, which are scattered piecemeal through his theological works. To maintain that any whole constructed from such pieces depends upon the acceptance of truths of faith would be to vitiate the whole enterprise. It would be better not to call such a systematic whole a philosophy at all if it presupposes religious faith for its acceptance.

What is for the moment clear is that philosophy represents for Bonaventure a given level of knowledge which is best interpreted with an eye to the hierarchy in which it fits. Most of his remarks about philosophical doctrines amount to more or less symbolic interpretations: they are seen as prefiguring what lies beyond philosophy. Bonaventure, in this characteristic stance, is clearly looking on philosophy from the vantage point of faith, and this is a perspective which presupposes philosophy as given and betrays no interest in contributing to it. From this sapiential point of view philosophy is a sign of what lies beyond it and at the same time is seen as a useful, if not necessary, rung on the ladder to heaven.

E. The Division of Philosophy

Scattered throughout the works of Bonaventure are the divisions of philosophy into various disciplines that indicate their sources in Augustine, Hugh of St. Victor, and, of

course, Aristotle. Bonaventure sets down the threefold division of philosophy into rational, natural, and moral in *The Reduction of the Arts to Theology* and argues that it is an adequate one since there are but three kinds of truth -- that of speech, that of things, and that of morals. Another argument is more typically Bonaventurian.

"Again, just as in God we can consider the note of efficient cause, of formal or exemplar cause, and of final cause, since he is the cause of subsisting, the means of understanding, and the order of living, so in philosophical illumination, since it illumines either for knowing the causes of being, and then it is physics, or for knowing the means of understanding, and then it is logic, or for knowing the order of living, and then it is moral or practical philosophy." (n. 4) Bonaventure goes on to subdivide each of these, assigning grammar, logic, and rhetoric as the parts of rational philosophy. "Further, since our intellect has to be directed in judging according to formal notions [*rationes formales*] and these can be considered in three ways -- with reference to matter, and then they are called formal notions; with reference to soul, and then they are called concepts; or in relation to divine wisdom, and then they are called Ideas -- so natural philosophy is divided into three parts. Physics, accordingly, considers the generation and corruption of things according to natural forces and seminal reasons; mathematics considers the intelligible notions of abstractable forms; metaphysics is knowledge of all beings, which it reduces to one first principle from which they come according to the Ideas, or it reduces them to God as principle, goal, and exemplar. There is, however, a great divergence among metaphysicians on the subject of Ideas." Finally, Bonaventure subdivides moral philosophy into monastics, economics, and politics. The following schema summarizes his views:

- Philosophy
 - moral
 - monastics
 - economics
 - politics
 - natural
 - physics
 - mathematics
 - metaphysics
 - rational
 - rhetoric
 - logic
 - grammar

While Bonaventure gives these divisions, with which we are well acquainted from previous chapters, what characterizes much of his

work, and indeed the *Reduction* itself from which we have just been quoting, is the way in which philosophy occupies only a few of the rungs on that ladder which reaches from earth to heaven. We shall try now to give a sketch of *The Reduction of the Arts to Theology*; having done that, we shall discuss a famous text in which Bonaventure argues that all science and wisdom are summed up in Christ, who is the mean (*medium*) of every science. We will then go on to the allied question of the way in which whatever is known is known in the eternal notions or divine Ideas.

The Reduction of the Arts to Theology is an elaborate interpretation of a remark by St. James in the first chapter of his Epistle: "Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights." From this basic image of God as a sun from which flow rays of light Bonaventure distinguishes a variety of participated lights. He speaks of four: an *external* light, or the light of mechanical art; a *lower* light, or the light of sense knowledge; an *inner* light which is the light of philosophical knowledge; a *higher* light which is the light of grace and of Sacred Scripture. Bonaventure's discussion of the mechanical arts simply recalls the relevant part of Hugh of St. Victor's *Didascalicon*. Given the threefold division of philosophy already mentioned, he arrives at six ways of looking at the light emanating from God: mechanical arts, sense knowledge, rational philosophy, natural philosophy, moral philosophy, and Sacred Scripture. These make way for a seventh, the light of glory. (n.6)

Since these six lights have their origin in one source, they are all ordered to knowledge of Sacred Scripture: they are contained in it, perfected by it, and through it ordered to eternal illumination. (n.7) Bonaventure's task now becomes one of showing how the other illuminations of knowledge are to be led back to Sacred Scripture. He then goes on to show how sense knowledge can be distinguished in terms of a *medium*, the exercise of knowledge, and the delight concomitant with it. The means (*medium*) suggests to Bonaventure the Divine Word; the exercise of sensation gives a pattern for human life, since each sense is directed to its proper object and shrinks from what could harm it. The delight which accompanies sensation is a sign of the soul's union with God. "Behold the way in which divine wisdom is contained hidden in sense knowledge." (n.10) This may suffice to indicate how each of the levels of light leads Bonaventure inexorably back to Sacred Scripture and theology. "And thus it is obvious how the manifold wisdom of God, lucidly revealed in Sacred Scripture, is bidden in all knowledge and in nature itself. It is also clear how all kinds of knowledge serve theology, which takes examples and terms belonging to every branch of science. So too, it is clear how wide is that illumined path and how within each thing sensed or known God himself lies hidden." (n.26)

The procedure of the Reduction is not wholly unlike that of *The Mind's Journey to God*, the purpose of which is "rather the stirring of the affections than intellectual erudition." (Prologue, n.5) Doubtless such an approach lends itself to parody; moreover, the literal intent of philosophical doctrine becomes swiftly a matter of indifference as one seeks signs of what is believed. Perhaps the most difficult example of Bonaventure's attempts to take a scriptural text as programmatic for a summary assessment of human knowledge is to be found in his lectures on the six days of creation.

The first conference opens with the following passage from Ecelesiasticus (15:5): "In the middle of the Church he will open his mouth and the Lord will fill him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding and will clothe him with the mantle of glory." The *medium ecclesiae* of the text is identified with Christ, who is *mediator Dei et hominum*, the mediator between God and man (I Timothy 2:5). Bonaventure then sets forth his intention. "Our plan then is to show that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God and that he is the means (*medium*) of every science. There are seven kinds of mean: of essence, of nature, of distance, of doctrine, of modesty, of justice, and of harmony. The consideration of the first falls to the

metaphysician, of the second to the physicist, of the third to the mathematician, of the fourth to the logician, of the fifth to the moralist, of the sixth to the politician or lawyer, of the seventh to the theologian. The first mean is primary because of its eternal origin; the second weighty because of its efficacious diffusion; the third profound because of its central position; the fourth clear because of its rational manifestation; the fifth important for moral choice; the sixth important in judicial compensation; the seventh pacifying by its universal conciliation. Christ is the first mean in his eternal generation, the second in his Incarnation, the third in his Passion, the fourth in his Resurrection, the fifth in his Ascension, the sixth in the future judgment, the seventh in eternal reward and punishment." (*In Hexaemeron*, I, 11)

From this we construct the following table:

	Medium	Science	Christ
1.	essence	metaphysics	eternal generation
2.	nature	physics	Incarnation
3.	distance	mathematics	Passion
4.	doctrine	logic	Resurrection
5.	modesty	morals	Ascension
6.	justice	politics	judgment
7.	harmony	theology	heaven / hell

Most of these juxtapositions are, to say the least, initially surprising. At any rate, this is Bonaventure's plan. To get some glimmering of how he makes good on it, let us see what he has to say about metaphysics. Metaphysics, he observes, although it rises from a consideration of the principles of created and particular substance to the universal and uncreated and to that being (*ad illud esse*) as it has the note of beginning, means, and ultimate end, does not grasp it as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is because philosophy ultimately arrives at God, who is the efficient, exemplar, and final cause of all else, that Bonaventure sees new significance in the tripartite division of philosophy. The metaphysician, insofar as he sees God as the first efficient cause of all things, is like the natural philosopher who considers the origin of things; and when the metaphysician considers God as final cause, he is like the moral philosopher who refers all to the highest good. "But when he considers that being as exemplifying all things, then he is a true metaphysician." (n.13) The defining role of metaphysics is concern with the eternal exemplars, or Ideas. Christ as the Word of God is the locus of the divine Ideas, and with him all things have their origin; hence, knowledge will achieve its perfection in Christ and metaphysics in its reduction of things to the Ideas. "For the beginning of knowledge is the same as the beginning of being. For if, as Aristotle says, the knowable (*scibile*) as such is eternal, it must be that nothing is known save through immutable, unchangeable, unlimited truth."

Just as Christ lies at the center of metaphysics since the peculiar concern of metaphysics is the divine Ideas, so Bonaventure would have us see that Christ is implied by or prefigured in the principal concern of each of the sciences. Physics is concerned with two worlds, the macrocosm and the microcosm, man; and the centers of these worlds are, respectively, the sun and the heart, both of which are signs of Christ in his Incarnation. Mathematics is said to be chiefly concerned with the measurement of the world and with the movements of the heavenly bodies. In his crucifixion on earth Christ stands at the center of the world; moreover, his passion is the measure of the Christian life. In logic we are concerned with the exterior manifestation of the truth, and this is a sign of the Resurrection, which is a proof of Christ's divinity. Ethics of course is concerned with virtue, and virtue lies in the mean between extremes. The Ascension corresponds with ethics insofar as the Christian is supposed to rise from virtue to virtue; moreover, rectified reason determines the mean of virtue, and faith is such a rectification of reason. The jurist or politician who must pass judgment is a sign of Christ in the last judgment. The theologian is chiefly concerned with the return of all things to God and thus with Christ as the means of eternal beatification.

One can only marvel at Bonaventure's ingenuity, though at the same time he may be baffled by its results. We have dwelt on this passage in order to give an indication of the way in which Bonaventure, while he sets down traditional divisions of philosophy, goes on in what we may well take to be his characteristic manner or style to reduce all intellectual pursuits to theology. Once more, in such efforts a minimum of time is spent in sketching aspects of philosophical doctrine, and the tendency is to hurry on to an interpretation of the whole endeavor as a sign of some role of the Incarnate Word in the supernatural order. Generally speaking, Bonaventure's attitude toward philosophy would seem to be one which assumes philosophy as given, as already there awaiting the kind of symbolic interpretation at which he is so adept. The goal again is spiritual edification rather than intellectual enlightenment. As we shall see, it is a matter of knowing things not simply in themselves but as vestiges and images of the divine.

F. The Divine Ideas

St. Bonaventure has summed up the "whole of our metaphysics: it deals with emanation, exemplarity, consummation; that is, to be illumined by the spiritual rays and be led back to the highest is to be a true metaphysician." (*In Hexaemeron*, I, 17) We have seen that these various aspects come down to a consideration of the beginning, exemplar, and end of all things and that since in some fashion the metaphysician shares his interest in the origin and goal with the physicist and moralist, the defining metaphysical concern will be with God as exemplar cause. The proper way to approach the doctrine of Ideas is to ask after Bonaventure's theory of knowledge.

For Bonaventure knowledge is of three kinds: sense knowledge, scientific knowledge, and sapiential knowledge. It is the difference between the last two which interests us now; the fact that he admits both is testimony to Bonaventure's desire to keep what he considered best both in Augustine and in Aristotle. For Bonaventure the human intellect at the moment of creation is a blank slate, a pure possibility as far as knowledge goes. (*II Sent.*, d. 3, p. 2, a. 2, q.1) Experience is the beginning of science.

"It is true beyond doubt that, as the Philosopher says, knowledge is generated in us by way of the senses, memory, and experience, from which we derive the universal which is the principle of art and science." (*Sermo, Christus magister*, 18) However, Bonaventure, while accepting the Aristotelian doctrine on the abstractive character of our intellectual knowledge, makes some notable additions to that doctrine. Is it the case that all of our intellectual knowledge comes from sense experience? "The reply must be in the negative. For we must hold that the soul knows God and itself and the things in itself without any help from the external senses. Hence, if the Philosopher sometimes says that 'nothing is in the intellect which was not first in the senses' and that 'all knowledge takes its rise from sense,' this should be understood as referring to those things which are in the soul owing to an abstracted likeness." (*II Sent.*, d. 39, a. 1, q. 2, c.) God and soul -- these fundamental, and Augustinian, concerns are excepted from the scope of Aristotle's doctrine of abstraction. Let us first see what Bonaventure has to say about abstractive knowledge, *cognitio scientialis*.

St. Bonaventure will here make use of the Aristotelian analysis which led to the distinction between an agent and passive intellect; this distinction permits us to speak of understanding both as an activity and as a kind of receiving of an impression. The agent intellect itself is a kind of light, Aristotle had said, which plays upon the images garnered from sense experience. The agent intellect then is the innate light because of which we can attain knowledge of what things are. We do not want to emphasize just now the divergence between Bonaventure and other Scholastics on the interpretation and use of Aristotelian doctrine. What we do want to stress is that Bonaventure allows for a theory of knowledge which it is easy to think is diametrically opposed to that which comes from Plato and Augustine. Bonaventure sees the merit in the teaching that intellectual knowledge of sensible things is abstractive. Intellectual knowledge is not simply a passive reception of objects: it is an activity and there is an agent intellect which may be compared to a light and which is an indispensable element in the doctrine of abstraction. However, while he accepts the necessity of abstraction, Bonaventure will also argue against its sufficiency. He will argue that intellection requires as well a kind of illumination which is independent of abstraction. It is to that difficult Bonaventurian tenet that we must now turn.

The *locus classicus* of Bonaventure's doctrine on the necessity of illumination as the complement to and foundation of abstractive knowledge is the *Disputed Question on the Knowledge of Christ*, question 4. The thesis Bonaventure would defend is this: "For certain knowledge it is necessary that the intellect, even here below, in some way grasps the eternal notion as normative and efficient cause, not by itself and in its own clarity, to be sure, but along with the created proper notion and as known in a glass darkly." We must follow in some detail Bonaventure's defense of this thesis.

The claim that whatever is certainly known is known in the light of the eternal Ideas (*rationes aeternae*) is susceptible of three interpretations. First, one might take it to mean that in certain knowledge the evidence of eternal light is the sole and whole cause of knowing. This does not commend itself, however, since it comes down to saying that all knowledge is knowledge of things in the Word, and then there is no difference between terrestrial knowledge and the beatific vision. Moreover, there would be no difference between knowing something in the Word and knowing it in itself (*in proprio genere*), and no difference between scientific and sapiential knowledge, between natural knowledge and that of grace, between rational knowledge

and that of revelation. Since all these consequences amount to false identifications, the interpretation must be rejected. Augustine has observed that skepticism is the final result of this opinion. The Academicians, maintaining that nothing could be known with certainty save in the intelligible, archetypal world, and recognizing that that world is hidden from us, had to conclude that we have no certain knowledge, that all is opinion and open to doubt.

A second way of interpreting the claim is this. In certain knowledge an influence of the eternal Idea is necessarily involved, but not in such a way that the knower attains the eternal notion itself except in its influence or effect. This view is inadequate, however, and this according to Augustine, who expressly asserts and clearly argues that the mind has to be regulated in certain knowledge by eternal and changeless rules, not as by a possession of its own, but by things above it in the eternal truth. Thus, to say that our mind in knowing with certitude does not go beyond the effect or influence of uncreated light is to say that Augustine was deceived, since his remarks cannot be interpreted in this way. Bonaventure takes this to be an absurd accusation to make against so great a Father and Doctor, who is the most reliable expositor of Sacred Scripture.

We may add that either this "influence" of light is the general causality of God with respect to all creatures or it is special, like God's causality in grace. If the former, then God need be named the giver of wisdom with no more propriety than he is called the fructifier of the earth, nor should we ascribe wisdom to him anymore than honey; if the latter, in the fashion of the special effect of grace, then all knowledge is infused and none acquired or innate. But all this is absurd.

But there is a third way of understanding the claim, one which is a mean between the two unsatisfactory interpretations. Certain knowledge necessarily requires the eternal Idea as normative and efficient cause, not alone and in its proper brilliance, but together with the created notion, that is, it is "known in part" to the degree that this is presently possible. This is what Augustine tells us. "Let the impious one reflect in order that he may be converted to the Lord as to that light whereby even as he turns from it he is touched. So it is that even the impious recognize eternity and rightly grasp and rightly praise many things concerning the morals of man." (*De trinitate*, XIV, 15) And he adds that they accomplish this through rules "written in the book of that light called truth." In order that our mind in its certain knowledge might in some wise attain those rules and changeless Ideas, there must necessarily be both nobility of knowledge and worthiness of the knower.

By nobility of knowledge Bonaventure means that certain knowledge requires immutability on the part of the knowable and infallibility on the part of the knower (*ex parte scibilis immutabilitas et infallibilitas ex parte scientis*). Created truth is not absolutely, but potentially, immutable; similarly the light of the creature is not wholly infallible in virtue of itself -- both are created and come forth from nonbeing to being. Both truth and the light which enables us to see it are daughters of time. If then the fullness of knowledge necessitates recourse to a truth in every way immutable and stable and to a light wholly infallible, there must needs be in such knowledge recourse to the supreme art as to light and truth: to the light as to that which gives infallibility to the knower, to the truth as to that which gives immutability to the known. Since then things enjoy a threefold existence -- in the mind, in themselves, and in the eternal

art -- the truth of things which follows on the second mode of being is not sufficient for the soul's certain knowledge, nor is the existence of these things in the mind sufficient. In some way things must be attained as they are in the eternal art.

Certain knowledge also requires worthiness (*dignitas*) on the part of the knower. The rational spirit has a superior and inferior part, and just as the inferior part has need of the superior for a full deliberative judgment as to what should be done, so too with respect to a complete judgment in speculative matters. The superior part of the soul is that owing to which it is an image of God; it adheres to the eternal rules, and it is through them that it defines and judges with certitude: this belongs to it insofar as it is an image of God.

The creature can be compared to God as a vestige, image, or likeness. The creature is a vestige insofar as it is referred to God as to its principle, an image insofar as it is referred to God as to an object, a likeness insofar as it is referred to God as to an infused gift. Every creature since it is from God is a vestige; every creature which knows God is an image; only that creature is a likeness in whom God dwells.

Following on this threefold reference to God, there is a threefold gradation of divine cooperation.

God cooperates in the effect of the creature as vestige by way of the creative principle and in the work of the creature as likeness, a work meritorious and pleasing to God, by way of an infused gift. God cooperates in the effect of the creature as image in the manner of an effecting notion (*per modum rationis moventis*), and such is the work of certain knowledge which is not from inferior reason alone but involves the superior reason. Since then certain knowledge belongs to the rational spirit insofar as it is an image of God, in such knowledge it attains the eternal Ideas. But because in this life it is not fully like God, it does not attain them clearly, fully, and distinctly; rather, to the degree that it is more or less like God, to that degree it attains them, but always only in a certain fashion, since it cannot rid itself of the status of image. Hence, in the state of innocence, when the soul is an image without the deformity of guilt, it nevertheless did not have the full likeness with God which is glory; thus, it attained the Ideas in part but not in darkness. In the state of fallen nature the soul both lacks "deformity," likeness to God, and has deformity, and so attains them in part and darkly (*in aenigmate*). In the state of glory the soul will lack deformity and have full likeness to God and will then attain the Ideas fully and perspicuously.

Again, because the soul is not an image in its entirety (but only owing to the *ratio superior*), it attains the eternal notions along with the similitude of things abstracted from phantasms, and these similitudes are proper and distinct means (*rationes*) of knowing. Without these concepts the light of eternal reason is insufficient for knowledge, at least in this life, unless perhaps through some special revelation this state is transcended. This happens in states of rapture and in revelations to the Prophets.

C. The Nature of Illumination

The key text we have just examined provides us with a hook on which to hang all subsequent discussion of St. Bonaventure. We have seen that for Bonaventure true metaphysics is occupied with three things: creation or emanation, exemplarity, and

consummation or return. Of these three the exemplars, or divine Ideas, are finally the most important since, as we shall see, it is via these that things emanate from God and because of these that in their different ways creatures return once more to God. This metaphysical program will strike us as Neoplatonic, and as a philosophical program that is essentially what it is. The theologian, of course, could have no alternative plan: creator, creatures, return. That is, as we shall see, the plan of Aquinas' *Summa theologiae*. Yet Bonaventure is no Neoplatonist, or if he is, he is something else besides. In the first place, while in some sense the Ideas are the beginning of knowledge as well as of being, they are also a culmination and conclusion from a philosophical point of view. The text we have just considered exhibits a typical deference to Augustine, and the Augustinian influence gives a Platonic and Neoplatonic tone to what Bonaventure has to say. True and certain knowledge entails infallibility on the part of the knower and immutability on the part of what is known. If I am certain that "X is Y", there can be no possibility that "X is not Y" will be true. The truth, in short, is immutable.

Whence comes this immutability, particularly when I consider that the value of X is something sensible and changeable? Here is the familiar source of idealism, whether it leads to the positing of another realm of entities, Xness and Yness, or whether it posits innate rules of thought according to which "X is Y" can never be overturned. Notice that Bonaventure, following Augustine, has dismissed the latter possibility: the eternal rules are not the innate grooves of the

created mind. Why? Precisely because it is created. As created, the human soul is *vertibilis in non-esse*. Being contingent, it cannot of itself account for the necessary. Changeable things are in themselves changeable and not necessary; moreover, their existence in the mind cannot as such confer unchangeability and necessity on them. If we take a proposition which expresses an eternal truth, "the truth signified by it can be signified either as it is in matter or as it is in the soul or as it is in the divine art or taken to be certain in all these ways at once." (*Ibid.*, ad 23-6) Now, if we say that things are true as spoken, such statements are signs of mental states. What we must do is see the soul as occupying the middle ground between things and the divine Ideas. Owing to inferior reason (*ratio inferior*), the soul is referred to things in themselves by way of abstractive forms or concepts which are accordingly *rationes creatae*; because of superior reason (*ratio superior*), which makes it an image of God, the soul refers to the divine Ideas which are *rationes increatae*. True and certain knowledge is had by bringing the *rationes aeternae* to bear on the *rationes creatae*. We have then a blend of abstractive and illuminative knowledge: the former without the latter is mere contingency; the latter without the former is empty. Illumination, then, an intellectual participation in the divine Ideas, is the perfection and *sine qua non* of abstractive knowledge; scientific knowledge must be anchored in and guaranteed by sapiential knowledge.

As to the nature of illumination, we are first told what it is not. Neither is it another name for the general cooperation of God in the operations of creatures nor is it something as special as grace. Illumination is not something supernatural. It lies somewhere in between these two possibilities. More positively, it is said to be God's cooperation with the activity of the creature as image; a creature is an image insofar as it can know God, and thus illumination is the divine cooperation with the activity of the intellectual creature. God as exemplar cause is the guarantee of the certitude

and immutability of knowledge in the strict sense. No matter how fluid and evanescent the created thing which is known, it is a vestige of the creator, an exemplification of a divine Idea. As such it can be a factor in abstractive knowledge, in scientific knowledge. But scientific knowledge is not yet sufficiently grounded. Bonaventure accepts Aristotle's definition and discussion of *scientia*, or *episteme*, and asks what is the guarantee of its immutability. It cannot be the things known, the things out-there in the visible world, for they are mutable and changeable; it cannot be a constituent conferred by our mind because we too are creatures, our minds are *vertibiles in non-esse*. Beyond abstraction and science, then, it is necessary for recourse to be had to the art behind the things and our souls, the art which operates through eternal notions and Ideas. By reference to these science is anchored and justified. Without this reference to Ideas there is no metaphysics. Aristotle, consequently, is a philosopher of nature, a scientist, but he is not a metaphysician or *sapiens*.

This is not to say that scientific knowledge requires explicit reference to the Ideas. Augustine has said that the eternal light reaches men even when they are turned from it. The scientist -- think of Aristotle -- achieves certain knowledge and thus implicitly at least is aware of the Ideas -- that is why his knowledge is certain: the Ideas are operative in it. But he is not, for all that, wise. "The wise man [*sapiens*] attains these Ideas in one way, the scientist [*sciens*] in another. The latter attains them as causes [*ut moventes*], the former as that in which he rests [*ut quietantes*], and to this wisdom no one attains 'unless he first be cleansed by the justice of faith' (John 1:9)." (*Ibid.*, ad 2) Alas, this passage complicates matters once more. In his defense of his thesis Bonaventure had made no mention of Ideas *ut quietantes*, but only *ut moventes*. Presumably the latter was sufficient to show the way in which abstraction is perfected by illumination, science by wisdom, and there was no question of a supernatural gift. Now, wisdom is associated with a knowledge which terminates in the Ideas as opposed to a knowledge in which the Ideas are operative but perhaps not explicitly alluded to. Is Bonaventure distinguishing now the wisdom which is a gift of the Holy Ghost from theology and *a fortiori* from philosophical wisdom, or is he distinguishing the supernatural from the natural order? If unequivocally the latter, then philosophical wisdom, or metaphysics, is impossible and Plato is no better off than Aristotle. Perhaps it is not a trivialization of Bonaventure's position to say that the Ideas are operative in scientific knowledge insofar as God is the cause of the known and cooperates with the activity of the knower. He need not be taken to mean that there are other objects of knowledge to which we must turn in order to have scientific knowledge, but that we can have scientific knowledge of the things we do because those things are what they are and we are what we are. The divine truth is known to us, not in itself, but rather insofar as it is revealed generally in the truths we know: "The eternal Idea not only causes us to know but is known, not specially in itself, but generally together with the truth of principles; thus, it does not follow that it is known to us in itself, but to the degree that it shines forth generally in principles." (ad 16) Scientific truths, then, are referred to the Ideas, the *rationes creatae* to the *rationes aeternae*, not as objects to further objects. Rather, in reflecting on the demands of truth and knowledge the mind is led to know God and the way in which God creates.

The danger here of course is that eternal truths appear to be, *salva reverentia*, whimsical or capricious choices of God. Bonaventure's point is more subtle and Augustinian. Self-evident principles are signs of God, who is eternal truth. In short,

and we shall return to this, Bonaventure is here treading the Augustinian way of truth as a proof for the existence of God. The following summary statement of his position by Bonaventure perhaps makes it as clear as it can be made. "To the objection that if we know in these notions or Ideas

[rationibus], every knower is a wise man, let it be said that it does not follow, because to attain these Ideas does not make one wise unless he rests in them and knows that he attains them, which is proper to wisdom. For such Ideas are attained in the concepts of scientists as instruments [*ab intellectibus scientium ut ductivae*], but in the concepts of the wise as terms and resting points [*ab intellectibus sapientium ut reductivae quietativae*]. And since they are few who so attain them, the wise are few, though the knowing are many. Few indeed are those who know that they attain such Ideas and, what is more, few wish to believe there are such Ideas since it appears so difficult for an intellect which has not been elevated to the contemplation of divine things and thus to have God present and near, although Paul says in Acts 17:27 that 'He is not far from each of us.'" (ad 19)

Few indeed maintain that Bonaventure's doctrine on illumination is an easy one to grasp. We can only hope that we have managed to remove some of the initial ambiguity from it. We must go on now to discuss a number of allied doctrines: What is the status of proofs for the existence of God? What has Bonaventure to say about creation? What is Bonaventure's doctrine on universal hylomorphism? What is the nature of the human soul and can its immortality be proved? In attempting to answer these questions we shall have more to say on the distinction of reason into a superior and inferior part and on the division of created perfections into vestiges, images, and likenesses. We shall want to ask what is the relevance of that triad to the question, How can God be named by us?

H. Proofs of God's Existence

Bonaventure's doctrine of illumination is such that God is involved in all certain knowledge, not as object, but as the regulating and motivating cause. The theory according to which intellectual knowledge is abstractive is good as far as it goes, Bonaventure feels, but it is ultimately insufficient to explain the certitude of knowledge. For that, appeal must be made to the Ideas. Now, if Bonaventure were saying that we know all things in God, it would be fair to call him an "ontologist," but, as it happens, he insists that in this life we always know God in or through something else. God, the divine Ideas, are the ultimate guarantee of knowledge, but we cannot have direct and comprehensive knowledge of God in this life. Thus, he counsels us to interpret carefully any authoritative statements which seem to say that we can know God in this life; they must be taken to mean, not that we can know God in his essence, but rather that we can know him in some inner effect. (*II Sent.*, d. 23, a. 2, q. 3) The universe is a scale we must ascend in order to arrive at knowledge of God; therefore, the universe is that through which we know God. We must begin with God's vestige in the corporeal and temporal. Although he more often than not will exempt ecstatic and mystical knowledge from the scope of this claim, Bonaventure says that our knowledge of God is always an achievement, the term of rational discourse by which we move from effects to God as their cause. If, however, knowledge must begin with what is sensed, we cannot make the object of intellection coterminous with what has been abstracted from sense experience. Once more,

abstraction is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition of intellectual knowledge. Bonaventure will insist that our knowledge of God is not abstractive; no more is our knowledge of ourselves. Not unlike Kant, he will say that while all knowledge begins with experience, not all knowledge is derived from experience. Our knowledge of sensible things may be the occasion for our self-awareness, but knowledge of self is not derived from what is sensed. In order to stress this, Bonaventure will speak of an intuition of the self as opposed to abstractive knowledge, which pertains to the corporeal and temporal. In the same connection he will speak of an intuition or cointuition of God.

Knowledge of self and knowledge of God are linked when Bonaventure wants to oppose them to abstractive knowledge. "It is necessary to say that the soul knows God and itself and its own activities without any aid from the external senses." (*II Sent.*, d. 39, a. 1, q. 2) The route that Bonaventure is taking here is certainly Augustinian. In our ascent to knowledge of God the sensible world has its role to play, not so much because one moves from corporeal things directly to their incorporeal cause, but rather because corporeal things, as vestiges of God, lead us within ourselves, to the image of God we are. What is the next step? If there is an intuition of the self and of mental activities which is occasioned by experience of corporeal things, is there also a direct intuition of God? The difficulties here are precisely the difficulties we encountered in trying to understand Bonaventure's remarks on the divine Ideas. On the one hand, he seems to be saying that we know God by direct intuition; on the other, he vehemently denies that God is directly accessible to the human mind in this life. What he seems to be saying is that since the human soul is the image of God, reflection on it permits us to arrive at knowledge of God by moving from the image to the original. This is a discursive knowledge, a movement from effect to cause, but Bonaventure insists that it is knowledge of God. The whole purpose of the universe is to lead men to knowledge of God, and Bonaventure's teaching will not allow that this purpose is systematically frustrated. But since our discursive knowledge of God must betray its origins, our knowledge is always imperfect, and Bonaventure will again remind us of the distinction between attaining God cognitively and comprehending God. The latter is impossible. Bonaventure employs the distinction between affirmative and negative knowledge to indicate how we attempt to surmount the imperfections of what has permitted us to come to knowledge of God.

Bonaventure is often represented as accepting the ontological argument for God's existence, and there are grounds for this contention. However, here as elsewhere the precise position of Bonaventure is a nuanced one, and we must be careful in ascribing to him an unqualified acceptance of the Anselmian proof. The text which is most pertinent to this inquiry is the *Disputed Question on the Mystery of the Trinity*, question one, article one. Bonaventure is asking whether "God exists" is an indubitable truth. He begins by giving twenty-nine reasons why the truth that God exists is indubitable, and among those twenty-nine reasons are several borrowed from Saint Anselm. When we turn to the *Respondeo* of the article, however, we find Bonaventure remarking that a truth can be indubitable in itself and nonetheless dubitable by us. That is the kind of indubitable truth "God exists" is taken to be. Insofar as one does not correctly apprehend the meaning of the term "God," he can doubt that God exists. Nevertheless, Bonaventure concludes as follows: "But that God exists cannot only not be doubted, its contradictory cannot even be thought by a mind which fully comprehends the meaning of the term 'God,' namely, a being than which

nothing greater can be thought." Bonaventure thinks it highly unlikely that anyone would not know the meaning of the term "God," however, and if the ontological argument is less an argument proving that God exists than the denial of the need for such proofs, one must ask what Bonaventure takes the status of attempted proofs to be. Having recalled that "God exists" is dubitable only from a defect on the part of our mind, a defect which calls forth proofs, he adds, "Hence, reasonings of that kind are intellectual exercises rather than arguments giving evidence and manifesting a proved truth." (*Ibid.*, ad 12m) So-called proofs do not so much prove as remove impediments to our seeing that "God exists" is indisputably true.

If the whole of creation bespeaks its cause, nevertheless because the universe is graded and hierarchical, things reveal their creator in various ways. Bonaventure, we have seen, distinguishes between vestige and image. Sometimes he speaks of shadow, vestige, and image. Earlier we proceeded as if the difference between vestige and image were simply the difference between the corporeal and spiritual. This is not exactly true, since vestigial traces of God are found in spiritual creatures as well. "With respect to the difference between vestige and image some assign the following: the vestige is in sensible things, the image in spiritual. But this will not do because the vestige is found in spiritual things as well, for unity, truth, goodness, in which the vestige consists, are quite universal and intelligible conditions. Others say that something is called a vestige because it is a partial representation, while an image gives the whole. But this position will not do either, because since God is simple, he cannot be represented according to a part. And since he is infinite, he cannot be represented totally by any creature or indeed by the whole world. So we should recognize that when creatures lead to knowledge of God as shadows, vestiges, and images, the difference among these three, as their names suggest, is taken from mode of representing. For a shadow is that which represents in a remote and confused manner, a vestige in a remote but distinct manner, and an image more closely and distinctly.... Creatures are called shadows with respect to properties which refer them to God in any genus of causality, but according to an indeterminate notion of the cause. The vestige is that whose property refers it to God under the aspect of a threefold cause: efficient, formal, and final, like one, true, and good. A creature is called an image because of conditions which refer to God not only as cause but as object -- properties like memory, understanding, and will. From this we can arrive at other differences taken from the cognitive destination of these three. For the creature as shadow leads to knowledge of the common as common; as vestige, to knowledge of the common as appropriated; as image, to knowledge of the proper as proper." (*I Sent.*, d. 3, q. 2, conel.) From creatures which are only shadows we can have only the most remote conception of what God is, whereas vestiges enable us to know attributes common to the three Persons of the Trinity, though these attributes of nature can be appropriated to one Person rather than another, for example, wisdom to the Son. The rational creature alone is an image of God and is an *imago trinitatis*.

I. Creation and Universal Hylomorphism

The principle that Bonaventure invokes to discuss creation is that the good is diffusive of itself (*bonum est diffusivum sui*), what might be called the principle of the generosity of the good. Since he invokes this same principle in speaking of the procession of Persons in the Trinity, however, some distinctions are clearly called for. The procession of Persons is eternal, whereas Bonaventure is a staunch opponent of

the claim that the world is eternal. The distinction brought forward is that between production within the Godhead and production without. The procession of Persons is within the Godhead and is a necessary one, whereas the production of the world is without and is not necessary. The reason for the latter claim is that production without bears on that which can be and not be, that is, on the contingent. The created world depends for its existence on God's free will. "The reason why this causality is attributed to the will is the following: the reason for causing both from the point of view of efficient and from that of final causality is goodness, for the good is said to be diffusive of itself and the good is that for the sake of which all things are. The efficient cause becomes actually such because of the end. . . . Therefore, it is will that unites the effective with the end." (*I Sent.*, d. 45, a. 2, q. 1) It is according to the divine reason and power that creation takes place, but not automatically or necessarily -- free will is required. God has eternally within himself the patterns of creatures, but he creates them freely and in time. Creatures come to be in time and from nothing owing to the power and free will of God.

That the world was created freely by God, in time and from nothing, is for Bonaventure a truth accessible to human reason. However, though this is true in principle, in fact men have recognized this only under the influence of Scripture. "It must be said that this is the truth: the world was produced in being, not simply as a whole but also with respect to its intrinsic principles, which do not come from anything else but from nothing. This truth, though it is now open and clear to every believer, was hidden from the wisdom of philosophers, who on this matter long wandered on errant ways. (*II Sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. 1, q. 1, concl.) Since the most eminent philosophers have erred on this matter, Scripture has come to our aid and made the point clear. Once the truth of creation in time and from nothing is clarified by Scripture, it is easy, Bonaventure feels, to see that the opposed view is untenable. Bonaventure held that to maintain that the world is eternal not only contradicts Scripture but involves within itself a contradiction. He gives a number of reasons for this, among which are the following. If the world had always existed, the sun would have described its revolutions an infinity of times; but the sun is still revolving, and this entails further additions to an already infinite number, which is a contradiction. Furthermore, if the world as we know it is eternal, there would be an infinite number of souls of the departed, and an infinite number is a contradictory notion. By an infinite number Bonaventure understands an actual, not a possible, infinity; an actual infinite number is one to which no further additions could be made.

Bonaventure's assertion that the notion of an eternal world is self-contradictory is directed against Aristotle. Nevertheless, Bonaventure makes use of an Aristotelian conception when he describes finite beings, namely, the notion that the creature is composed of matter and form. Aristotle had argued that an entity which comes to be as the result of a change is composed of form and matter. There are other beings, separate substances, devoid of matter. For such a thinker as Aquinas there are beings other than God and still quite immaterial. Bonaventure held to a universal hylomorphism, claiming that every finite being has matter as a principle of its limitation. "The principle of any limitation is matter or something material" (*principium omnis limitationis est materia vel aliquid materiale*). (*Q.D. de myst. trin.*, q. 4, a. 1) Only divine being, which is pure act, lacks materiality and thus is without limitation. It is clear that for Bonaventure matter is the name of the principle of limitation whereby finite being is precisely finite and not infinite; it is the source of

possibility and potentiality. That is why he can speak of matter in the angels and in rational souls. "Matter considered in itself is neither spiritual nor corporeal; therefore, the capacity following on the essence of matter relates indifferently to spiritual and corporeal forms." (*II Sent.*, d. 3, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2, ad 3) On the basis of this Bonaventure will speak of spiritual matter which is simple and unextended. All this sounds odd, of course, but the strangeness recedes somewhat when we recall that what Bonaventure was seeking to emphasize is the difference between finite and infinite being. Since finite being is limited and some principle or source of its limitation must be recognized, Bonaventure chose the term "matter" to designate the principle of limitation of finite being. Souls and angels, while not corporeal, are finite beings and thus, in Bonaventure's odd locution, must contain a material component. He is not suggesting that everything other than God is material in the sense of corporeal and extended.

The human soul is immortal or incorruptible, something that could hardly be said of it if it were material or a composition in the usual sense, for matter, in its usual sense, is the principle of change or of the corruptibility of the composite. Matter itself is incorruptible, and that provides Bonaventure with one of his arguments for the immortality of the soul. The order of the universe involves both prime matter and an ultimate form. The rational soul is the ultimate form, and if prime matter is incorruptible, then, Bonaventure argues, the ultimate form too must be incorruptible. This is the first of twelve arguments given by Bonaventure for the immortality of the rational soul. (See *II Sent.*, d. 19, a. 1, q. 1.) On other occasions Bonaventure will found the soul's immortality on its ordination to beatitude. "For the soul is the image of God because it has a capacity for God and can participate in his being, and thus it is made for beatitude and is apt for beatitude, which, I say, can only belong to an immortal substance; it is necessary therefore that the soul be immortal." (*II Sent.*, d. 26, q. 4, ad 1) In connection with discussions of the immortality of the soul Bonaventure will stress that his doctrine of universal hylomorphism is a metaphysical and not a physical doctrine. From a physical point of view the soul is wholly simple, since a composition of parts makes a body, whereas the soul is a spirit since it is simple and without extension. Metaphysical composition, such as of act and potency, is, Bonaventure notes, admitted to obtain in all creatures, even angels, and angels are certainly immortal. That is why he concludes that the soul's metaphysical composition of form and matter is not a root of corruptibility.

J. Conclusion

In form and intent the work of St. Bonaventure is always the work of a theologian; he writes as one for whom the only angle of vision and the proximate criterion of truth is the Christian faith. This fact influences his importance for the history of philosophy; when coupled with his style, it makes Bonaventure perhaps the least accessible of the major figures of the thirteenth century. This is true, not because he is a theologian, but because philosophy interests him largely as a *praeparatio evangelica*, as something to be interpreted as a foreshadow of or deviation from what God has revealed. We find in his writings something like a charter for philosophy, but not for anything like a fully autonomous philosophy. Despite this, however, Bonaventure himself seems little interested in engaging in philosophical work. In a way that is not true of Aquinas or Albert or Scotus, Bonaventure does not survive well the transition from his time to ours. It is difficult to imagine a contemporary philosopher, Christian or not, citing a

passage from Bonaventure to make a specifically philosophical point. One must know philosophers in order to read Bonaventure, but the study of Bonaventure is seldom helpful for understanding philosophers and their characteristic problems. Bonaventure as a theologian is something else again, of course, as is Bonaventure the edifying author. It is in those areas, rather than in philosophy proper, that his continuing importance must be sought.

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The Thirteenth Century

Chapter VI

Saint Thomas Aquinas

A. The Man and His Work

Almost twenty years ago a professor of philosophy remarked that there are more Thomists in the world than any other kind of philosopher, a remark that lost its surprise when one reflected that it was prompted by identifying every Catholic philosopher -- if not every Catholic -- as a Thomist. Things have changed in the meantime, for better or worse, but the remark retains some interest if only because it reveals how Thomas Aquinas has sometimes been swallowed by Thomism, that in his case we seem to be dealing less with an individual thinker than with an institution. In a broken rhythm but with general constancy since his death, men have come forward as intermediaries between Thomas and his reader. Commentaries on Aquinas, monographs devoted to particular points of his teaching, a bewildering barrage of journal articles, popularizations of his doctrine, even popularizations of the popularizations -- all this has sometimes had the effect of putting Thomas himself further and further away from the possibility of direct contact. Dominicans, members of Thomas' own order, have always been in the vanguard of these efforts to explicate, expand, and apply the teachings of Aquinas, but they have always been joined by other religious, by secular priests, and, more recently, by laymen, Catholic and non-Catholic.

The remarkable attention that has been paid the thought of Aquinas, while it relates to the essential quality of his work, cannot be understood on that basis alone. The favor shown Thomas by the Catholic Church over the centuries, the unique deference paid him in the Leonine revival at the end of the nineteenth century, added the weight of the ordinary magisterium of the Church to the attraction of the intrinsic qualities of Thomas' teaching and to his previous historical impact to insure for Aquinas an attention to his writings on the part of Catholics which goes far beyond that owed and paid to other important thinkers. This antecedent deference to the thought of Thomas has had disadvantages as well as advantages, and we are currently in a time when the mood of deference to Aquinas seems almost wholly absent from some Catholic philosophers. Just as earlier there were a few who equated repetition of what Thomas had written (a repetition that seemed most comfortable when it was of the original Latin) with understanding and philosophical argument, so now a few seem to take hostility to Aquinas as a sure sign of philosophical seriousness.

One childish attitude is scarcely preferable to another; the importance of Aquinas cannot be decided by hoisting a moist finger to catch the winds of current fashion. Our task here must be to get through the Thomistic tradition -- so much of which, taken in moderation, is undoubtedly an aid -- to the teachings of Thomas himself. When we do this, when we catch something of the flavor and style of his procedure and make soundings in the vast expanse of his teachings, we begin to see why he has been singled out for the attention he has received, why that vast tradition of scholarship and commentary arose, why he is one of a handful of truly major and perennial thinkers. Only then can we hope to speak intelligently of the role Thomas may play today -- and that he has a contemporary role to play is the continuing and insistent conviction of the teaching Church. But, of course, it will not be our task here to enter into any lengthy discussion of the timeliness of Thomas.

Thomas was born in 1225 in Roccasecca near Naples, and Aquinas is the family name taken from Aquino, where the feudal family into which Thomas was born ruled. Thomas' early education was at the Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino. From 1239 to 1243 he studied the arts at the University of Naples, which had been founded by Emperor Frederick II in 1224. When Thomas entered the Order of Preachers in 1244, his decision met with resistance from his family; taken into custody by his brothers, he was held prisoner for several months, but they set him free in 1245. His first years as a Dominican are obscured for us, but we know that Thomas studied under Albert the Great at Cologne from 1248 to 1252. In the latter year he was sent to Paris, where he was a student of theology until 1257. He was a bachelor of Scripture from 1252 to 1253 and a bachelor of the Sentences from 1253 to 1256 in the Dominican convent in Paris. At the end of this period he was admitted as a master of theology and granted a license to teach on the faculty of theology of the University of Paris. His inaugural lecture was delivered in the summer of 1256.

It must be pointed out that these years of study at Paris were far from serene, for it was just at this time that the efforts of the secular clergy to keep the religious, particularly the mendicant friars, from faculty positions reached a peak of what can only be called frenzy. Thomas and Bonaventure were granted their degrees at the same time, but their admission to chairs on the faculty of theology was delayed. In October of 1256 Pope Alexander intervened to demand that they be received into the academic community. This demand was not complied with until August, 1257, by

which time Bonaventure had been elected master general of the Franciscans. But for Thomas this marked the start of a professorial career which, one way or the other, defined his life until he died.

From 1256 to 1259 Thomas held one of the Dominican chairs of theology at the University of Paris. During this period he wrote his *Commentary on the Sentences*, or rather completed his comments on the work of Peter Lombard begun in 1253. To this period also belong his commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew, the *Disputed Questions on Truth*, the expositions of the *De trinitate* and *De hebdomadibus* of Boethius, the opuscula *On Being and Essence* and *On the Principles of Nature*, and several quodlibetal questions. These few years represent the first stage of Thomas' career as a teacher and are called the first Parisian period.

The first Italian period begins perhaps in 1260 and extends to 1268. During this period Thomas taught first at Orvieto, where Pope Urban IV was in residence; from 1265 to 1267 he taught in Rome, at the convent of St. Sabine, and then perhaps at Viterbo, where the papal court had gone. During the first Italian period Thomas wrote the *Summa contra gentiles* as well as the first part of the *Summa theologiae*, the masterpiece which was still to be incomplete at the time of his death. He also wrote at this time the *Disputed Questions On the Power of God* and *On Spiritual Creatures* and commented on Pseudo-Dionysius' *On the Divine Names*. The commentaries on Isaiah and Jeremiah seem also to belong to this period. Of great importance for our purposes are commentaries on works of Aristotle, some of which, notably those on the *Metaphysics* and *On the Soul*, were begun during this period.

The second Parisian period took place between 1269 and 1272, when, on the orders of his superiors, Thomas reclaimed his chair on the faculty of theology at the University of Paris. In many ways this could be called the Aristotelian period of Thomas' career since during it he completed his commentaries on the *Metaphysics* and *On the Soul* and commented as well on the *Physics*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Meteorology*, *On Interpretation*, and the *Posterior Analytics*. At the same time he commented on the *Liber de causis* (pointing out that it amounted to a selection from Proclus' *Elements of Theology*). He also commented on Job, St. John's Gospel, and the Epistles of St. Paul. He continued working on the *Summa theologiae* during this period and engaged in many *Disputed Questions*, those *On the Soul*, *On Evil*, *On the Virtues*, and *On the Union of the Word*, as well as in many quodlibetal questions. It is to this period that the opuscum *On the Unity of the Intellect against the Parisian Averroists* belongs.

The second Italian period begins in 1272 and ends with the death of Aquinas in 1274. Thomas taught at the University of Naples, where he was sent in 1272 to found a Dominican House of Studies. Besides organizing the curriculum and teaching, Thomas wrote more commentaries on Aristotle, those *On the Heavens*, *On Generation and Corruption*, and on the *Politics*. Moreover, he worked on part three of the *Summa theologiae*. In 1274, on orders of the pope, Thomas set out for the ecumenical council to be held at Lyons. He never made it. Falling ill on the way, he was taken into the Cistercian abbey at Fossanova, located between Naples and Rome. It was there, when he was not yet fifty, that he died on March 7, 1274.

To summarize a life in this way gives us everything but the man who lived it, and of the man Thomas it must be remembered that he was priest and Dominican, teacher

and mystic, scholar and saint. In Thomas we find a blend of the natural and supernatural virtues, the moral and intellectual virtues, and truly, insofar as man can say of man, Thomas exhibited in his own life the ideal of Christian perfection of which he wrote with authority and in a style that is almost never unctuous. There is a story that as a child he asked. "What is God?" lie followed the trail of that question throughout his life, not as the statement of a curious intellectual puzzle, but in quest of the ultimate meaning of life and of the universe. With respect to that controlling question of his life he was intent to run out the string of reason as far as it could go, and by doing so he came to hold that in the end the most we can do is know what God is not; we cannot know what or who he is with clarity in this life. This final position is not a sign of resignation or lethargy; it represents a learned ignorance which refers not simply to the limits of pure reason but also to the darkness and obscurity of the spiritual life. Intellectual and saint, Thomas speaks audibly both to the sophisticated academic and to the lyric mystic. St. John of the Cross professed to see in the treatise on the contemplative life in the *Summa theologiae* the map, insofar as it can be mapped, of the profundities of the spiritual life. Only the traveler who has returned can make us maps, and Thomas' credentials, unsettling for a certain view of the intellectual life, are incorrigibly dual: his holiness and his austere arguments.

It is not Thomas the saint who is our interest here, but Thomas the thinker, and however inseparable these were in his person, they can be considered apart. The writings of Aquinas which have come down to us are intimidating in their bulk and number; editions of his complete works fill shelves. Our sketch has indicated that they fall into classes. The first great division of his writings could be between those which comment on, explicate, or expose the writings of others on the one hand and independent works on the other. Among the latter we might include those which grew out of academic debates, the *Disputed Questions* and the *Quodlibetal Questions*, but more particularly various opuscula and, of course, the two great summaries of Christian theology, the *Summa contra gentiles* and the *Summa theologiae*.

Another way of grouping his writings, one more important for our purposes, would be into philosophical writings and theological writings. The former, of course, are what seem to interest us most, but what would they be? Such opuscula as *On Being and Essence*, *On the Principles of Nature*, and *On the Unity of the Intellect* certainly -- these are, on Thomas' own criteria, philosophical works, and, while dependent on his predecessors, they are original in their conception and development. Further, there is the great mass of his commentaries on Aristotle. There has been a dispute among students of Thomas during the present century concerning the status of those commentaries, a dispute which often swings around varying ideas of what Thomas was doing when he commented on Aristotle. Some have simply used the commentaries (despite the deplorable condition of the text of crucial ones like that on the *Metaphysics*) as unqualified repositories of the teaching of Thomas; others have suggested that in his Aristotelian commentaries Thomas is trying to make as clear as he can (and some would say he succeeds to a fault) what Aristotle is saying, without giving his own personal views on the matters in question.

One cannot, of course, in a few lines hope to settle a dispute in which men of acumen and sincerity have disagreed deeply, but some working conceptions for our present purposes seem both possible of formulation and necessary to our task. It seems unreasonable to ask that we ascertain the motives of Thomas the commentator, which

could in no way be verified in the evidence we have. We must look at the commentaries, consequently, and see what we find there. We find, as some have insisted, a Thomas who takes great pains to discover precisely what Aristotle is teaching, what his questions are, what the order and development of the text are, and what is the structure of his arguments. Say then that we find Thomas the commentator showing us in great detail that such and such is the problem, so-and-so is the solution, and these are the reasons for accepting the solution. Are we then to ask whether he agrees or disagrees? This suggestion seems to me to be an invitation to distraction. Our attention must be on the question, solution, and arguments; the point is, Do we agree or disagree? If the discourse as Thomas presents it is cogent, to ask if he finds it so is irrelevant. Why should we doubt that he does? What I am suggesting, with respect to those who would downgrade the commentaries, is simply that a cogent argument, a reasoned position, in a commentary of Aquinas must quite naturally be assumed to be the one with which Thomas agrees.

Now this seems a terribly simple dissolution of a long-standing problem when we had said earlier that it would be difficult and indeed inappropriate to try to settle the matter in a few lines. I want now to develop the solution suggested in such a way that both sides in the dispute are given their due. In commenting on Aristotle, Thomas often takes into account other efforts to explicate the text; when he rejects those efforts, as he often does, it is because they make nonsense of Aristotle or negate the order and development of his thought. Now this sort of thing, which is so far from being rare that it is almost the mark of Thomas' Aristotelian commentaries, suggests that Thomas was deeply sympathetic with the philosophy of Aristotle, that he held Aristotle in an esteem that is quite unique in his relations to previous thinkers, and that this explains both the volume of his commentaries on Aristotle and the fact that he urged his Dominican friend, William of Moerbeke, to provide him with more accurate Latin translations of Aristotle. In short, we can employ Thomas' commentaries on Aristotle with the assurance that in them Thomas is striving for an accurate reading of Aristotle and he is doing so because, by and large, he agrees with the results of such a reading.

Having stated the matter in this way, we must hasten to add that no one doubts for a minute the impact of Aristotle on Aquinas. Indeed, save for infrequent exaggerated statements, no one would doubt for a minute what has been said about our proper response to cogent arguments in commentaries which are clearly regarded to be cogent by Thomas when he formulates them. That is not the point, we would be told; of course Aquinas agrees with Aristotle as far as he goes, but Aquinas often goes far beyond a text of Aristotle in commenting on it. One sees how the dispute now alters in character. At first it seemed to be a disagreement between those who insisted that there was only Aristotelianism in Thomas' commentaries and those who would find Thomism in those commentaries. Now it is those in the first group who insist that the commentaries are Thomistic and beyond mere Aristotelianism. This apparent switch points, however, to a most important truth.

No one could possibly doubt that Thomas is an Aristotelian; what those who object to an almost exclusive reliance on the Aristotelian commentaries have in mind is the fact that we cannot equate Aristotelianism and Thomism. This means at least the following: that there were other sources of the philosophizing of Thomas than the texts of Aristotle. Some insist on the influence of Christian faith, an influence which

led him to philosophical positions, philosophically arrived at, which, if not incompatible with Aristotelianism, nevertheless represent a deepened version, perhaps even a transformation, of it. Surely this is not *a priori* an implausible suggestion. Others will call our attention to philosophical influences other than Aristotle which leave their mark on Thomas' teaching. Consider for example Aristotle's opposition to Plato. Does Aquinas too reject Plato? It would seem so, on the basis of the commentaries, but a number of recent works -- notably those of Fabro, Geiger, and Henle -- have pointed out the influence of Platonism on Thomas. A crucial consideration here is that of participation, which Aristotle rejects as a useless metaphor but which permeates the doctrine of Aquinas.

Our simple solution of the dispute thus gives much to both sides. We seem to find here as we often find elsewhere that when intelligent men disagree, they may on a more profound level be in agreement. However, to agree that not every philosophical teaching of Aquinas is already in Aristotle or derived from Aristotle is not of course to agree about the nature of the more commodious entity, Thomistic philosophy. One can accept, one must accept, the reminder that there is much Platonism in Aquinas, but that is not *eo ipso* to accept certain descriptions of the resultant Thomistic synthesis. It is the assumption of the present presentation that Aquinas was so fundamentally an Aristotelian that he accepted Platonic and Neoplatonic suggestions on an Aristotelian basis. That assumption is borne out by Thomas' procedure in commenting on the *Liber de causis* and on Pseudo-Dionysius.

When we distinguish between the philosophical and the theological writings of Aquinas, we are not suggesting that a history such as this one must restrict itself to the former. For reasons that will be made clear in the following section, formally theological works of Thomas contain much that is crucial for understanding his philosophy. A presentation of the philosophy of Aquinas must rely heavily on the *Summa theologiae*. Thomas' exposition of Boethius' *De trinitate* gives us one of the most lucid presentations of the nature of metaphysics and its relations to other philosophical sciences. For the reader who has come to this chapter from the preceding ones that fact will not be terribly surprising, of course, but let us now turn to what Aquinas has to say on one of our recurrent themes, the relation of faith and reason as well as on one of the allied themes, the relation of theology and philosophy.

B. Philosophy and Theology

The very first question Aquinas asks in his *Summa theologiae* is, Why do we need any doctrine or inquiry beyond philosophy? To pose such a question suggests, of course, that philosophy is or was a going concern and that later and by way of addition a new study was introduced, call it "theology." Thus, it is theology and not philosophy which must be justified. Thomas provides a number of reasons why theology seems superfluous. In the first place, if a man ought not try to know what is beyond his intellectual capacities and whatever is within those capacities falls to the concern of philosophy, philosophy is certainly sufficient for man. Further, teaching is concerned with something, with being, but no type of being seems excluded from philosophical consideration, certainly not divine being since Aristotle's name for metaphysics is theology.

Having made things look difficult indeed for the work he is undertaking, Thomas begins to move toward the contrary position by first quoting from St. Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy (3:16), where Scripture is said to be useful for teaching, arguing, correction, and so forth. It becomes clear that what Aquinas is thus opposing to philosophy, which includes a theology or teaching about God, is Scripture, in which God tells man of himself. "Divinely inspired Scripture does not belong with the philosophical disciplines, which are discovered by human reason. We see that the difference lies in the source of a doctrine: it is discovered by human reason or it is revealed by God. It is this opposition which Thomas stresses in the body of the article. "I reply that we must say that it was necessary for human salvation that there be a doctrine according to divine revelation in addition to the philosophical disciplines which are investigated by human reason. For, in the first place, man as man is meant for God, who is a goal surpassing reason's comprehension. . . . But the goal must be foreknown by men, who are to direct their intentions and actions to it. That is why it was necessary for man's salvation that things which exceed human reason be made known to him by divine revelation." (*ST*, I, 1, 1, c.) The assumption here is that God as man's goal is beyond the ken of man. And yet, had not Thomas conceded earlier that philosophy arrives at valid knowledge of God? He had, and this will of course lead to ambiguity in the use of the term "theology." There is the theology of the philosophers, and there is the theology contained in and based on Scripture.

Aquinas now says something quite important about the theology of the philosophers. "It was necessary that man be instructed by divine revelation even concerning those things which human reason can know about God. The truth concerning God as discovered by reason comes to only a few men after a protracted period of study and with the admixture of much error -- and yet on knowledge of such truth man's whole salvation depends, for that lies in God. Thus, it was necessary, if salvation was to come to men more fittingly and certainly, that men be instructed about divine things by divine revelation." (*Ibid.*) That last remark may seem confusing, as if Thomas were suggesting that through reason men could, though with difficulty and over a great span of time, arrive at truths concerning God which God has revealed to man. That suggestion is not wholly unintended, as we shall see, but precision is required.

For the moment Thomas is after another point. We remember that one of the arguments for the superfluousness of theology pointed out that philosophy studies God. Notice what Thomas now says of that. He first gives an example of how different sciences can prove the same truth, as the physicist and astronomer might prove that the earth is round by quite different reasons. If that is true, "nothing prevents that the same things be treated philosophically insofar as they are knowable in the light of natural reason and by another science insofar as they are known in the light of divine revelation. Thus, the theology which pertains to Sacred Scripture is generically different from the theology which is a part of philosophy." Without for the moment going into the fact that there are truths about God revealed in Scripture that would be inaccessible to human inquiry no matter how much time and effort were expended, Thomas concedes that philosophy arrives at certain truths about God which can also be gleaned from Scripture. With respect to such truths the argument for revelation bears on the difficulty of arriving at them philosophically, on the few men who have succeeded in doing so, and on the errors that mar their success. Yet even here Thomas draws our attention to the different ways in which the same truth may be

held to be such, either on the basis of natural reason or on the basis of divine revelation.

This seems curious because two types of rational activity are apparently being compared, and then one is described as a rational activity, namely, doing philosophy. What are we to call the other, the acceptance of a truth as a truth because it is revealed by God? Thomas will call it "believing" the truth. For example, to hold, to affirm, to say that God is one, that there is but one God, because God says so, is to believe that truth. There is a mental attitude here vis-à-vis an object which finds form in a linguistic expression, "God is one." In speaking of faith as a condition or state of mind Thomas will want to contrast it with other mental attitudes, with other states of mind. Thus, he will compare "believing that A is B" with "knowing that A is B" and "intuiting that A is B" and "thinking that A is B." The symbols stand for subjects and predicates, of course, and perhaps we would normally say that we know or believe or think, not propositions, but what propositions are about. Nonetheless, we can say that propositions or sentences express what we know or think or believe -- that, at any rate, is the way Thomas understands the matter, though in speaking of faith he will insist that we believe someone and something. What is the relation between the subject and predicate when we intuit that A is B? (I am using intuition here for Thomas' *intellectus*.) We intuit that A is B when the connection between the two is immediate, when no link other than that of subject and predicate is required to see that the proposition is true. A frequent example of such a truth in Aquinas is "the whole is greater than any of its parts." In order to see that this is true we need know only what a whole is and what a part is. (Notice that I did not say that we need know only what "whole" and "part" mean, since this could suggest that Thomas thought it is simply a matter of convention and that he shares the suppositions of many current discussions of "analyticity.") Once we know what a whole is and what a part is, the truth is immediately seen. To know that A is B, on the other hand, is to know a statement is true whose predicate and subject are connected or mediated by some third thing. That third thing is, of course, a middle term, and the connection of knowing with the conclusion of a demonstrative syllogism is apparent; so too, intuition bears on the principles of such syllogisms. To think that A is B, finally, is to assert a connection between subject and predicate on other than conclusive grounds. That is, intuition and knowledge are certain, whereas thinking, or opinion, is not. Enough has been said, perhaps, to introduce Thomas' notion of "believing that A is B."

Is believing that A is B like thinking that A is B? It is like it in that, as believed, no cogent reasons for the truth are known; believing is unlike opinion or thinking in that believing is unwavering and, in that sense, certain. Thus, faith is like knowledge and intuition in that it is certain and unwavering, but it is unlike both in that it does not involve the same sort of clarity. Further, what is known or intuited is, in principle, within the reach of any normal man if he pays attention and follows the argument. But faith, the acceptance of what God reveals, is not just the natural employment of a natural capacity. There is something surprising about faith, an intrusion into human affairs of something outside the normal course of events. That something more is, for Thomas, grace, the power of God, and it reaches the mind through the will. "To believe belongs to intellect insofar as it moved by the will to assent." (*ST*, IIaIIae, 2, 2, c.) What the mind assents to in faith is not seen, that is, to continue the earlier analysis, we do not see the connection between A and B. Faith involves an intellectual assent to what is believed, but intellectual assent is of course involved in intuiting, in

knowing, even in opinion. "There is another way in which intellect assents to something, not because it is sufficiently moved by its proper object, but rather by a choice voluntarily inclining it to one side [of a contradiction] rather than to the other. If this is done with doubt or fear that the opposite might be true, there is opinion; if however it is done with certitude and without fear, it is faith." (*ST*, IIaIIae, 1, 4, c.) The proper object of intellect is what is seen; when the mind assents to something it does not see, whether mediately or immediately, it may do so because it is prompted by desire. Thomas suggests that such motivation is common to opinion and faith, but the great difference is that the believer is without doubt. Or is he?

Like Bonaventure, Thomas distinguished the certitude of adherence from the certitude of comprehension. Knowledge or intuition would possess both kinds of certitude; faith has only certitude of adherence and has it, Thomas argues, to a greater degree than do intuition or knowledge. It is because the assent of faith is prompted by the will, moved by grace, that while there is no wavering with respect to adherence to what God has revealed as true, there is a kind of movement, of mental discomfort, on the part of the believer with respect to believed truths. His assent, while mental, is not prompted by what is proper to intellectual assent as such. Thus, the believer reflects in some unease on the truths he has accepted on the authority of God, and this reflection or meditation may, when it is of a certain sort, give rise to what Thomas means by theology. Thomas makes this point by comparing believing with intuiting and knowing. Intuiting involves assent without prior cogitation, while the assent of the knower to what he knows follows on cogitation. "The knower has both cogitation and assent, but a cogitation causing assent and an assent which terminates cogitation." Belief or faith involves both cogitation and assent but, as it were, on an equal footing (*quasi ex aequo*). "For the assent is caused, not by cogitation, but by the will. In this way the intellect is not determined to one [side of a contradiction] as it is when it is led to its proper term, which is the vision of something intelligible; that is why its movement is not at rest, but cogitation and inquiry remain concerning those things which are believed, though the believer most firmly assents to them." (*Q.D. de ver.*, 14, 1, c.) The mind of the believer is thus portrayed as restless since it has given its assent under the influence of will and not because of the evidence of what is assented to. The mind of the believer has been rendered captive, its assent prompted by something extrinsic to intellection as such. "Thence too it is that in the believer there can arise an impulse toward the contrary of what is most firmly held, something that does not happen in intuiting and knowing." (*Ibid.*) Having noted that certitude involves both firmness of adherence and evidence, Thomas can speak of the certitude of faith in various ways. With respect to firmness of adherence, "faith is more certain than any intuition or knowledge, because the First Truth, which causes the assent of faith, is a stronger cause than the light of reason which causes the assent of intuition or knowledge. It [certitude] also implies evidence concerning that to which assent is given; in this sense, faith has no certitude, though intuition and knowledge do." (*Ibid.*, ad 7)

To know what Thomas meant by believing and knowing is to possess the prerequisites for understanding his distinction between theology and philosophy. Philosophy aims at knowledge which is discourse terminating in an assent prompted by the evidence of what the mind is attending to. The starting points of such discourse are truths knowable by everyone. This is why, when Thomas compares teaching and discovery, he will insist that teaching must imitate the route we would go if we were

finding out for ourselves, at least in the sense that it must start from what may be presumed to be already known. What the teacher proposes must be shown to follow from what is already known by the pupil, and it is from that connection that it derives its force and commands assent -- not from the authority of the teacher. "If someone should propose to another something unconnected with self-evident principles or whose connection with such principles is not shown, he does not cause knowledge in him, but perhaps opinion or trust." (*De ver.*, 11, 1, c.) The point is that each man has in principle the capacity for knowledge; there are certain truths that no one could fail to know. Such truths are the object of what we have been translating by intuition (*intellectus*). What is known is connected with such self-evident truths, which are premises or guidelines for reasoning. If another presents to us a statement that A is B, he must give us some grounds for assenting to the connection between the terms when this is not self-evident. What mediates between A and B in knowledge is not someone's say-so, but the evidence of what is being talked about. Thus, knowledge and, consequently, philosophy are portrayed as what any man in principle can come to have owing to his natural powers.

To believe through revelation that A is B is precisely to accept the connection on someone's say-so, namely, God's, and the motive force is the will drawn by the promise that such assent will lead to man's saving good. The will is a cause here under the influence of grace, a special intrusion of God's causality. To believe is not to be a theologian in Thomas' understanding of theology, although one cannot be a theologian unless he believes.

What does theology add to belief? Theology is the science of Sacred Scripture, that is, it is a discourse bearing on the truths revealed by God in Scripture. Revealed truth, the articles of faith, are the principles of theology, and in discussing the theologian's attitude toward them Thomas will invoke the practice within certain philosophical disciplines of accepting the principles and attempting to prove things other than the principles of the discipline. Metaphysics, unlike the other sciences, disputes with those who would deny its principles. Theology, like philosophical sciences in general, accepts its principles (the philosophical sciences accept theirs because of their evidence; theology accepts its principles on faith), and, like the metaphysician, the theologian disputes with those who would deny the principles of theology, that is, who would deny revealed truth. (*ST*, Ia, 1, 8, c.) The mark of theology, as Thomas conceives of it, is the use that it makes of what men naturally know, that is, of philosophy, in its discourse about what God has revealed. We remember Thomas saying that while faith involves the firmest assent, cogitation, a kind of discursive wavering with respect to what is assented to, remains. Theology may be regarded as addressing itself to this cogitation or, perhaps better, as being an instance of it insofar as the theologian tries to bring into relation with one another what is believed and what is known. Predictably, Thomas shows concern with the procedure or methodology of the theologian, asking whether it is licit to employ philosophical reasoning in theology. (*De trin.*, q.2,a.3) Against this practice he arrays a barrage of quotations from Scripture and the Fathers, and fashions arguments against it by appealing to the methodological rules of the philosophers. Having done this, he shows that St. Paul himself used philosophical doctrines in his Epistles, cites the practice of the Fathers, and so on. With that dialectical background he develops his own position.

He begins by remarking that grace does not destroy nature but rather perfects it and that, thus, the light of faith, which is infused in us by grace, should not be thought to destroy the light of natural reason, which is also God-given. Of course, natural reason is inadequate with respect to the object of faith; nonetheless, it is impossible for the truths God has revealed to conflict with those known by the reason God has given us. Rather, naturally known truths are similitudes of a sort to what has been revealed. Thomas makes the point stronger. Natural truths are preambles to revealed truths. This is an extremely important teaching of his. We saw earlier that he holds that some things which in principle can be known by man have been revealed by God. Now, if some of the things God has revealed can be known in the strong sense of known, that is, by natural reason, this is a sign that other revealed truths, which are beyond our understanding, are also intelligible in themselves. There is thus a kind of bridge between natural knowledge and what can only be believed; it is this bridge that is meant by the phrase *praeambula fidei*.

Thomas distinguishes three ways in which philosophy can be used in theology. It can be used for demonstrating those things which are preambles to faith, that is, to prove by natural reason that God exists, that he is one, and other things concerning God and man which can be proved in philosophy and which faith implicitly or explicitly holds. Second, it can be used to make known what is believed by appealing to philosophical doctrines, as Augustine finds many similitudes to the Trinity in philosophical doctrines. Third, philosophy is useful to the theologian to resist what is said against the faith by showing the attacks to be false or at least inconclusive. The assumption here is that anything contrary to faith is false and that since it is false, it can be shown to be such on philosophical grounds; if it is only probable, that too can be manifested by philosophical reasoning.

There are, of course, dangers involved in the theologian's use of philosophy. Thomas mentions two of them. The theologian might employ philosophical teachings which are contrary to faith, which are corruptions of natural reasoning since they are false. Thomas mentions Origen as guilty of this. Second, he might try to submit revealed truth to natural reason as to an absolute measure. For example, he might want to believe only what can be proved by philosophical reasoning. The order should be the reverse, Thomas says. *Philosophia sit ad metas fidei redigenda* (philosophy should be submitted to the measure of faith). (*De trin.*, q. 2, a. 3, c.)

Thomas sees no problem whatsoever with respect to the use of dialectic in reasoning about revealed truths. Except in the case of the *praeambula fidei*, truths which have been revealed but can be known by natural reason, there is no possibility of proving revealed truths. Insofar as dialectic is construed as simply a method of reasoning, the theologian can use it to prove, for example, that, given two revealed truths, a further truth can be derived from them. It is in this, as it happens, that he sees the possibility of an explication in time of the content of faith. (*ST*, IIaIIae, q. 1, a. 7) But beyond the employment of the method of philosophy in reasoning about the contents of faith the theologian, according to Thomas' conception of him, will often develop philosophical points in order to cast some poor light on the mysteries of faith. Thus, the notions of person, nature, relation, and so forth are clarified to a remarkable degree in the course of the theologian's deliberation on the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation. There is a striking amount of such philosophical clarification in the *Summa theologiae*, as, for further example, in the treatise on man and in the moral parts.

Because of this, interpreters ask if Thomas is then to be thought of as doing philosophy or theology. It is not facetious to reply that he is doing both. His overall purpose in a theological work is of course theological, that is, to achieve such understanding as is possible concerning the objects of faith. But his very conception of how to do this indicates that much philosophy must be brought into play. With respect to philosophical arguments and clarifications in theological works of Aquinas it must be said that insofar as they are philosophical, their worth and acceptance does not depend upon the acceptance of faith. That is why Thomists, in the course of philosophical writing, will often refer to passages which occur in the theological writings of St. Thomas. When they do this, they are not asking their philosophical reader to accept the overriding assumptions of theology, that is, the truths revealed by God. The passages referred to are found in a theological context, but if they are philosophical, acceptance of them demands appeal only to principles knowable by every man on a natural basis. Thus, in presenting a sketch of the philosophy of Thomas, as we are attempting to do here, we can legitimately cite passages from theological works precisely because these theological works are filled with philosophical passages.

A caution must be made nonetheless. Often in a theological work of Aquinas we can read for pages without encountering significant appeals to truths accepted on faith. Nevertheless, any such section, being a section of a theological work, draws its order and plan from the work of which it is a part. The order and procedure of the *Summa theologiae* is not, in its main lines, philosophical but precisely theological. Reasons can be adduced from Thomas to show that the order of the *Summa* is not and could not be the order of philosophical reasoning. Let one reason suffice. The *Summa* takes up at the very outset the existence of God, but this is a question which philosophy can fruitfully ask only in its culminating part. In the case of Thomas, however, we encounter far less trouble than we do in the case of a theologian like Bonaventure in determining what is the philosophical whole into which the philosophical passages which occur in theological works fit. Thomas provides us with a highly developed notion of what the term "philosophy" covers and clues as to what part of philosophy a random consideration would belong. Let us turn now to the notion of the nature and parts of philosophy.

C. The Division of Philosophy

Thomas' conception of what philosophy is and of how it is divided is basically Aristotelian, but he strives to incorporate into this conception the other major traditions. Thus, he will on occasion make use of the Stoic division of philosophy, which was used by Augustine, into natural science, ethics and logic. "Because reason's consideration is perfected by habit, there are diverse sciences following on the diverse orders which reason properly considers. For it pertains to natural philosophy to consider the order of things which human reason considers but does not cause, insofar as metaphysics is included under natural philosophy. The order that reason introduces into its own act of consideration pertains to rational philosophy, which considers the order of the parts of discourse to one another and the order of principles to one another and to conclusions. The order of voluntary actions pertains to the consideration of moral philosophy." (*In I Ethic.*, lect. 1, n. 2) Further, he will incorporate into his conception of philosophy the tradition of the liberal arts. This can be seen if we first consider his notion, developed from hints in Aristotle, of the proper

order of learning the philosophical sciences. For the term "philosophy" covers a variety of disciplines.

When he comments on Aristotle's discussion of wisdom at the outset of the *Metaphysics*, he, like Aristotle, is impressed by the etymology of the term "philosophy": the love of or quest for wisdom. Wisdom is the knowledge of all things in their ultimate causes, and philosophy, accordingly, is seen as a drive toward knowledge of the highest and best reality, that is, knowledge of the divine. Any intellectual inquiry is philosophical to the degree that it is necessary for or useful to acquiring knowledge of God. Hence, the various philosophical disciplines are ranged with respect to the culminating consideration of philosophy, and this is part of what underlies Thomas' notion of the order of learning. "Thus it is that the chief intention of the philosophers was that they might come to knowledge of the first causes by means of everything they considered in reality, and thus they placed the science of first causes last and assigned the consideration of it to the final period of life.

Beginning with logic, which treats the mode of sciences, they proceeded to mathematics, something which even the young can grasp; they then went on to natural philosophy, which, because of experience, requires time; fourth came moral philosophy, since youth are not good students of it. Finally they came to divine science, which considers the first causes of beings." (*In librum de causis, proemium*) The tradition of the liberal arts had divided the seven arts into two groups. The arts of the trivium (grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic) Thomas reduces in the above list to logic; the arts of the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music) he reduces to mathematics, and thus he absorbs into his Aristotelian conception the arts preparatory to wisdom. (*De trin.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 3) He actually cites Hugh of St. Victor in this regard, but in doing so he alters the view of Hugh himself, since the wisdom Hugh had in mind as the goal of these arts as ways (*viae*) was not metaphysics in the Aristotelian sense.

In what way are the various disciplines which are ranged in the order of learning distinguished from one another? Thomas accepts from Aristotle a first division of philosophy into speculative and practical. "It must be said that the theoretical or speculative intellect is properly distinguished from the operative or practical in that the speculative has for its end the truth which it considers, the practical orders the truth considered to operation as to its end." (*De trin.*, q. 5, a. 1) Thomas does not mean that we have two intellects; he is drawing attention to the two uses we make of our mind. (*ST*, Ia, q. 79, a. 11) Thomas introduces three criteria which must be taken into account when we speak of knowledge as speculative or practical, one of which, the end of the knowledge, has already been mentioned. The other two are the object and the method of knowing.

In the speculative use of our mind we have in view no end beyond the perfection of the act of knowing itself, and perfection is truth, to be in conformity with the way things are. When our thinking is aimed at the perfection of an activity other than thinking, say the perfection of choice, then it is called practical. We can see that these different uses of our mind can be dictated by the nature of its objects. Thomas will point out that there are some things that we cannot do or make, and thus our only cognitive attitude toward them is speculative. His examples are God and natural objects. Insofar as our purpose in knowing is the perfection of the act of knowing or some other activity, our method of knowing the object will differ. Thomas' point here

can perhaps be captured by saying that the method of practical knowing is expressed in something resembling recipes. That is, if you want to build a house, first do this, then that and that, and, voila, there is your house. Speculative knowledge of an object does not reduce it to the steps whereby we might bring it into existence, but proceeds by a resolution into its defining principles. Much more could be said of all this, of course. We might point out that insofar as there are various criteria of speculative and practical knowledge, knowledge can be to a greater or lesser degree speculative or practical insofar as it saves one, two, or all of the criteria of the one kind of knowledge. This is a point to which we will return when we consider Thomas on moral philosophy.

Division of Speculative Philosophy. Thomas calls the objects of practical and speculative philosophy, respectively, the operable and the speculable. It is by considering the notes of the latter that he finds grounds for distinguishing various speculative sciences. There are two proper characteristics of the speculable object, Thomas argues, and these are drawn from the nature of the intellect and the demands of science, which is the quality of intellect as it bears on the speculable. The intellect, Thomas says, and we will look later at his reasons for this assertion, is an immaterial faculty; consequently, if anything is to be an object of intellect, it must be in some way immaterial. Science, knowledge in the strong sense, bears on what is necessary. To know that the sum of the internal angles of a plane triangle is equal to two right angles is to know what cannot be otherwise and is thus necessary. But what cannot be otherwise is immobile or unchangeable. All this is shorthand for matters which are not self-evident and are not taken to be such by Thomas. Nevertheless, on these assumptions he is able to conclude that immateriality and unchangeability are essential characteristics of the speculable, the object of speculative philosophy. "Therefore, it is according to the order of removal from matter and motion that the speculative sciences are distinguished." (*De trin.*, q. 5, a. 1) This removal from matter and motion is first indiscriminately described by Thomas as a separation or abstraction, terms which later acquire meanings owing to which they are opposed.

If separation or abstraction from matter and motion is essential to the objects of speculative thinking, insofar as there are different types or degrees of such abstraction we will have formal differences among speculative sciences, since the difference will be read in terms of what is essential to the speculable as such. We will seek this difference in definitions, for reasons which become clearer when we consider Thomas' doctrine on the paradigm of scientific reasoning. Now, we do find different modes of defining with respect to removal from matter and motion. "There are some speculables which need matter in order to be, since they cannot exist except in matter, but these are further distinguished, since some depend on matter both to be and to be understood, like those in whose definitions sensible matter is put and which are thus unintelligible without sensible matter; for example, it is necessary to put flesh and bones in the definition of man. Physics, or natural science, is concerned with things of this kind. Others indeed depend on matter in order to be but not to be understood since sensible matter is not put in their definitions, for instance, line and number; mathematics is concerned with these. Further, there are speculables which do not depend on matter in order to be because they can be without matter either because they never are in matter, like God and angels, or in some cases are in matter and in others not, like substance, quality, being, potency, act, one and many, and the like, with all of which theology is concerned, that is, divine science, the chief object of

which is God, a science also called metaphysics, that is, beyond physics, because for us, who must proceed from sensible things to that which is not, it is studied after physics." (*De trin.*, q. 5, a. 1)

This is a very difficult doctrine, but perhaps something can be seen of the precision with which Thomas handles what might seem to be acceptable merely as a *de facto* division of intellectual labor into natural science, mathematics, and metaphysics. If he is to admit that there are different speculative sciences, he must seek the difference in what is essential to the object of speculative philosophy. By citing the essential characters of the speculable, Thomas is able to give a statement of Aristotle's division of speculative philosophy which is a good deal clearer than that of Aristotle.

Division of Practical Philosophy. The principle of the division of moral philosophy is drawn from the fact that practical thinking is concerned with the perfection of an activity other than thinking. Thomas, in commenting on the discussion of prudence in book six of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, makes a distinction, called for by the text, between political and ethical prudence (practical wisdom). (*In VI Ethic.*, lect. 7, n. 1196) These are substantially, that is, generically, the same, he argues, in that both involve right reason with respect to what ought to be done concerning human goods and evils, but they differ specifically. What we are calling ethical prudence is the concern of a man with his own good, whereas political prudence is a concern with the goods and evils of the whole civic community. Besides these two kinds of prudence there is economic prudence, which is concerned with the good of more than one and of less than the whole civic community, that is, the good of the family. These three are intellectual virtues and, as such, presuppose a right disposition of the will, but the distinction enables Thomas to proceed to distinctions of practical, or moral, philosophy. "It should be noticed that, as has been pointed out, prudence is not of reason alone, but depends on appetite. What we have been speaking of here are species of prudence insofar as they do not consist of knowledge alone, but depend on an appetitive condition. Insofar as they are in reason alone, they are called practical sciences, namely, ethics, economics, and politics." (*Ibid.*, n. 1200)

To make this less obscure, let us recall what was said earlier about the various criteria of speculative and practical thinking. The first and minimal criterion of practical thinking is that the mind be concerned with something we can do or make. Moral philosophy for Thomas is concerned with man's rational choices. The task of moral philosophy, he writes, "is to consider human operations insofar as they are related to one another and to the end." (*In I Ethic.*, lect. 1, n. 2) But a human action may be considered in various ways; it may be approached in much the same way as we think of objects whose existence is not dependent on any choice of ours. Thomas' distinction of types of prudence or practical wisdom is an example; he is dividing a genus into species. A more practical method would be to know how to perform, what must be done, in order to achieve a given practical goal. That is why "normative discourse" rather than distinctions, definitions, and so forth, would be thought of as particularly ethical. Thomas would say that to know an operable thing as to how it can be done is a knowledge more practical than that whereby we know an operable in the same way we know speculable objects. What happens to knowledge when the third criterion of practical knowing is saved, namely, intention? Completely practical knowing, for Thomas, is exemplified in acting, and since actions are singular, we must say that completely practical knowledge is singular. Therefore, what Thomas in

commenting on the *Ethics* gave as the distinction between types of prudence and types of practical philosophy, namely, presence or absence of a certain appetitive condition, can now be clarified by saying that practical science is at a level of generality in a way in which prudence is not. Practical sciences (the division of moral philosophy) are general judgments of man's good and of the way it can be attained, and insofar as the good is the good of the individual, of the family, or of the whole civic community, the judgments differ accordingly and so too do the sciences.

Like Aristotle, who is his mentor here, Thomas grants philosophy a charter so broad that it includes every natural intellectual pursuit insofar as it is necessary for or conducive to the attainment of knowledge of God. The point of moral philosophy is not cognitive perfection as such, but virtuous action. But moral virtue is conceived by Thomas as dispositional with respect to our seeking the perfection of our mind as such. That is why moral philosophy is philosophical.

Let us go on to give brief sketches of basic areas of Thomas' philosophical doctrine.

D. Logic

What did Thomas conceive logic to be, and with what is it concerned? In the preceding section we quoted a passage in which Thomas made use of the division of philosophy into natural science, logic, and ethics. That same passage contains a very brief statement of the object of logic, namely, the order introduced into reason's very act of considering objects. We must now try to understand that remark, and we begin by citing another. "As Aristotle says at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, the human race lives by art and reason, a remark in which the Philosopher seems to hit on something proper to man whereby he differs from the other animals. For the other animals seem to be led by instinct in their actions, whereas man is directed in his by the judgment of reason. Thus it is that the various arts serve to perfect human acts so that they take place easily and in an orderly fashion, for art seems to be nothing else than a determinate ordination of reason whereby human acts arrive at their appropriate ends by determined means. But reason can not only direct the acts of inferior parts; it is even directive of its own act. It is proper to the intellective part that it reflects on itself, for intellect understands itself, and similarly reason can reason about its own activity. Now, if, as a result of reasoning about manual activity, the building art is discovered, an art which enables man to perform acts of a certain kind easily and in an orderly fashion, by the same token an art seems necessary which is directive of the act of reason itself, through which art man might proceed in reasoning in an orderly fashion, easily and without error. This art is logic, or rational science." (In *I Post. Analytic.*, *proemium*, n. 1)

The assumptions of this passage are several. First, reasoning is taken to have a goal, namely, truth; and, second, it is not so determined to that goal that the possibility of error is excluded. Reflection on the reasoning process will permit us to devise an art which will direct reasoning more surely to its goal. Well, we might say, if an art, then artifacts. What are the products of this art? Notice that there is a necessary duality implied by the notion of reason reflecting on its own act, reasoning on reasoning -- for in the first, or basic, type of reasoning we are presumably concerned with known objects other than reasoning itself. The things we first understand, what reasoning first intends, leads to talk of *prima intellecta* or *prima intentiones*. On the assumption that

unless we are thinking of or reasoning about something there would be no activity to reflect on, what is involved in reflection comes to be called *secunda intellecta* or *secundae intentiones*.

In the passage from the *Commentary on the Ethics* Thomas spoke of this reflective reasoning as constituting an order. What is the logical order? Thus far we have a few clues. Logic is not reasoning about just anything, but reflective reason, reasoning about reasoning. This makes logic sound like an introspective psychology, and logic is not psychology for Thomas. For one thing, Thomas will make use of a distinction between real being (*ens reale*) and rational being (*ens rationis*), and psychological activities are instances of real being.

Perhaps the best way to achieve clarity here is to compare a list of sentences: (1) man is rational, (2) man is a species, (3) man is white. The subject of each sentence is the same, so clearly it is the predicates that interest us. Consider first the difference between the predicate of (1) and the predicate of (3). In a word, the predicate of (3) is said to be accidental, because it is not predicated of everything of which man is predicated, and even when it can be truly predicated of a man, it does not tell us *what* he is, or something of what he is, as does rational. Let us call rational an essential predicate -- it expresses the very nature of that of which it is predicated. To get at the difference between (1) and (2), consider the following discourse. Man is rational, and Socrates is a man. We feel no hesitation in formulating a further sentence: Socrates is rational. But if we should say, "Man is a species and Socrates is a man," we would hesitate to go on to say, "Socrates is a species." "Man is a species," we would want to say, is a lot more like "Man is a noun" than it is like "Man is rational." Take "Man is a noun. This tells us something about man, not in terms of what it might stand for in the world, but in terms of grammatical relations. What are we saying of man when we say, "Man is a noun" or "Man is a species"? Well, again, we are not attributing something to human nature, mentioning it in terms of an intrinsic component, as when we say that man is rational. Are we then predicating something accidental of it? Surely it is accidental to human nature that the linguistic expression for it is in grammar a noun. But if it is accidental to what "man" signifies that "man" should be a noun, just as it is accidental to human nature that the English word "man" is a three-letter word and its Latin equivalent a fourletter word, such accidental predicates are not like the predicate of (3) above. "Man is white" involves an accidental predicate, but the sentence is true because it happens that in the real, extramental world some things that are men are white. That "man is a noun depends on the intrusion of man into the world and results from a characteristic activity of his, the formation of grammars. With this as background, let us approach (2) above. If "noun" is a grammatical term, "species" is a logical term. Other examples of logical terms are "predicate," "syllogism," "proposition," "middle term," and so forth. But let us stay with "species." What does "man is a species" tell us; what does "species" mean? For Thomas "species," like other logical words, signifies a relation a nature takes on as known by us. Something is a species if it is predictable of many numerically distinct things, as "man" is predictable of Socrates and Plato and so forth. We are back at the problem of universals, since species is a type of universal, one of Porphyry's predicables. To be predictable pertains to a nature like human nature accidentally; it is not an accident of a nature because of its presence in individuals as is the case with whiteness and man.

The logical order, as Thomas sees it, can now be defined as the relations which obtain among things as they are known and named by us. Furthermore, the logical order is intimately tied to our abstractive way of knowing. Like Aristotle before him, Thomas is struck by the fragmentation reality undergoes in our knowing process, a fragmentation which calls for the kind of ordering and binding together provided by logical relations. For example, we might first know of something simply that it is something-there, a being, then that it is a substance, then that it is living, then that it has senses, and finally that it is rational. If we stop there and collapse these steps, we would have the meaning of the term "man." But we can also label the preceding steps: "substance," "living substance," "animal"; and we might call them genera, as in the sentences "substance is a genus" or "animal is a genus." Now, what is expressed by "substance," what it means, is such that it can be predicated of objects in the world (the same would be true of "animal"), but to be a genus, in the sense of being predicable of many specifically different things, is true of the nature only as it exists in the mind. Furthermore, it is only in the mind that substance exists apart from further determinations like "living" and "nonliving." Thus, in this case certainly it is our abstractive mode of knowing, the fact that we move through progressively less vague "fixes" on things to determinate knowledge, that is productive of the "things" related by logical relations. This is something we must keep in mind when we consider the question of whether the categories (literally, predicates) of being are logical or real, but that is another consideration.

The objects of logic are the relations which accrue to things as they are known by us, relations which are accidental to the nature known. The divisions of logic, for Thomas, are precisely what he takes to be Aristotle's divisions. The bases for the division are the various acts of reason, since these acts are what logic is said to order and direct. Thomas speaks first of an understanding of incomplex things which expresses itself in definitions. Obviously, if something can be defined, it cannot be wholly incomplex or simple. Let us then start with rational discourse, with the syllogism. If C is predicated of everything of which B is predicated, then C is predicated of everything of which A is predicated. Such discourse can be seen as composed of such symbolically expressed propositions as "Every B is C" and "Every A is C." Apart from and prior to considering the relations among propositions in such discourse, we can consider the relations involved in affirming or denying one thing of another just as such. But the things which enter into affirmations and denials must first be known as to what they are, that is, must be defined. Thus, the parts of logic are, in a sense, the parts of rational discourse. "There are three acts of reason of which the first two belong to reason insofar as it is intellect [*intellectus*]. For one act of intellect is the understanding of indivisible or incomplex things, insofar as it conceives what a thing is. To this operation of reason is ordered the doctrine Aristotle treats in the *Categories*. The second operation of intellect is composition or division, where the true or false first obtains. The doctrine Aristotle treats in *On Interpretation* serves this act of reason. The third act of reason is one proper to reason as such, namely, discourse from one thing to another so that from what is known knowledge is gained of what was unknown. The rest of the books of logic serve this act." (In *I Post. Analytic.*, *proemium*, n. 4)

The act of reasoning is sometimes necessary, sometimes probable, and sometimes fallacious. The first, necessary reasoning, is scientific and is called by Thomas judicative logic "because judgment is had with the certitude of science." Judgment is

said to have its certitude owing to a resolution or analysis into principles, so this part of logic is also called analysis or analytics. "The certitude of judgment, however, which comes from resolution is either from the form of the syllogism alone, and the *Prior Analytics* is ordered to this, or is also from the matter, because it involves propositions which are selfevident and necessary, and with this the *Posterior Analytics* is concerned, which deals with the demonstrative syllogism." (*Ibid.*) The second part of the logic of reasoning is called inventive logic or the logic of discovery. Now what is discovered must be judged, and the term may be science if the judgment is with certitude; if not, if the resultant knowledge is only probable, then it is the concern of what Aristotle calls dialectics and is dealt with in the *Topics*. One can see Thomas the commentator at work here, incidentally; he is surely trying to say something accurate about the contents of and relations between the works of Aristotle's *Organon*, but what comes first, and in his own name, are the statements about the subject matter. He goes on to link the *Rhetoric* and *Sophistical Refutations*, and even the *Poetics*, with the logic of discourse. One is tempted to associate this treatment of the *Poetics* with Thomas' reduction of the arts of the trivium to logic. The only completed commentary on a logical work of Aristotle is that on the *Posterior Analytics*, but Thomas began one on *On Interpretation* and carried it forward a good distance. Among his collected writings are a number of opuscula whose authenticity has been questioned, one on modal propositions, another on demonstration, one on the square of opposition, and another on fallacies. In the commentaries on Aristotle's logical works Thomas exhibits his usual acuity, and it is easy to wish he had commented on the whole *Organon*. But with logic, as with many subjects, we find illuminating remarks scattered throughout Thomas' works. A notable example is his teaching, which must be pieced together from many sources, on systematic ambiguity, or analogy.

Logic has, of course, come a long way since Thomas, come so far indeed that it is questionable whether the term logic must not be taken to be ambiguous as applied to what Thomas meant by it and to what logicians do today. Historians of logic, writing from the standpoint of twentieth-century logic, are seldom detained by Thomas' contributions to the subject, but quite often such historians are indifferent to what logic may have meant in earlier times and seek only foreshadows of what logic has come to mean today. This procedure, while it achieves results of value, is finally perhaps as historically suspect as a "Thomistic" critique of the *Principia Mathematica* would be. To see how contemporary thought has "gone wrong" from a thirteenth-century vantage point is as dull as seeing how medieval logic "fell short" from a twentieth-century vantage point. We have yet to see a comparison of "logics" which does justice to historical periods taken on their own terms. When such a history of logic is written, Thomas may well occupy a prominent place in it, not as an innovator, but as a lucid exponent of the view that logic is not concerned with the most abstract language, with symbols or variables whose values are the things of this world (or nothing), but with rational relations accruing to things as the result of our knowing them. That is, that logic is incorrigibly human, all too human, and that its purpose is the quite human one of assuring the correctness of discursive reasoning about objects other than logical entities.

E. Natural Philosophy

One of the most shocking things about the Thomist in the eyes of his colleagues must surely be the attention he pays to what Thomas had to say about our knowledge of the natural world. The source of the shock is not simply that Thomas lived in the thirteenth century, which is prehistoric enough as far as natural science goes, but more basically still that in natural philosophy Thomas is spiritually in the same place as Aristotle in the fourth century B.C. It would be quite easy to list tenets of Thomas in natural science which could seem quaint at best and weird at worst; even if we should think that such is the stuff of which history is made, at least the history of science, we might question the advisability of devoting time to it in a volume as restricted in length as this one. Much better, it might be thought, to pass over in generous silence this part of the philosophy of Thomas and push on into his metaphysics. But that is precisely the problem. For Thomas there is little point in pushing on into metaphysics unless we have gained some purchase on the physical; in a word, if his physics is totally undermined, his metaphysics is *a fortiori* undermined. This is why Thomists pay so much attention to such writings of Thomas as his commentaries on Aristotle's natural works and his own *On the Principles of Nature*. It is true that these writings are so different from what we nowadays call natural science that the tendency often is to call the doctrines contained in them metaphysical. Nevertheless, for Thomas they amount to natural science, and that is how we shall consider them. To put what we shall try to say in a proper perspective, consider the following question. Is knowledge of the natural world possible, knowledge which in a significant sense is scientific, which does not employ the methodology of current natural science? If such knowledge is possible, there is no reason why it could not have been had prior to the development of scientific methodology in more recent senses of the phrase; it could have been had in the thirteenth century, even in the fourth century B.C., and need not be thought of as a competitor with or substitute for what we now call natural science.

In this section we shall consider three topics, the first of which is Thomas' statement of the hylomorphic composition of natural, or physical, things. The next two topics bear on what Thomas takes to be the presuppositions of metaphysics, the proof of the separability or immortality of the human soul, and the proof for the existence of an unmoved mover. These proofs are the reasoned ground for the conviction that "physical being" and "real being" are not synonymous and that, consequently, the science of being as being is distinct from natural science.

Hylomorphism. In *On the Principles of Nature* Thomas sets down this doctrine in a swift, staccato way. Some things can be, some things already are; the first are said to be in potency, the second in act. There are two kinds of actual being, however, substantial and accidental; it is one thing to be a man and another thing for a man to be white, and something can be in potency to either kind of being; what is in potency can in either case be called matter, though that which is in potency to substantial being might be called the matter out of which (*ex qua*) something comes actually to be, whereas that which is in potency to accidental being might be called the matter in which (*in qua*) something comes to be. "Again, properly speaking, that which is in potency to substantial being is called prime matter, but that which is in potency to accidental being is called the subject, for the subject gives being or existence to the accident, since the accident has no being save in its subject; hence, it is said that accidents are in a subject, but substantial form is not said to be in a subject. Matter differs from the subject in this: that the subject is not something which exists because something advenes to it; rather it is autonomously (*per se*) and has complete being;

for example, a man does not come to be (a man) thanks to whiteness. Matter, on the other hand, has being from that which advenes to it, since of itself it is incomplete, indeed has no being. . . . Hence, absolutely speaking, form gives being to matter, but the accident does not give being to the subject, but the subject to the accident (*De princ. nat.*, chap. 1) Having introduced two kinds of composition, that of prime matter and substantial form and that of subject and accident, Thomas goes on to speak of the coming into being of these two kinds of composites as, respectively, substantial and accidental becoming.

Accidental becoming is exemplified by a man's becoming pale. The acquisition of this quality does not make a man be a man, but a pale man. Man is the subject of the change, and prior to the acquisition must have been capable of possessing the quality, in potency to it, though at the time not in possession of it and thus deprived of it. A man moves from not being pale to being pale. Despite the restrictiveness of his earlier definitions, Thomas allows that the subject can be called matter. "Therefore, there are three principles of nature, namely, matter, form, and privation, of which one, form, is that for the sake of which the generation takes place. The other two are that from which the generation takes place. Hence, matter and privation are the same in subject but are different in conception (*ratione*), for bronze and unshaped are the same thing before the advent of form, but from one point of view the thing is called bronze and from another unshaped. Hence privation is said to be a principle not *per se* but *per accidens*, because it resides in the matter (*Ibid.*, chap. 2)

Substantial becoming, the coming to be, not of pale man, but of man, is similarly analyzed. If "man" names something one and autonomous, something substantial, the form that makes a man to be is not like the quality which presupposes a substantial subject. Humanity is not something that advenes to an already existing thing to make an accidental compound like white man. The subject of a substantial change is called prime matter precisely to distinguish it from the subject of an accidental change; prime matter is not a substance as is the subject of an accidental change. For much the same reason the form involved in the substantial change is called substantial form: the being it constitutes by advening to prime matter is a substance. Whatever comes to be as the result of a change is a compound of matter and form. This is what the term "hylomorphism" conveys, of course, fashioned as it is from the Greek terms for matter and form. Matter and form are thus two ways of accounting for a physical thing, two causes, or principles, of its being. Besides these intrinsic causes there must be an efficient, or moving, cause which effects the composition of matter and form. Like Aristotle, Thomas also speaks of a final cause, that for the sake of which the change takes place and which in that sense terminates it. The form or the product of the change is the final cause of the change, but the final cause of the change is not of course the final cause or goal, that for the sake of which the product of the change exists. That is, a man may be the final cause of a substantial generation, but man's goal or final cause is not simply substantial existence.

The Unmoved Mover. We will present this proof in the statement Thomas gives it in his *Summa contra gentiles*, book one, chapter thirteen, a statement which is fuller than that found in the *Summa theologiae* and closer to the proof as it is developed by Aristotle in his *Physics*.

"Everything that is moved is moved by another." The fact of motion is evident to the senses, and the nature of motion demands that what is in motion is moved by another. But the mover is either itself moved or it is not. If the latter, then we have an unmoved mover (which can be taken to be a description of God); if the former, either what moves the mover is moved by another or it is not. Now either we must posit an infinite series of moved movers or we arrive at an unmoved mover. But an infinite series of moved movers is impossible, so there must be an unmoved mover.

As Thomas points out, there are two assumptions here that must be proved, and they are precisely the premises of the proof: "Every moved thing is moved by another" and "An infinite series of movers and things moved is impossible." He selects from Aristotle several proofs of the first premise.

First, if something moves itself, it must have within itself the principle of its motion, for otherwise it would manifestly be moved by another. Further, it must be what is first moved, not some part of it, as an animal being moved by its feet, for then it is moved not by itself but by its part, and, indeed, one part by another. And it is necessary that it be divisible and have parts, since whatever is moved is divisible, as is proved in the *Physics*, book six, chapter four. Given all this, the following argument can be devised. "That which is posited as moved by itself is itself first moved [*primo motum*], and thus the repose of one of its parts entails the repose of the whole. For if when one part comes to rest, another part should remain in motion, then the whole itself is not what is principally moved [*primo motum*], but its part which is moved while other parts are at rest. Nothing which comes to rest when another thing comes to rest is moved by itself, for whose repose follows on the repose of another must be such that its motion is a consequence of another's motion, and thus it is not moved by itself. Therefore, that which was posited as being moved by itself is not moved by itself. Therefore, it is necessary that whatever is moved is moved by another." The nub of the argument, according to Thomas, is this: "If something moves itself first and as such and not by reason of parts, it is necessary that its being moved is independent of anything else; however, for a divisible thing to be moved, as for it to exist, depends upon its parts and that is why it cannot move itself first and as such [*primo et per se*]."

Another proof of the first premise is this. "Nothing is simultaneously in act and in potency in the same respect. But whatever is in motion is, just as such, in potency, since motion is 'the act of that which is in potency just as such.' But whatever moves is as such in act, since nothing acts except insofar as it is in act. Therefore, nothing can be, with respect to the same motion, mover and moved. Thus, nothing moves itself."

Thomas offers several proofs in support of the second premise of the argument which concludes to the existence of a mover which is itself unmoved by another. That there cannot be an infinite series of subordinated moved movers is a good deal more difficult to prove, and the arguments are too technical and demand too much subsidiary commentary to go into here. In examining these arguments, as in examining those brought forward in support of the first premise, one is struck by the dependence on the *Physics* of Aristotle, and when one reflects that the proof of the unmoved mover comes at the end of the eight books of that work and depends on nearly everything that has come before, it is not surprising that Thomas, in giving a résumé of the argument, must presume so much. That presupposed doctrine is the

source as well as the corollaries of the proof. If whatever is moved is moved by another and if this series cannot proceed to infinity, so that there must be a mover not itself moved, the nature of this unmoved mover can be approached by denying of it characteristics of things which are moved. Suffice it to say for now that matter is a component of what is moved and that thus the unmoved mover must be immaterial. The point is that in the course of doing natural science Aristotle and Thomas following him feel they must admit the existence of something immaterial. Thus, "being" is no longer synonymous with "material being," and the need for a science beyond the natural sciences is seen.

The Immortality of the Human Soul. There is another instance within natural science where one comes to see the existence of something immaterial, this time in biology. It should be said that considering natural science generically, we can say that its subject is mobile being. The predictable scope of such a phrase is, of course, great, and Thomas accepted Aristotle's view that on this level of generality it is possible to formulate proofs which would conclude to properties commensurately universal with the subject. That is, as a first step in natural science we can arrive at some scientific knowledge of what must pertain to any mobile thing, whatever differences among kinds of mobile being must later be taken into account. The *Physics* of Aristotle is precisely an attempt at a general science of nature, and its doctrine is thought to transcend the differences between living and nonliving natural things. One would not be content with such general knowledge of the natural world, of course, and in *On the Soul* Aristotle commences the study of living being. What distinguishes the living from the nonliving is precisely the former's possession of soul. What is meant by "soul"? The soul is that owing to which we live, move, sense, and understand. This definition, which Thomas takes from Aristotle, indicates that the soul is denominated from a variety of vital operations of which we have a privileged experience in ourselves. To wish, to fear, to love, to think, to see, and so forth are activities of our own whose existence we are not likely to doubt. If we perform these activities, we must of course be capable of performing them, and the actual performance is not equatable with the capacity since sometimes we perform them and sometimes not. This is the origin of talk about potencies or faculties of the soul: we have various capacities for vital activities like seeing, hearing, wishing, knowing, and so forth. What is the relation of these capacities to the soul? Is the soul identical with them, a class term signifying them all, or distinct from them? Thomas regards the soul as distinct from these capacities or faculties and as related to them as substance to accidents. One reason he gives for this is that if the soul were identical with a capacity to perform a vital act and if there are several such capacities (and there obviously are in man), then since two things identical with a third are identical to one another, the several capacities would actually be one. But surely it would be odd to identify our capacity to see with our capacity to will or to hear or to think. One can see that the soul is something of an inferred entity and that the procedure is from activities to faculties and from faculties to their subject, the soul.

Since this analysis is considered to be part of natural science and the hylomorphic analysis of natural things occurs at the very outset of natural science at its most general level, we are not surprised to find soul spoken of as a form. It is a kind of substantial form, in other words, and the living thing is thought of as a compound of soul and body. Hence, a further definition of soul as the first actuality of an organic body having life in potency. Now, as was clear above, substantial form and prime

matter are not so much substances as they are principles or components of substance. Neither matter nor form is thought of as capable of existence apart from a compound. For Aristotle and for Thomas too the question as to the continuance in existence of the human soul after death comes down to asking if the substantial form which is the human soul survives the dissolution of the human being, this compound of body and soul.

How could this question be answered in the affirmative? First, let us point out that Thomas speaks of kinds of soul insofar as souls are denominated from the characteristic or highest activity of the living thing of which the soul is the principle in the sense of substantial form. So we find Thomas speaking of the vegetative soul, of the animal, or sensitive, soul, and of the rational soul. Man is thought to have the capacities for the vital operations found also in lower things like plants and beasts, but beyond those to have the power of reason, and his soul is denominated from his distinguishing and defining activity. The various vital operations seem to involve the body essentially, since seeing, hearing, smelling, fearing, hoping, imagining, and so forth intrinsically involve corporeal aspects. But is the same true of thinking? Here is the crux of the matter for the question of the immortality of the soul as it is discussed by Aquinas. If a living man performs an activity which does not intrinsically and essentially involve his body, we would seem to have some basis for saying that the soul which is the subject of that activity is not dependent for its continued existence on the body.

On many occasions Thomas attempts to show that the human soul is incorruptible because it is capable of a kind of knowing which reveals that it is wholly immaterial. Question 75 of the first part of the *Summa theologiae* and the *Disputed Question on the Soul* might be particularly cited. An indication of his procedure can be had from the following sketch. Thomas will use the hylomorphic model to speak of cognition. (*De ver.*, q. 2, a. 2) Just as in things it is their forms which make them actual and what they are, so to know things can be described as coming into possession of the forms of things, of what they are. Thus, Thomas will define knowing as having the form of another as other. Now to have the form of a physical thing in knowledge is a different kind of possession of that form than is exemplified in a concrete physical thing. When the form or nature of rose is united with matter in the genesis of a rose, the result is a singular rose, this one and not that one. In short, the form is individuated as received in matter. However, when we know what a rose is, when, in Thomas' terminology, the form of rose is received in the mind, the result is not another rose but an intentional form which enables us to know the material rose. Thus, the mode of existence of the form in the mind is an immaterial one. This is the source of the claim that the human soul is in a sense all things (*anima est quodammodo omnia*) since it can know all things. A physical thing can possess but one substantial form, but the mind can know many forms. "It should be said that the principle of intellectual operation which we call man's soul is an incorporeal and subsistent principle. For it is manifest that man owing to intellect can know the natures of all bodies. That which can know other things cannot be those things in its own nature [*oportet ut nihil eorum habeat in sua natura*] because that which is in it naturally would impede knowledge of other things as we see that the tongue of someone ill which is infected by a choleric and bitter humor cannot perceive what is sweet but everything seems bitter to it. If therefore the intellectual principle had in itself the nature of some body, it could not know all bodies, for every body has some determinate nature. Therefore, it is impossible that

the intellectual principle be a body." (*ST*, Ia, q. 75, a. 2) can Once more, we face a most difficult matter and a doctrine which be assessed only when all its presuppositions are examined, but this outline may convey something of the flavor of Thomas' procedure. As we have said several times before, the upshot of these two proofs within natural science is that one sees that "being" must be predicated of things which are not material, that the science of being as being is different from the science of natural, or material, being.

F. Metaphysics

Let us begin this section by taking a fairly close look at the preface Thomas wrote to his *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*. This preface sketches the terrain of metaphysics and suggests a number of points we can develop in order to convey the nature of Thomas' metaphysical doctrine.

Thomas begins the preface by remarking that whenever many things are organized into one whole there must be something which directs and orders the many. He illustrates the principle by noting that man is one thing composed of several "parts," namely, body and soul, and that while it is the role of soul to command, it is that of body to obey. All arts and sciences, he goes on to say, are ordered to one thing, namely, to the perfection and happiness of man, but it is necessary that one of them be directive of all the others and, that science will be called wisdom because it is the role of the wise to order: *sapientis est ordinare*.

We can get some inkling of what this directive science would be and what its subject matter is by pursuing the analogy and asking what makes a man fit to rule others. Well, Thomas says, choosing between brain and brawn, would not we say that men of vigorous intellect are more fit to rule others than are men of great bodily strength but weak minds? Could not we say, then, that the science which is most intellectual is naturally fit to be regulative of others? But what would we mean by the "most intellectual science?" Thomas suggests that it would be the science concerned with the most intelligible objects and adds that "the most intelligible" can be understood in three ways.

First, that which grounds certitude of understanding is what is meant by intelligible. Since to have certitude is to know the cause of what is known, a science which is concerned with first causes can meaningfully be said to deal with the most intelligible things and to be directive of all other sciences which deal with lesser and thus less intelligible causes.

Second, the "most intelligible" can also be explicated by comparing intellection and sense perception. "For, since perception is cognition of particulars, by that very fact it seems to differ from understanding which grasps universals. Hence, that science is most intellectual which concerns itself with the most universal principles -- these are being and what follows on being like one and many, potency and act, which ought not be left wholly uninvestigated since without knowledge of these knowledge of what is proper to a given genus or species cannot be had." Very abstract notions like being, one, act and potency, do not fall to the consideration of any particular science; indeed, since knowledge of them is needed to undertake the study of any determinate type of being, one would have to say that if the study of them falls to one particular science, it

falls to every particular science. Better that in all their scope and generality they be treated in one common science which is thereby most intellectual and directive of the others.

Finally, if we consider the nature of intellectual knowledge, which involves abstraction from matter, we can say that the most intelligible things are those most free of matter. What is most free of or separate from matter will not be what is free of individuating characteristics alone, as man is free from the peculiarities found in Socrates, Plato, and so on, nor what is free from all sensible matter in conception alone, like mathematical objects, but rather most free are existent immaterial things, like God and the angels. The science concerned with immaterial things seems most intellectual and, accordingly, directive of the others.

We recall that Thomas started by saying that he was looking for the one science that would be directive of all the others and that this would be the science concerned with the most intelligible objects. Since he has introduced three criteria for understanding "most intelligible," he must go on to show that it is one and the same science that is referred to no matter which criterion of "most intelligible" is used. We are talking, he says, of one science, not three. "For the aforementioned separate substances are the universal and first causes of being [*essendi*]. It belongs to the same science to consider the proper causes of a genus and the genus itself, as the natural scientist considers the principles of natural body; so it belongs to the same science to consider separate substances, universal being [*ens commune*], which is the genus of which the foregoing substances are the common and universal causes." If the science considers the three things mentioned, it does not consider all of them as its subject; the subject of the science is being (*ens commune*). In a science we seek to know the causes and properties of the subject, but the causes of the subject of a science are not the subject of the science. However, though the subject of this science is being in general, it is said to bear on what is separate from matter both in conception and in existence, since this is taken to mean not only what never exists in matter, like God, but also what is sometimes material, sometimes immaterial, like being.

Three names for the science follow from these considerations. It is called "theology" insofar as it is concerned with immaterial existents, the chief of whom is God; it is called "metaphysics" because it comes after physics, which studies a type of being, while metaphysics is concerned with being as being. Finally, it is sometimes called "First Philosophy" because it is concerned with primary realities, first causes.

Thomas has gotten a tremendous amount into this short preface, has in fact taken stands on a number of controverted and difficult questions about the nature of metaphysics and its relation to other sciences. In the sequel we want to unpack this preface a bit and speak of the relation of metaphysics to the other sciences, and of the way in which it is both a general science and a theology. This will lead to a discussion of analogy as an explanation of talk about God.

Abstraction and Separation. When we discussed the division of speculative philosophy earlier, we made use of a text to which we must now return, a text from Thomas' exposition of Boethius' work on the Trinity. In distinguishing types of speculative science Thomas appealed to the nature of the speculable, which he characterized as immaterial, and argued that insofar as speculable objects are more or

less separated from matter, the sciences which deal with them will differ formally. The various degrees of immateriality are revealed in definitions. This is important since the model of scientific knowledge is a demonstrative syllogism whose middle term is the definition of the subject of the conclusion that links it with its predicate, a property. The order of removal (*ordo remotionis*) from matter is called by Thomas, in article one of Question Five of the *Expositio*, a separation (*separatio*), and here the term covers indiscriminately the kind of freedom from matter exhibited in the objects of natural science, mathematics, and metaphysics. In article three the term "*separatio*" acquires a narrower meaning which restricts its application to metaphysical abstraction, a fact which has occasioned much discussion.

There are four articles in question five of the *Expositio*. After the distinction of the different kinds of speculative science in article one the remaining articles take up, in order, natural science, mathematics, and metaphysics. Article three, therefore, is concerned with mathematics, but recent discussion has turned on the remarks on the nature of metaphysics to be found there. The guiding question of the article is, Does mathematics consider without matter and motion things which exist in matter? Let us turn immediately to the body of the article. Aquinas begins by saying that there are two kinds of abstraction which follow on two kinds of intellectual activity: simple apprehension, and composition and division. The first is that whereby we grasp what things are and is expressed in definitions. Notice that he says these are two kinds of abstraction.

The first kind of mental activity, he continues, looks to the very nature of a thing according to which the thing understood has what rank in reality it has (*aliquem gradum in entibus obtinet*), whether it is something complete like a whole or incomplete like a part or accident. The second kind of mental activity mentioned looks to the very being of the thing (*respicit ipsum esse rei*) which in compound things results from the conjunction of its components or principles and in simple things is a concomitant of nature.

Truth consists in the mind's conformity with reality; consequently, we cannot truly abstract one thing from another by means of the second type of intellectual activity when they are united in reality. The reason for this is that abstraction would here be expressed in a negative judgment: A is not B. "By this type of activity the mind can truly abstract only those things which are separate in reality, as when we say, 'Man is not an ass.'" Throughout this discussion of composition and division Thomas uses "abstrahere" to signify the mental act of negative judgment and "separatio" to signify otherness in reality.

The first type of mental activity, the apprehension of the nature of a thing, is relatively freer from reality, so to speak, insofar as something can be understood and defined without reference to things with which it exists. This is not total freedom, of course. The part as part cannot be understood without reference to its whole or the accident without reference to its subject or the parent without reference to children. But of two things which exist together, "if the one does not depend on the other with respect to what constitutes its nature, it can be abstracted by the mind from the other and understood without it." Some parts can thus be understood without their wholes, as letters can be considered apart from syllables, though not vice versa, and accident apart from a determinate subject, like whiteness.

Up to this point, again, Thomas uses "abstrahere," "to abstract," both for negative judgments, the denial that one thing is another or with another, and for conceiving or considering which would be expressed in a definition. He now introduces a new term, "distinguishing" ("*distinguere*"), and speaks of distinguishing one thing from another in such a way that the phrase comprehends the two kinds of abstraction mentioned. This permits him to give abstracting and separating narrower meanings according to which they are opposed to one another as types of distinguishing. "*Sic ergo intellectus distinguit unum ab altero aliter et aliter secundum diversas operationes.*" The narrow meaning of "separation" confines it to the distinguishing proper to the second type of mental activity, that expressed in a negative judgment. Here one thing is distinguished from another when it is understood not to be with the other (*quia secundum operationem qua componit et dividit, distinguit unum ab alio per hoc, quod intelligit unum alii non inesse*). Conceptualization, the understanding expressed in a definition, may be called abstracting in a narrower sense, namely, when one thing is understood, without another, though the two are together in reality (*sed tunc tantum quando ea quorum unum sine altero intelligitur sunt simul secundum rem*). In this narrow sense an animal is not considered abstractly when it is considered apart from stone, since they are not one in reality; examples of abstraction in the narrow sense would be considering a form apart from matter and considering a whole without its parts.

The thing that has interested scholars here is the fact that Thomas goes on to speak of natural science and mathematics in terms of these two kinds of abstraction in the narrow sense, applying the consideration of form without matter to mathematics and of a whole without its parts to natural science. This would seem to leave separation in the proper, or narrow, sense to metaphysics, and the conclusion to be drawn is that metaphysical thinking involves a negative judgment, an assertion that in reality something is separate from something, is independent in existence from something else. We know from the foregoing what central negative judgment provides the charter for metaphysics. It is precisely insofar as we can judge that some being is separate or independent from matter in existence that we can say that a science of being as being is possible, a science which will be distinct from natural science, which is concerned with a particular kind of being, mobile or physical being. (And of course we know natural science is a particular science, that is, a science concerned with a particular kind of being, just insofar as we know there is another kind of being.) This science will differ from mathematics, which, though it defines its object without sensible matter, does not assert that it so exists out-there.

Being as Being. The subject of metaphysics is being as being; metaphysics inquires into what pertains to being, not insofar as it is mobile and material, but precisely insofar as it is being. It is concerned with separate being, with whatever can be considered apart from all matter and asserted to enjoy existence in separation from all matter. Now, all this sounds extremely enigmatic, particularly when we try to put together various statements of Aquinas. When he says that there is a science of being as being he is talking of wisdom, the culminating philosophical consideration, that which is appropriately placed last in the order of learning the sciences since it would be folly to expect wisdom until one had studied for a long time. Yet Thomas will also say that being is the first thing we know (*ens est quod primum cadit in intellectu*), an observation that suggests what anyone would expect, namely, that to know of something that it is, that it is a being, is to know as little of it as is possible. But does

not the description of metaphysics as wisdom suggest that to know being as being is the most profound and desirable knowledge possible?

The difficulty we are trying to elaborate can be put in another way. Is metaphysics a general science of being, an ontology, or is it rather a science of a particular kind of being, immaterial being, and thus a particular science, a theology? Remember that in the preface to his *Commentary on the Metaphysics* Thomas had said that metaphysics is concerned both with things which never exist in matter (like God and the angels) as well as with things which sometimes exist in matter and sometimes do not (like being, substance, act and potency). Does this solve our problem? It would seem not, since if substance is defined without any matter, the definition would be appropriate only to separate substances, and once more metaphysics would seem to be a special science, not a general science of all being.

As it happens, Aristotle raised just this question in book six of his *Metaphysics*. Let us consider Thomas' formulation of the problem and its solution. "Someone might wonder if First Philosophy is universal, concerned with being generally, or if it considers some determinate genus, some one nature (which does not seem to be the case) Unlike mathematical science, which deals with a determinate kind of things, "First Philosophy is universally common to all things." (*In VI Metaph.*, lect. 1, n. 1169) Metaphysics then would seem to be about everything insofar as everything has something in common with everything else, namely, being. But would not such scope entail meager and impoverished knowledge? Here is Thomas' formulation of the solution. "If there were no substance other than those which exist in nature [*secundum naturam*] with which physics is concerned, physics would be the first science. But if there is an immobile substance, this kind will be prior to natural substance, and the philosophy considering it will be First Philosophy. And because it is first, it will be universal and it will fall to it to consider being as being. . . . The science of the first being and of common being is the same." (*Ibid.*, n. 1170)

The solution seems to retain the difficulty. This science is concerned with the first being, presumably God, and therefore must be concerned with common being. Common being is not a synonym for first being here; it seems to stand for being insofar as it is predicable of all that is, both immaterial and sensible things. Earlier Thomas had written, "Notice however that although things which are separate both in definition and in existence from matter and motion pertain to the consideration of First Philosophy, not only such things do, but sensible things as well, insofar as they are beings [*in quantum sunt entia*]." (*Ibid.*, n. 1165)

Being considered universally (*ens commune*), being as being (*ens in quantum ens*) -- these signify the subject of metaphysics, and the subject of the science is that about which we want to discover attributes or properties which belong to it because of what the subject is. What does Thomas mean by "being," what is the "*ratio entis*"? He answers this question in a number of ways: what is, what has existence (*quod est, habens esse, id quod habet esse*). Such a definition does not include sensible matter, but neither does it exclude sensible matter in the sense of prescinding from it. Thus, with this meaning "being" can be predicated of Socrates or a rose, but it surely would not tell us a great deal about them. Far better to know of Socrates that he is a man, of a rose that it is a plant -- better in the sense of more informative. If that is true, and surely it is, what kind of an advance is metaphysics supposed to be? To answer that

question we must draw back a bit and ask ourselves what for Thomas is the ultimate and crowning concern of philosophy. Philosophy drives toward knowledge of the divine, toward knowledge of God, and this is preeminently the concern of metaphysics. Metaphysics is not undertaken to give us more adequate and appropriate knowledge of physical things (if there were no immaterial substance, physics would be first philosophy); it is undertaken to give us less inadequate knowledge of the divine. The formulation "being as being" therefore should not be regarded as a more profound approach to physical or sensible beings. To know sensible beings insofar as they are beings (*in quantum sunt entia*) is simply less informative than to know them as sensible (*in quantum sunt sensibilia*). The whole point of formulating definitions of "being" and "one" and "act" which do not include sensible matter is to provide us with a less inadequate language with which to talk about God. It would seem that for Aquinas it is not even the principal business of metaphysics to prove the existence of God, since for him that is one of the presuppositions of metaphysics. Rather, for Aquinas metaphysics would seem to be a prolonged reflection on what we know of sensible being, a purification of concepts formed in knowing sensible beings so that they become means of describing less inadequately the immaterial or divine. This interpretation of the metaphysics of Aquinas may be novel, but I feel it accurately reflects both what he says about metaphysics and what he does as a metaphysician. In reply to the earlier question, we can say that for Thomas metaphysics is an ontology in order to be the only kind of theology it can be. God, simple substance, cannot be the subject of a science, Thomas argues, so metaphysics cannot be a theology in the sense that God is its subject matter. Its subject matter is being as being, that is, conceptions which do not involve sensible matter and thus are inadequately informative of sensible things but which, because of this absence of matter, provide a less inadequate bridge to talk about God.

The Analogy of Being. It is a commonplace that for Thomas being is analogous, but, before discussing his teaching on this point, it must be clear to us what analogy is for him. What are we saying when we say that being is analogous? Ultimately what we are aiming at is the fact that some beings are substances and some are accidents, that some being is finite and one infinite, but while all this is what analogy is applied to in this instance, that is not what "analogy" means. In order to get at the type of word "analogy" is, we might consider another sentence, "Being is a genus." Thomas agrees with Aristotle that that sentence is false, but we have already seen the type of predicate "genus" is, we know what it means to say that "genus" is a logical term. Well, "Being is analogous" is the affirmation Thomas offers when he decides that "Being is a genus" is false. "Analogy" must be a logical term too, and if we imagine three statements each of whose predicates is a logical term -- "being is analogous," "being is univocal," and "being is purely equivocal" -- Thomas will say that only the first is true.

As a logical term, "analogy" signifies the relations among several meanings of a given word; analogy is a kind of signification, and it is usually exemplified by "healthy." Consider the following list: (1) Fido is healthy, (2) urine is healthy, (3) food is healthy. Although the same term occurs as predicate in each of these sentences, it does not seem to have the same meaning in all of them as "man" does in "Socrates is a man" and "Plato is a man." Nor does it seem to have entirely unrelated meanings as "top" does in "he spins the top" and "he opens the top." That is, the meanings of "healthy" in our list, while different, seem related. "Healthy," to use Thomas'

language, is imposed to signify from health, and we might formulate a common meaning for the various uses in (1), (2), and (3) above by saying that "healthy" means "related in some way to health" or "referring to health in some way." This would be what Thomas means by the common notion (*ratio communis*) of an analogous name, but unlike the common notion of a univocal term (the example of "man" above) it does not apply equally to the things of which it is predicated. By applying equally Thomas means that when I say Socrates is a man I make no reference to anything else called a man, something else that might be thought to have prior right to the name. The common notion of the term Thomas calls analogous is unequally common to many things in this sense, that it applies to one thing primarily and to others secondarily. That is, beyond the *ratio communis* of "healthy" (referring in some way to health), we can formulate a proper notion (*ratio propria*) which expresses a determinate reference to health, say, "subject of health," which is the principal meaning of the term and is the meaning it has in (1). In (2) it would mean "sign of health," and in (3) "preservative of health." However, if for an analogous term there is a common notion and also a number of determinate notions or meanings, these determinate meanings are fashioned in such a way that one of them is controlling or privileged, the focal meaning of "healthy." In our list the focal meaning (*ratio propria*) or primary analogate is "subject of health." Why does Thomas say this? How does he know one meaning is more basic than the others? He arrives at this by observing that in explicating the meaning of "healthy" in (2) he must make reference to the meaning it has in (1). Thus, its meaning in (2) is "the sign of health in the subject of health," and its meaning in (3) is "preservative of health in the subject of health." Its meaning in (1) makes no reference to its meanings in (2) or (3), and we can safely conclude that the meaning "healthy" has in (1), "subject of health," is the primary and controlling meaning.

"Healthy" is an example of the analogical community of a term, just as "animal" would be an example of genus. The doctrine of analogical signification is no more tied down to its examples than is any other logical doctrine -- and no less so. As a logical relation, analogy is a second intention and thus is a relation obtaining among real things (or other logical entities) as they are known by us. "Healthy" is one instance of an analogous term, "being" is another. To say of such terms that they are analogous is to say something of the way they are predicated of a variety of things, but just as "genus" does not say something about animal as it exists in reality, apart from our knowing animal nature, neither does "analogy" refer just as such to things as they exist, but as they are known and named by us.

Before going on to "being," we might formulate the technical language Thomas uses in discussing analogous signification. What the term is imposed to signify, health in the ease of "healthy," is called the thing signified, or *res significata*; the various ways of signifying it, the *modi significandi*, make up the determinate meanings or rationes, of the term, one of which is primary (*per prius*), the others secondary (*per posterius*). What is called the common notion (*ratio communis*) is quite indeterminate and might be thought of as involving the thing signified and a place-marker for determinate modes of signifying it, something like "health," where the blank can be filled by "subject of," "sign of," and so forth, though, again, one mode of signifying will be controlling and enter into the secondary modes of signifying the *res significata*. Let us watch Thomas apply all this to being.

The common notion of being is "that which exists," so that existence (*esse*) is the *res significata*, and "that which" (or "having" in "having existence") may be regarded as a place-marker for determinate modes of being. That there are different ways of being may be recognized by constructing a list in the way we did with "healthy": (1) George is a man, (2) George is tall, (3) George is tan. This list does not look like the earlier one since we seem to have three different predicates, "is a man," "is tall," "is tan." Nevertheless, these predicates express different modes of being, different ways of existing -- the substantial, quantitative, and qualitative, respectively -- and we could say that our list suggests another: (a) substance is, (b) quantity is, (c) quality is, which suggests a further list: (i) substance is being, (ii) quantity is being, (iii) quality is being. "Being" now emerges as the common predicate, and, as in the case of our list of sentences where "healthy" was the common predicate, Thomas holds that "being" cannot mean exactly the same thing in (i), (ii), and (iii). What the term is first predicated of, the primary analogate, is substance: the mode of signifying *esse* involved in the predicate of (i) is the *ratio propria entis*, the controlling signification: "That which exists autonomously, not in another" (*id cui debet esse in se et non in alio*). The other ways of signifying *esse* involve reference to the substantial mode of being and thus are secondary meanings of the term. The analogy of "being," therefore, tells us of the way the term "being" is common to many things according to an ordered variety of meanings. The ways of signifying *esse* express, of course, various ways of being, *modi essendi*; the various meanings of "being" express various modes of existence. Thus, though the relation of the meaning of "quantity" to the meaning of "substance" is logical, the dependence of accident on substance is real and ontological. That is why, mistakenly, the analogy of being is often understood as a direct statement about the way things are. The coincidence here between the primary meaning of "being" and what primarily is, substance, is, from the point of view of analogical signification, just that, a coincidence; the principal meaning of a term is often ontologically secondary since priority and posteriority among the meanings of a term reflect the process of our knowing and not directly the ontological hierarchy.

Being and Essence. In the foregoing we spoke of the community of being in such a way that we seem unable to account for talk of logical entities or beings, nor do we seem able to account for what Thomas called "being in the sense of [being] true" (*ens verum*). For example, "There is no one in the room." "There is" means that it is true to say that no one is in the room. This is a secondary sense of "being," as is also the case when logical relations are called beings; the primary sense of being for Thomas is real being (*ens reale*), being out-there. That real being has many senses is what we were trying to show in our talk of the analogous predication of being with respect to substance and accidents. We might also say that being is analogously common to real being, being as true and logical being on the basis of a list like (1) John is a substance, (2) "the President is not here" is true, (3) analogy is a second intention. The meaning of "being" that could be formulated on the basis of (2) and (3) would make reference to that which could be formulated on the basis of (1), and the reverse would not be the case.

Of real being Thomas will say that it posits something in reality (*aliquid in re ponit*), so we might call it positive being. That owing to which it "posits" is its essence: only real being is said to have essence. Thus, as Bobik has shown, the title of Thomas' opusculum *On Being and Essence* suggests just this transition from being as comprehending more than real being to real being which alone possesses essence.

And, since real being is analogous and substance is the primary kind of real being, essence will be found par excellence in substance. Essence is that through which and in which a thing has being; we can see the connection between essence and the modes of being (*modi essendi*) expressed in the various meanings of real being. The essence or nature of a substance is that which makes it what it is and is the measure of its actuality or *esse*.

This brings us to Thomas' teaching on the relation between the essence and existence (*esse*) of a substance. This is often presented as a novelty of Thomistic metaphysics, but it should be pointed out that Thomas himself exhibits no sense of being an innovator when he holds that essence and *esse* must be really different. He attributes the distinction to Plato, Aristotle, and of course Boethius. It is in the *De hebdomadibus* of Boethius that Thomas finds what he takes to be a capsule statement of the real distinction: *diversum est esse et id quod est* (to be and what is differ). In Aristotle a phrase which conveys the point is found in the second book of *On the Soul*: *vivere est esse viventibus* (for living things to be is to live). Thomas approaches the matter by saying that the essence or nature of a physical substance is composed of matter and form; neither of these alone is the nature of the thing. For a thing of such a nature to exist is for there to be a conjunction of its essential components or principles (*ipsum esse ret resultat ex congregacione principiorum rei in compositis*). (*De trin.*, q. 5, a. 1) In a living thing essence is composed of body and soul, and this conjunction makes the thing live. To live is of course a determinate kind of existence following on an essence of a given type. When Thomas speaks of a distinction between essence and *esse*, he does not mean simply that there is a difference between a possible man and an actual man; he does not mean simply that there is a difference between the abstract nature (for example, humanity) and a concrete instance of it (for example, this man). What he intends is this: in an actually existing substance we cannot identify its essence or nature and the actuality or existence which is a consequence of the essence and measured by it. The essence of a thing relates to its *esse* as potency to act. Thus, Thomas will say that *esse* is the actuality of all other acts, even of forms. The form is act with respect to matter as potency, but for the act which is form actually to be in matter is an act other than the act the form is. This absolutely fundamental actuality is what Thomas means by *esse*, and it can be equated neither with form nor with essence in material substances.

The nonidentity of essence and *esse* does not obtain only in physical substance however; Thomas holds that there are immaterial essences other than God, and as other than God their existence is dependent on God as cause. In such substances essence is identified with form, and the form is regarded as having *esse*, sharing in it, participating in it in such a way that their essence is other than their existential actuality. In order to pursue this we must first turn to what Thomas has to say about the names of God.

God and Language. We have said that the whole thrust of philosophy and *a fortiori* of metaphysics is, for Thomas, toward knowledge of God. how such knowledge is possible and how it can be expressed in language are two sides of the same coin, and for purposes of this sketch we will concentrate on the linguistic side.

In question thirteen of the first part of the *Summa theologiae*, Thomas discusses the divine names, the meaning of terms predicated of God. Some such terms pose

relatively little difficulty, for example, what Thomas calls negative names. Thus, when we say of God that he is immaterial or immobile, we may be thought simply to be denying of God certain characteristics of material creatures. Problems of a more pressing sort arise in the case of affirmative names. Let us take "wise" as our example. It should be said in the first place that Thomas approaches the question of talk about God by assuming that the problem arises because a term is predicated both of God and creature, that is, that we are confronted by "Socrates is wise" and "God is wise" and ask ourselves if the predicate has the same meaning in the two uses. Thomas will say that it does not have exactly the same meaning, but neither does it bear utterly unrelated meanings, that is, neither univocity or equivocity seems to handle the case. Well, we know what remains for Thomas: he will say that "wise" is predicated analogously of God and creature. Let us try to explicate this example in terms of what we have already learned about analogical signification.

What would the common meaning (*ratio communis*) of "wise" be? Surely something like "having wisdom." Thus, wisdom is what the term "wise" chiefly signifies, its *res significata*. How is wisdom signified when Socrates is said to be wise? The *modus significandi* here would be somewhat elaborate: to say that Socrates is wise is to say that he is a substance possessing a quality of cognition such that he assesses everything in the light of what is truly first and important. That cannot be the way wisdom is signified when we say that God is wise, if only because in God, who is simple, there is no distinction between substance and accident. To be wise is an accidental attribute of Socrates, but if God is wise and wisdom is no accident in him, we might want to say that God is wisdom. This is quite a different way of "having wisdom" than is the case with Socrates, and the term "wise" must be construed to convey this difference as it is affirmed of God.

Thomas invokes the procedure of Pseudo-Dionysius here and suggests that there are various "moments" in our analysis of the meaning of "wise" in "God is wise." First, there is the affirmation (*via affirmationis*), but we then go on to deny of God (*via negationis*) the way of being wise that is expressed in the meaning of the term as affirmed of Socrates, for example. Thus, as is generally the case with analogous predicates, there is the same *res significata* but different *modi significandi*. As to how the *res significata*, wisdom, is found in God, we do not know. We say that it is different from the way it is found in creatures for the reasons given, and this is all quite negative. Finally, we can say that the perfection exists in God in an eminent way (*via eminentiae*). Nothing in what the term "wise" means (its *res significata*) prevents our attributing wisdom to God, but we cannot have anything like determinate knowledge of the way (*modus*) this perfection is found in God. This is why Thomas will say finally that we know what God is not rather than what he is. This is not a charter for calling God anything whatsoever, of course, since it is a consequence of analysis and reflection rather than a refusal to undertake them.

Participation. Let us turn now to the question of "being" as predicated of God and creatures so that we may rejoin our earlier discussion of the real difference between essence and *esse* in simple substances other than God. We have already seen how the term "being" is common to substance and accidents; the question now is, How is it common to God and creature, to infinite and finite being? The sentences to compare, accordingly, are "Socrates exists" and "God exists," or "Socrates is a being" and "God is a being." The *res significata* of the term is *esse*, and in the case of physical

substance *esse* is an actuality consequent upon the conjunction of its essential principles, matter and form. This mode of being cannot obtain in God, and his mode of existing is approached by denying of him the creaturely mode of existing. God is thus thought of as existing in an eminent way, to be existence. This kind of talk leads to a distinction between essential being and participated being.

The common notion of being -- having *esse* -- has to be so strained when we call God being that it becomes "is *esse*." Creatures, on the other hand, have *esse* and in various ways; they partake of *esse*. To participate or partake means, etymologically, to take a part of, to share in, to possess in a diminished manner. To be something essentially, as opposed to by participation, means to be it wholly, completely, and in an unrestricted fashion. When creatures are called beings by participation, when they are said to participate in *esse*, the following is what is meant. *esse* means actuality, but no creature is actuality *tout court*: any creature is this kind of thing or that, and its nature is consequently the measure of its actuality. From this point of view, essence as we have discussed it emerges as a limitation on the actuality *esse* is, and *esse* is considered abstractly as actuality without qualification.

Now, of course, the essence of a given thing is not a limitation of its *esse*, since it is precisely the measure of the kind of *esse* appropriate to it. We must proceed with delicacy here since it is precisely at this point, it seems to me, that some champions of the Platonism of Aquinas have gone astray. The creature's *esse* is either *esse substantiale* or *esse accidentale*, substantial existence or accidental existence. *esse substantiale* is simply a general and abstract phrase which covers to be alive or to live, which, in turn, is generic with respect to the *esse* or ultimate actuality of man, beast, and plant. From the point of view of richness of information it is far more exact to say of a living thing that it lives than that it exists (*vivere est esse viventibus*); in short, more and more determinate designations move us in the direction of greater and greater determinate perfection. There is no doubt that this is true of creatures, but when we attempt to talk about God, we seem to reverse the procedure and put a premium on vagueness.

This can be seen when we consider Thomas' discussion of "being" as the most appropriate, or least inappropriate, name of God. When we say of God that he is a being, as opposed to wise, merciful, and so forth, we seem to be saying the least possible about him. But to say the least possible means here that we are making no reference to determinate creaturely modes of existence, modes which restrict and limit *esse* considered abstractly as actuality or perfection. It is this very freedom from determinate creaturely modes of being which makes "being" the least inappropriate name of God. And since God does not partake of *esse*, does not have actuality in some restricted mode, we can speak of God as subsistent existence (*ipsum esse subsistens*).

The Platonic, or Neoplatonic, aspect of this approach is evident when we see Thomas speaking of a generic expression of *esse* as if it contained in an eminent manner the specific types of *esse* below it; as if "to live" were not a vaguer expression of the type of *esse* appropriate to men or beasts or plants, but a richer concept, containing eminently the subtypes. On that assumption we can press on and think of "to be" (*ipsum esse*) as containing telescoped within itself all determinate types of *esse substantiale* and indeed of *esse accidentale*. *esse* then becomes a kind of dialectical limit at which various kinds of actuality are considered to meet in an eminent way --

what Cusa will call a *coincidentia oppositorum*. In Fabro's phrase, *esse* has then become *esse ut actus*, the fullness of actuality, as opposed to *esse in actu*, minimal or brute being-there, mere factual givenness. *Esse ut actus*, a dialectical construct, provides us with the least inadequate name of God, for when we say he is existence, we are saying that he is total perfection and actuality and no more -- that is, without the diminution and restriction which in creatures is read from their determinate natures or essences. Anything other than God has only as much actuality and perfection as its essence permits. In short, everything other than God partakes of *esse*, has from the point of view of total perfection only a partial perfection, its own limited one. That is how Thomas establishes the difference between essence and *esse* in simple substances other than God.

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When the metaphysics of Aquinas is regarded as a lengthy meditation on what man can know of God, which is what essentially it is, something can be seen of what Maritain has called *la grandeur et la misère de la métaphysique*. In metaphysics man is straining against the limits of his knowing powers, so much so that Aristotle spoke of it as something inhuman, in the sense of superhuman. For Thomas the proportioned object of the human mind is the essence of sensible things, and it is what man knows of the material world which must always provide the lens through which he attempts to see beyond the material world. The elaboration of the subject of metaphysics, being as being, is an effort to formulate concepts which will be less obscure lenses, but their obscurity remains dual: when we consider the physical world through such concepts, we see it more vaguely than we do when we look at it through the more appropriate concepts of natural science; when we use them to gain some purchase on the divine, we are brought to the melancholy realization that all our concepts, all our names, are defective with respect to their mode of representation (*quantum ad modum significandi, omne nomen cum defectu est*). (*I Contra Gentiles*, ch. 30). And yet a little knowledge of the divine, no matter how defective and distorting, is infinitely preferable to much clear and certain knowledge of lesser things.

G. Moral Philosophy

In speaking of the division of philosophy into speculative and practical, we pointed out that for Thomas there are three criteria to which attention must be paid in assessing whether an instance of knowing is speculative or practical, namely, object, method, and end. The object of practical knowledge is called generically the operable, something we can do or make. The types of operable object call attention to the distinction between man as moral agent and man as artisan. The process of making something, of art, is one whose perfection is to be found in a product beyond the process producing it. Thus, Thomas will say that art aims at the perfection of the artifact and not at the perfection of the artisan as man. Of course, a man who makes good shoes would be called a good shoemaker, but one can be a good shoemaker without being a good man in the moral sense. Doing or the do-able (*agibile*) -- it is with this that our choices and decisions have to do, and the perfection of our choices is the perfection of us as choosers. The standard of perfection here will not be the demands of an artifact. Thomas will emphasize the difference between art and prudence, or practical wisdom, by saying that we can choose the end of art, that is, to make artifacts and to make this one as opposed to that, but in an important sense the

end of practical wisdom chooses us, imposes itself upon us. Of course, to act as an artisan, to make things, is something so natural to man that we must say that it would be impossible for man not to be an artisan in the sense this term has for Thomas. His point would seem to be that beyond the englobing necessity, the direction of such activity, the end it seeks to produce, is quite arbitrary and up to us. It is not like this with moral decisions, as we shall see.

Earlier we offered a description of practical knowing according to which its perfection involves the perfection of something other than mere knowing. The perfection of moral knowledge lies in its direction of voluntary acts, of choices. What perfects is a good, and moral philosophy begins for Thomas with the asking of the question, What is the good for man, what is his perfection? Since the good or perfection is looked upon as relative to a process, that which is sought in an act of becoming, the question could be stated, What is man's ultimate end? On the philosophical level Thomas is here a faithful student of Aristotle. For purposes of moral philosophy man is something that comes to be, something striving for its good and doing this in a conscious way. Unlike other cosmic entities, man, though fashioned for a given purpose, is not directed toward it in an unconscious and willy-nilly way. Rather, it is the mark of man that in reflecting on himself in his voluntary activity he asks what is the purpose of such activity, in what will its perfection consist? For a man to act or to do is for him to know what he is doing. The question "Why are you doing that?" might never be addressed to a being less than man, but it is always a good question to put to him. The implication of the question is that man is consciously directing himself to certain ends or goals. This can be taken to be a given of moral philosophy: we do make choices, we do pursue goals. The question of moral philosophy is, How can we do this well?

One could give a first statement of the human good in terms of what has already been said. The human good is to do well man's characteristic activity. Since this characteristic activity is reasoning, performing it well is man's good, and virtue is the term which designates the perfection of an activity. Thus, Thomas, like Aristotle, will say that virtuous rational activity is the human good. That is, as Aristotle observed, little more than a platitude, but it does involve a discrimination among possible answers to the question, What is the human good? Man houses not only reasoning but also a desire for pleasure, an impulse to avoid physical harm and pain. He is also the seat of any number of acts of sensation of various kinds. Yet more basically, he grows, takes nourishment, moves from place to place. Man on this basis comes to be regarded as a kind of epitomization of processes which are found in lesser beings as well, for it is not man alone who moves and grows, who senses, who seeks pleasure and avoids pain. But man, to do these humanly, must do them rationally insofar as such activities are amenable to rational control. To seek pleasure in a human way is to subject the objects which give physical pleasure to a goal beyond themselves and so to assess them; to seek pleasure pell-mell and irrationally is possible for man, but could a man who did this be considered a good man? Not if the mark of man is to use his reason, for then the specifically human good must attach to what is peculiar and characteristic of man.

"Reasoning" must be distinguished, however. There is the process of reasoning itself, with its appropriate objects and perfection; there is also reasoning which bears on activities other than reasoning and seeks to perfect them. The latter is practical

reasoning, and it is when man's appetite is responsive to such rational direction that we have the perfection of rational activity which is called moral virtue. A life lived according to reason -- that is the human good -- and this covers a multitude of virtues: the human pursuit of sensual pleasure, a human avoidance of physical pain. That is, when instinctive processes become permeated with rationality, they are more fully human. A life lived for pleasure is not a human life because the objects of pursuit which cause physical pleasure are not peculiar to human appetition and because human appetition, in a broad sense, encompasses other and higher objects than these.

To talk of the end or goal of human or rational choice may seem to refer to consequences of choice, to some quietus, some state achieved when choice is done. The human good, as Thomas sees it, is not beyond action, but in action; it is the style or formality or quality of our choices. To be a man is to choose and decide and live, and to do these things well is man's goal or end, and it will be had, if it is had, in acting and choosing and deciding, not after these are done. That is why Thomas will agree with Aristotle that man's happiness is an activity, not a state or capacity.

Man's moral goal is fixed Thomas holds; he has no choice concerning what will, in the nature of things, perfect him and be his good. Since he is a rational agent, his perfection can only be the perfection of rational activity. Rational activity can be either pure reason or practical reason, and it is the latter that is the concern of moral philosophy. The perfection of practical rational activity, again, is what is meant by moral virtue. To say that man's good is fixed by his very nature means that a man cannot be perfected as man by the pell-mell pursuit of pleasure, for example. Such an activity is not commensurate with human nature.

Thomas calls judgments or precepts concerning what we must do which are anchored in our nature, and thus sure and inflexible, natural law precepts. He uses the plural. (*ST*, IaIIae, q. 94, a. 2) Thus far, we have seen one such precept, which may be stated normatively as: Act virtuously. Thomas will sometimes state this overriding precept of human moral activity in the following way: Do good and avoid evil. But of course one must understand that in terms of the human good, and when one does, "act virtuously" is synonymous with "do good" as this is addressed to man. Are there any other natural law precepts? We can get a plurality of precepts which will have the fixity of the generic one just mentioned by appealing to the tradition of the cardinal virtues. Temperance is the name given to the rational control of the appetite for objects which cause physical pleasure. Fortitude, or bravery, is the name given the rational control of the impulse to avoid objects which cause physical pain. Justice and prudence are the other two cardinal virtues, and, without going into the nature of these, we can suggest that "Be temperate," "Be brave," "Be just," and "Be prudent" are precepts which always bind a man. Their plurality is gained by articulating the regions of human activity in which rational direction is required. There will never be a time when temperance, bravery, justice, and prudence will not be the guiding ideals of human choice. That is what is meant by saying these precepts are fixed, unchanging, and so forth.

Of course, the great difficulty in human action is not in settling on the major guidelines of choice. The difficulties begin when we ask, "But how should I be temperate in such and such circumstances?" And so too with bravery, justice, and prudence. If we think of these cardinal virtues as the articulation of man's good or

end, the further questions can be said to deal with means of incorporating these ideals of human conduct in our lives in the particular decisions we must make.

The precepts of natural law are judgments in the practical order analogous to self-evident judgments in the speculative order. A mark of the self-evident judgment is that to contradict it lands one in absurdity, and with respect to the most basic such judgment, the so-called principle of contradiction, the denial of it requires one to employ it. Something like this may be said about the first principle of the practical order, "Act rationally." If one questioned this, he might be thought of as asking a question as to why he should ask questions. For surely one who wants a justification of the principle is already exhibiting in his conduct his acceptance of the rule that he ought to act rationally. The articulation of the human good into the cardinal virtues is such that something of the same kind of imperviousness to contradiction attends such a precept as "Act temperately." If this principle lays on us the obligation to seek pleasure in a manner befitting the kind of agent we are, it would be difficult to gainsay it without calling into question the kind of agent man is and thus the kind of agent the questioner reveals himself to be.

At a level of great universality, then, Thomas feels that there are inflexible guidelines for human choice; the target at least is clear. But how is one to be temperate in such and such circumstances? As soon as we move into the area of enunciating means of realizing our end or goal, our judgments become corrigible, usually as opposed to always true. The elaboration of less general moral judgments not only depends more and more on experience, our own and others, but reflects increasingly the evanescence of circumstances, the particular historical epoch in which such judgments are made. Thomas will insist on the corrigibility and probability of general judgments less than the most common ones of natural law, but at the same time he will argue that this is no reason against the formulation of more particular moral judgments.

There are thus two levels of generality, what we might call the level of principles and the level of rules, with the former certain and inflexible and the latter true, even if true only for the most part or usually. The moral rule may be thought of as a statement of the means whereby we can usually achieve our end. The justification of moral rules, therefore, is to be found in the principles, in the end. But since the rules are true only for the most part, they admit of exceptions. What would justify an exception to a rule if the principle justifies the rule? It seems that we must say that the principle justifies the exception as well as the original rule, since if we should judge that in some cases it would be wrong to abide by a rule having to do with temperance, say, we might so judge because acting in accord with the rule will thwart the end of temperance or of some other articulation of our overriding good. And, of course, the recognition of exceptions to a rule can give rise to the formulation of another and lesser rule.

Since both principles and rules are in the practical order, they are not sought for their own sake but point beyond cognition to the perfection of our choices. Thomas follows the lead of Aristotle in saying that beyond the common principles, naturally and easily knowable, and beyond moral rules which might be taken to be the domain of moral philosophy and of human law, there is a third level of moral knowledge, completely practical knowledge, where we are cognitively engaged in applying principle or rule to a concrete set of circumstances. By calling this area the realm of prudence, completely practical knowledge, we are suggesting that it saves all three of the criteria

of practical knowledge mentioned earlier. With Aristotle, Thomas calls the discourse of prudence a practical syllogism.

The practical syllogism, the discourse of practical reasoning in the concrete direction of choices, is analyzed as follows. The major premise is a generality, a principle or rule; the minor premise is an assessment of our present singular circumstance in the light of the principle or rule relevant to it. The conclusion, ideally, is a choice in accord with this assessment. As soon as we move away from the major premise, we move away from generality and into an area where the state of our appetites becomes influential. The principle or rule expresses an object of appetition, a good, at a level of generality, and we can assent to such judgments in a way that does not engage us fundamentally where we live. Practical discourse, the practical syllogism, when it moves into the area of the concrete and singular, will reveal the actual condition of our appetites, what for us is really considered good. Now what for us is really considered good, what we have a bent toward due to past choices, may be other than and in conflict with the good expressed in the major premise. Imagine that the major premise has to do with temperance. We find ourselves in a situation where at the back of our mind we are aware of the obliging character of temperance with reference to our choices; with that awareness we regard the circumstances in which we find ourselves. In doing so we might repress or dismiss the moral principle because of the attractiveness of an object which promises pleasure and go on to pursue that object. This would reveal that the good expressed in the principle or rule is not effectively our good; that our choices are really governed by a rule we might hesitate to express as a generality, namely, "Pursue pleasure mindlessly."

A man acting on such a basis would be incontinent, in Thomas' use of the term; in moments of repose, as a student of ethics, say, he might assent to a moral principle or rule, but when the chips are down, the good he seeks is not that expressed in the moral principle. In order to move from the principle to an assessment of our circumstances in the light of it and to a choice in accord with that assessment, we must effectively love the good expressed in the principle. That is why Thomas will say that the truth of the ultimate practical judgment is to be read, not as a conformity with the way things are, but as a conformity with rectified appetite. In short, only the virtuous man will easily and without pain make the transition in practical discourse from principles to choice. One can see why Thomas places such importance on moral training and upbringing; it makes a great deal of difference what objects of aspiration are placed before us in our early years. Mature reflection on human action always takes place against a background of formation and education, of ideals which have become familiar because of habituation. It is not the case that the ideal can be recognized to be such only by those who strive to incorporate it into their lives, but Thomas will insist that when it comes to how the ideal can be realized here and now, our ability to know this is a function of our past moral history.

We might summarize Thomas' view of moral knowledge, then, by seeing three levels of it. First is the level of the most common precepts, those which enunciate the ideal of rational love or loving reason: man's perfection and its articulation into the cardinal virtues. This is the domain of natural law without qualification, for as long as man is what he is, his perfection is the perfection of the kind of agent he is. On a second level would be the formation of precepts or rules which elaborate at a level of generality how the ideal can usually be achieved. All such rules are corrigible, of course, and

they increasingly reflect experience and thus the changing situations in which man strives for the ideal. Finally, there is the concrete level, the singular choice in which knowledge must be proportionate to these changing, concrete circumstances and where knowledge is inevitably influenced by the condition of the agent's appetite.

H. Thomas and His Time

The foregoing presentation of various aspects of Thomas' doctrine has made little effort to relate what he taught to the currents of his day, though of course the reader will have connected elements of Thomas' teaching with controversies mentioned in earlier chapters. Since the fame of Aquinas reposes in large part on the fact that he brought together in a new whole the various strains and traditions which met in the thirteenth century, it is only right that we say some few things about his general attitude as it is exemplified in a number of key controversies.

If the men of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries had been confronted only with accurate Latin translations of the *Metaphysics*, *Physics*, and *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle, unaccompanied by commentaries, they would certainly have had their work cut out for them; we can surmise that there would have been a good dose of defensiveness in their response to such a powerful statement of the nature of the world, since in many particulars it seems contrary to what the Christian believes to be true. But of course the matter was not at all that simple. The Aristotle who came to be known came together with Islamic interpretations which confused Aristotelian and Neoplatonic doctrines. We have seen that in Islam portions of Plotinus and of Proclus were considered to be the work of Aristotle. Furthermore, the Greek commentaries on Aristotle, with their Neoplatonic bent, came into Latin directly as well as through the medium of the influence they had had on the thinkers of Islam. That meant that the whole Neoplatonic apparatus of emanation and the mediated causality of the first cause were added to the real problems in the text of Aristotle, those associated with the scope of the divine knowledge, the eternity of the world, and the survival of the individual soul after death. Before this onslaught it is not surprising to find that the first reaction was one of caution. Aristotle's works were proscribed at the University of Paris. Balancing this, however, was the commission set up by Gregory IX to study and interpret the teaching of Aristotle. The invitation to seek in Aristotle what truth might be there was clear, and masters responded to it to the detriment of the ban.

One of the members of the papal commission, William of Auvergne, indicates one mode of response to the new literature. He is quite confused as to what is authentically Aristotelian doctrine and what is not, but he has a double measure with which to confront the new teachings. First, there is faith; if the Aristotelians teach something contrary to faith, that is *prima facie* indication that their teaching is false. William does not leave the matter there, however; he goes on to try to show the falsity of such teachings by arguments. What exercises its influence on him as he does this is the Augustinian tradition which had been dominant, but, unsurprisingly, William also takes over from Aristotle and Islamic thinkers whatever he takes to be sound. The whole into which such borrowings are assumed is somewhat difficult to describe, and to call it traditional Augustinianism is to label it rather than analyze it.

Another attitude, far less ironic, is represented by Bonaventure; yet another by Albert and, more brazenly, the Latin Averroists. We have seen the curious neutrality Albert

claims when he is exposing the tenets of Peripatetic philosophy; more curious still is the silence he attempts with respect to the theological verdict on the philosophy he is narrating. His model here seems to be Moses Maimonides, and the term of the attitude could be either that theology must be measured by philosophy or, perhaps, that the truth of philosophy and that of theology may conflict and contradict in a way that is ultimately acceptable.

With Aquinas we have an Aristotelian, a man who accepts the fundamental validity of the philosophy of Aristotle and will employ it as the context into which other contributions must be fitted. This attitude is possible for him because he was able to distinguish between Aristotle and Neoplatonism, between Aristotle and his interpreters, in a way that had not been done to the same extent before. This is not to say that he rejects Neoplatonism, whether that of Proclus or of the Greek and Islamic commentators, out of hand. But there is a new clarity as to what is what. For example, in the *proemium* to his exposition of the *Liber de causis* Thomas matter-of-factly states the origin of the work in Proclus; apparently this is the first time the identification was made, and Thomas was able to make it because William of Moerbeke had provided him with a Latin translation of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*. When he approaches the text of Aristotle, Thomas seems possessed of the certitude that, accurately understood, it can withstand the criticisms that have been directed at it. Let us examine a few instances of this.

In the twelfth book of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle had said that God knows only himself, and this had been taken to mean that God knows nothing other than himself, which would seem a plausible enough interpretation. From that would follow a denial of providence and so forth, and Aristotle emerges as teaching things inimical to belief. Thomas comes at the passage in question with little indication that it has been the subject of controversy. Aristotle, he explains, identifies the First Cause with his act of understanding and says that the nobility of that act of understanding can be read in terms of its object. The object of the act of understanding (identified with the First Cause) must be itself, since if it were something else, that object would be more noble than the First Cause. But the First Cause is most noble, and so forth, so it is necessary that it understand itself and that in it understanding and what is understood be the same. "It should be considered however that the Philosopher intends to show that God understands, not something else, but rather himself insofar as what is understood is the perfection of the one understanding and of his act of understanding. It is quite clear that nothing else can be understood by God in this sense that it would be the perfection of his intellect. Nor does it follow that other things are unknown by him, since in understanding himself he understands all other things." (*In XII Metphys.*, lect. 11, n. 2614) The point is put more succinctly in Thomas' discussion of proposition thirteen of the *Liber de causis*: "Since according to the opinion of Aristotle, which in this matter is more in accord with Catholic doctrine [more than the opinion of Proclus, that is], we posit, not many forms above intellect, but one alone which is the First Cause, we must say that just as it is its existence [*ipsa est ipsum esse*] so it is one with its life and its intellect. Hence, Aristotle in the twelfth book of the *Metaphysics* proves that he [God] understands only himself, not that knowledge of other things is lacking to him, but because his intellect is not informed by any intelligible species other than himself. What Thomas is doing in such a case is, not bending Aristotle to Catholic doctrine, but insisting that Aristotle correctly understood is in accord with the faith. So too, for Thomas, Aristotle's God is the creative cause of

the universe. "From this manifestly appears the falsity of their opinion who hold that Aristotle thought that God is the cause, not of the substance of the heaven, but only of its motion." (*In VI Metaphys.*, lect. 1, n. 1164) It has become fashionable to say that Aristotle's God is only the ultimate final cause of the world; that "only" would have mystified Thomas, for whom the final cause is, as it was for Aristotle, the *causa causarum*, the cause of the other causes. Although he never developed the argument, since he was not confronted with this curious notion of "only the ultimate final cause," it would be a simple matter for Thomas to prove that if God is the ultimate final cause of the world, he is *a fortiori* its first efficient cause.

There is considerable confusion in recent discussions of Aristotle and creation. Sometimes it seems to be suggested that Aristotle's world cannot be a created one because it is eternal. Thomas is quite sure that it was Aristotle's firm opinion that the world is eternal, but he insists, as others had, that the arguments he brings forward for this claim are at best probable. Would the eternity of the world preclude its being a created world? This was a matter Thomas investigated, notably in an *opusculum* entitled *On the Eternity of the World Against Murmurers*. For those who take this sort of thing to be a mark of humanness, we might observe that in this opusculum Aquinas treats his unnamed adversaries with sarcasm, saying how marvelous it is that men like Augustine and the best philosophers had not seen the contradiction involved in an eternally created world. Those who see a contradiction in the notion, he adds icily, must alone be men, and wisdom arrived in the world with them.

In the opusculum *On the Unity of the Intellect Against the Averroists* Thomas goes to great lengths to show the inaccuracy of the Averroistic interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine on the faculties of the soul. Perhaps nowhere else is it as clear that what is at stake is what Aristotle taught and that accuracy of interpretation goes hand in hand with acceptance of the result. In this opusculum, as in his work *On Separate Substances*, Thomas exhibits his knowledge of Islamic, Jewish, and Greek interpretations of Aristotle.

We mentioned earlier in this chapter how unwise it is to identify the philosophy of Aquinas and the philosophy of Aristotle when this leads to a failure to recognize the influence of other philosophers on Thomas. It would be far unwiser to suggest that Thomas' thought is in principle Neoplatonic. In its principles Thomas' philosophy is Aristotelian, and, as we have observed, whatever else enters into his philosophy is subjected to an Aristotelian test, is brought into a fundamentally Aristotelian context. One may cheer or lament this, but he may not deny it or ignore it.

Thomas' contemporaries found it difficult to ignore what he had accomplished, and we shall see in the next chapter something of the history of his immediate influence and reactions to it. Insofar as Thomas the philosopher is a model for the twentieth-century thinker, it may be well to distinguish two aspects of the model. On the one hand are substantive doctrines to be understood and assessed; on the other hand there is what can be called the spirit of Thomas. That spirit applied nowadays to the thought of Thomas himself would doubtless see it as a component of a larger whole, and would see the Thomist as a philosopher for whom Thomas functions as Aristotle functioned for Thomas.

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The Thirteenth Century

Chapter VII

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters of this part we have concentrated on a number of thinkers, selected for their generally recognized importance, and discussed what they taught with only glancing references to the milieu in which they carried on their activity. That milieu -- the university, and particularly the University of Paris -- was one in which many divergent currents flowed, in which the kind of activity we have regarded in isolation comes into confrontation and conflict with opposed teachings, attitudes, aspirations. We have made reference to the dispute that raged concerning the academic status of Franciscans and Dominicans at Paris, a dispute which had its import for the two most eminent men of the century, Bonaventure and Aquinas. Similarly, we have referred to the caution with which the new writings invading the West were met, the proscriptions that were laid down, and so forth. The men we have concentrated on have represented, by and large, the effort to learn from the new and to assimilate it by putting it into relation with what had been had before. Yet efforts at assimilation varied insofar as one or the other middleman between the Western Scholastics and Aristotle was given prominence. We have suggested that one of the signal accomplishments of Aquinas is to be found in his distinguishing between the doctrines of Aristotle and those of his interpreters in Islam, something that required a painstaking and direct reading of Aristotle in less and less defective texts. No doubt it was this effort that enabled Aquinas to state with the clarity he did the distinction

between philosophy and theology. We must now say a few words of the context in which he did this.

We have been considering the universities of the thirteenth century, taking Paris as the great model, as places where the faculty of arts functioned as a stepping stone into the faculty of theology (or those of medicine and law). This suggests that the faculty of arts, and philosophy, which was its principal concern, had nothing terminal to it, that philosophy had its destiny in theology. It should be noted, moreover, that most of the men who have been the objects of our attention in the chapters of this part were theologians, wrote as theologians, saw philosophy from the vantage point of the principles of theology, and assessed its status accordingly. Yet it was at Paris that a conflict arose with regard to the relationship of philosophy and theology which was, in many of its aspects, a conflict between the faculty of arts and the faculty of theology.

It will be remembered that if there was anything that contributed to the determination of the relationship between philosophy and theology on the part of an Aquinas, it was the striking fact of the philosophical writings of Aristotle. Here, for the first time in centuries, the Christian intellectual found himself face to face with an elaborate and nuanced theory of reality in its various aspects, a theory reached in utter independence of the influence of faith. What greater proof could be required of the autonomy and viability of philosophy? Hand in hand with the appreciation of the autonomy of philosophy there went a sensitivity to those things Aristotle had taught which went contrary to Christian revelation. We have seen that, in large part due to the interpretations of Arabian commentators, it came to be a commonplace that Aristotle had taught that the world is eternal, that the survivability of the individual soul is a doubtful matter, and so forth. The typical reaction of Aquinas was to ask, first, whether this was what Aristotle actually taught. Quite often he reached the conclusion either that he had not taught what he was claimed to have taught or that he taught it in such a way that his doctrine was not in conflict with Christian belief. Others, like Bonaventure, lacking interest in the accuracy of the historical ascription of positions to Aristotle, applied the criteria of revealed truth to assess the alleged doctrines as false. Now while there is certainly a difference in approach between Aquinas and Bonaventure in this matter, the difference does not lie in the fact that the one thought revealed truth was a useful criterion and the other did not. Aquinas, as much as Bonaventure, may be taken to be guided by his faith in assuming that the position that holds firmly that the world has always existed must be false, or at least not provable. What is particularly interesting in the case of Aquinas is that he takes this initial judgment to be, not a foreclosing of argumentation, but an invitation to philosophizing. Let us, he suggests, look at the arguments; let us consult the texts. Animating his whole approach is the assumption that wherever there is a contradiction in terms the truth cannot lie on both sides of the contradiction. Now it was something like the latter position, the so-called two-truths theory, that came to be held by some masters of the faculty of arts in the middle of the century.

The two men most important for this controversy are Siger of Brabant and Boetius of Dacia. The movement associated with their names is commonly called "Latin Averroism." They were the objects of various polemical opuscula by figures already treated, for example, in the *De imitate intellectus* of Aquinas. Now, once more it must be emphasized that what Aquinas set out to do, and what he accomplished, in that

little work was to save Aristotle, not to bury him -- to show that he had not taught what was being attributed to him concerning the faculties of the human soul. The controversy in question, then, may not be viewed as arising from the efforts of theologians to condemn philosophy, to restrict it, to destroy its autonomy, and so forth. Rather, it appears to be an effort of theologians to save philosophy from the philosophers -- just as nowadays it sometimes seems that it will fall to Christian philosophers to save theology from theologians who misread the import of current philosophical trends.

When we look at the writings of Siger of Brabant, we find a repetition of interpretations of Aristotle with which we are familiar from the Arabian commentators. Thus, God's causality is restricted to a first effect, a primary intelligence, to whose activity the next level of reality must be ascribed and so on. So too, Siger teaches the "eternity of the world. Since these positions call into question, respectively, the universality of God's causal efficacy and revealed truth, it becomes a matter of some interest to inquire how Siger squared his philosophical tenets with his Christian belief. Siger seems to have adopted an ambiguous stand on this matter. On the one hand, he suggests that he is merely examining the teachings of the (pagan) philosophers; on the other hand, he implies that these tenets are unavoidable conclusions of reason. Boetius of Dacia held views that are both more openly abrasive and unequivocal in their implications. As if from an excess of professional pride, Boetius held that the pursuit of philosophy is the highest human pursuit, that only philosophers are wise, and that there is absolutely no restriction on philosophical activity. More substantively, Boetius is said to have held that creation is impossible, even though faith requires us to believe that it is possible. With what one sometimes suspects must have been perverse delight, Boetius went on to list a number of other articles of Christian faith which are philosophical absurdities, though he seems never to have urged that men cease and desist believing them.

Latin Averroism, then, would seem to be grounded on what must seem a psychological impossibility, since it asked believers to accept logical contradictions. Not only did this call into question the reasonableness of faith -- something insisted on from the beginning of theological study -- it also characterized the philosophizing of the Christian in a way that would require him to be schizophrenic. The remedy called for was one that assigned their proper notes to faith and to philosophizing, and it was this remedy that was offered by theologians -- as well as by masters of arts not in sympathy with Siger and Boetius, and these nonsympathizers, we might note, were the majority in the faculty of arts at Paris.

We began by saying that this dispute became a dispute between the faculty of arts and the faculty of theology and went on to say that it must not be viewed as prompted by an animus against philosophy on the part of theologians. This last claim, while true in the terms we made it, must now be qualified. In 1277 the bishop of Paris, at the behest of the pope, condemned a list of 219 propositions. In presenting this list, the bishop, Stephen Tempier, made quite clear who the targets of his condemnation were: masters of the faculty of arts who taught things contrary to faith and who, when accused of heresy, took refuge in the claim that there is a distinction between the truth of philosophy and the truth of faith. One of the great ironies of the Condemnation of 1277 is that several tenets of Thomas Aquinas were among the propositions condemned. Further, if animosity between philosophers and theologians was not at

the source of the dispute, it was certainly one of the consequences of the condemnation. Theologians became increasingly suspect of the activities of philosophers, and there was subsequently a tendency for the theologian to pursue his proper effort in growing independence from philosophical speculation. The reverse side of this coin, of course, was the tendency of philosophers who were also believers to ignore the relevance of their faith to their philosophizing.

If doctrines have a history, it is not linear, and if the history of philosophy is interesting, this is not because of movements which carry men along but rather because of individual philosophers. Men may think in a context, but the men who interest us as philosophers are less products of their times than producers of the spirit of their own and later times. To consider the movement into the thirteenth century of the complete Aristotelian corpus and of the Arabian commentators on Aristotle, as well as of Neoplatonic doctrines of an earlier time, is not to consider something that is independent of individual thinkers; on the contrary, such movements are ideal continua whose points are individual minds. All this is preface to our unwillingness now to discuss the fate and destiny of the movements of the thirteenth century. Finally, what is of philosophical interest in the thirteenth century are the writings of men like Bacon and Bonaventure, Albert and Aquinas, writings which are to a surprising degree accessible without paying great attention to the "spirit of the thirteenth century" or other abstractions taken as the putative antecedents of the efforts of such men. One of pitfalls of the historian is to interpret individuals in the light of their times, forgetful that those times are largely defined by us in terms of the great individuals who inhabited them. It would be easier to sustain the thesis that Aquinas thought against the grain of his age than that he is the perfect mirror of it, easier but perhaps no more fruitful. The suggestion that learning is a matter of entering into conversation with the great men of all times via their writings, while it may be marred by simplifying or overlooking the real difficulties and impediments that may obscure those writings to a later mentality, is, finally, the only defensible attitude toward the great minds of the past, of the thirteenth or any other century. We may compare the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by saying that in the former the schools were where the great teachers were, whereas in the latter the great teachers were where the schools were; however, in either case it is the great teachers who interest us -- and their greatness consists in large part in the way they transcend their times.