

The final conclusion of the entire metaphysical road, which we have just sketched, is that metaphysics is wisdom of the natural order. It is the highest science in the natural order, but it is surpassed by *supernatural* theology (see ch. 3, a). Therefore, it belongs to metaphysics to direct all the other sciences in some way: to draw up a charter, so to speak, for each, so that they do not step beyond their boundaries. This does not mean, of course, that metaphysics has to tell the sciences how to carry out their investigation: it simply gives them a global view of reality, so that they do not step beyond them a global view, as was explained in ch. 8.

The natural and supernatural wisdom of the natural order, but it is also science in the natural order. It is the highest science in the natural order, as mentioned in the Foreword.

## God Is

### CHAPTER 21

# Natural Theology

## PART IV

### a. Man can know God: natural and supernatural knowledge

Natural theology is the real objective, the real goal which metaphysics have seen, the real summit of metaphysics. As we pursue ultimately is God, the knowledge of God. The object of metaphysics ultimately is "being", but through the study of being, it reaches the cause of being, the principle of being, the first cause of metaphysics is "being", and this is God. The crowning achievement of metaphysics is the knowledge of God. The crowning achievement of metaphysics is the knowledge of God, to the extent that it is possible to man in the natural light of reason.

Now, the first point considered by natural theology is the existence of God: man can know God. How? First, he can know God by the power of his reason alone, both in a pre-scientific way (by spontaneous common sense) and in a scientific or metaphysical way. What is the difference between the spontaneous use of reason and the scientific use of reason? By the former, we simply know things, but the scientific use of reason consists in knowing the causes of things, as we saw in ch. 6. In other words, while spontaneous knowledge simply knows, scientific knowledge knows why.

We can know God both using reason only spontaneously and also scientifically (cf. ch. 3, a and b): we can reach the conclusion that God exists, by a reasoning process, as we

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shall see. Metaphysics has shown us that we can reach God with our minds. We have seen that being is participated. If all beings are participated, there must be a being by essence, which is *Essere Itself*, "to be" itself. Otherwise, how could there be beings at all? Where do they come from? Since they do not come from themselves, they must come from a source or print. Ciple which is pure esse or "to be"; this is how we have seen it, very schematically, and this is the sketch of every proof to show that God exists. (See ch. 18, h)

However, above this knowledge through reason, there is a higher knowledge of God, which is supernatural, and of this we have two kinds: *faith* is one of the two supernatural ways of knowing God. The other one is much higher: the knowledge of the blessed in Heaven: this beatific vision is the highest ledge of the blessed in Heaven; this beatific vision is the highest ledge of knowledge of God. The other one is much higher: the knowledge of the blessed in Heaven: this beatific vision is the highest ledge of the blessed in Heaven; this beatific vision is the highest ledge of knowledge of God. The other one is much higher: the knowledge of the blessed in Heaven: this beatific vision is the highest ledge of the blessed in Heaven; this beatific vision is the highest ledge of knowledge of God.

(i) the "natural" knowledge, in the "light of reason"

(ii) the "supernatural" knowledge, which has two degrees: beatific vision (*lumen glorie*) and faith (*lumen fidei*).

The ranking is, of course, from the highest to the lowest the difference between the higher two and the lowest is a difference of glory, light of faith, and light of reason. The difference between the higher two is only a difference of degree, while light of glory, light of faith, and light of reason are three different kinds.

Not only can man know God, but in actual fact the pure pose of man's being is precisely to know and to love God. He has been created for that, as the catechism says. Why does God want men to be born, to come into being? Because in that way, there are more who can know and love Him: and this is very good for them. The contemplative mentality is the result of metaphysical blindness. Human life is a gift from God: to be is better than not to be (cf. ch. 19, g). The purpose for which human beings are created is to know and to love God, which is the highest thing they can do: other ends can only be intermediate to

*Natural Theology*

We have said that natural theology, i.e. the philosophical knowledge of God, is the most that philosophy can attain regarding God. But in spite of being rather meagre in coming to faith and to the beatific vision, in spite of being only a modest achievement, it is the highest achievement of metatheistics, and metatheistics is the highest achievement of reason.

While its "material" object is God, its "formal" object is God as being, as the source or First Cause of all being. Its "light" knowledge is that natural theology studies subsistent esse, which is God. Natural theology studies subsistent esse, which is God, in the sense, reaching principles therewith through the intellect, and then deducing from principles.

Thus, with this natural reason and starting from creatures, man rises to the top of his knowing capacities when he knows God as one and unique, principle and end, subsistent in Himself, up to the threshold of *supernatural* theology.

Metaphysics thus brings man to the limits he can attain by himself, its self (*ipsam Essentiam Subsistens*), all perfect and Creator. Man rises to the top of his knowing capacities when he finds itself in His inner life, i.e. the Trinity in the Unity, grace, redemption, etc.

Therefore, natural theology provides the basis and the springboard, so to speak, towards the knowledge of revelation. In supernatural theology, the "material" object is also God (like in natural theology), but the "formal" object differs from that of natural theology, because while the latter is "God as Being", the former is God as *Himself*, as He reveals Himself that of natural theology, because while the latter is "God as Being", the former is God as *Himself*, as He reveals

"light", of natural theology is faith, which is higher than reason. And thereby his greatest right, his most basic greatest duty, and thereby his greatest need, and thereby his greatest nature: this is his greatest need, and thereby his greatest right.

b. Natural theology as highest achievement of metaphysics

We have said that natural theology, i.e. the philosophical knowledge of God, is the most that philosophy can attain regarding God. But in spite of being rather meagre in coming to faith and to the beatific vision, in spite of being only a modest achievement, it is the highest achievement of metatheistics, and metatheistics is the highest achievement of reason.

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Thus, with this natural reason and starting from creatures, man rises to the top of his knowing capacities when he finds itself in His inner life, i.e. the Trinity in the Unity, grace, redemption, etc.

## c. Philosophy cannot ignore God

The question of God is central in philosophy always. There is not a single philosopher who has not tackled this question one way or another. We cannot avoid God; wherever we look we have to face the question, since man's mind and will are oriented to infinity. Likewise, the stand taken by a philosophy with regard to God colors and determines its entire scope, since the whole of reality depends on God, who gives ultimate meaning to it. We could say simply, "Tell me what this philosopher says about God, and I will tell you the rest of his philosophy". This is the crucial question: What does this philosopher say about God? Practically all philosophy is oriented to the knowledge of God, and of the creationhood of beings.

## e. Reason not the only factor in our knowledge of God

This knowledge of God, however, is not an exclusively intellectual challenge. It is inevitably related to life and to morality, to what is right and wrong in human decision and action. This is why the inner disposition of the will and the emotions has a great influence on a man's knowledge of God. A person with a good disposition, with a good will, is more ready to see the clarity of this conclusion: *God must exist*. But it is a "conclusion", i.e. the ending of a reasoning process; and in this "process", the will may intervene by moving reason to look for objections, since the ego may resent the existence of someone above himself out of pride.

Reason, nevertheless, can prove by itself that God exists by showing the necessity of a cause for the universe of beings: this type of proof whereby we go from effect to cause is called a *posteriori*, which means going from what is "after", namely the effect, to what is "before" (prior), namely the cause. We shall presently see the various ways in which we can expand this argument, but we can already say that it is not reasonable to deny that reason can do this, and so fall into agnosticism.

## f. Agnosticism is unreasonable

Agnosticism is not the same as atheism. The latter denies that God exists, but the former denies that God can be known, if He exists: it is rather a suspension of judgment. Regarding the existence of God, dismised in an alleged intellect, "intellectual humility", consists precisely in submitting every moral virtue, is rooted in the fact that human, as every intellectual, "humility". But aside from the fact that humility, as we know, it does not deny that God exists. The latter denies that God exists as atheism. But it denies between God and God a spontaneous knowledge? It makes it more precise and more spontaneous knowledge? It makes it more precise and more spontaneous knowledge?

And what does philosophy do then with that kind of spontaneity and emotional bases. There may be influences from factors such as environment, there are not see God. The problem is that in this reasoning process, however elementary, since we do not see a reasoning process, this knowledge involves some scientific knowledge, even with a spontaneous pre-buses, between God and God? Because we see them. But it is night.

How do we know the difference between trees and intuitive knowledge, like knowing that the day follows the spontaneous knowledge of the divinity is not an immediate or live and to be accountable. Nevertheless, even this type of divinity, in something superior to themselves, for which to even the most backward nation. They all believe in some sort of deity. There is not a single nation without religion, at all peoples. There is the existence of God. This can be shown by looking complex demonstration, there is a spontaneous natural knowledge of the reasoning process. It is a fact, however, that without any reasoning process. It is the conclusion of a

## d. Reason is led to God

This "natural" knowledge of God is the conclusion of a reasoning process. It is a fact, however, that without any reasoning process, since the ego may resent the existence of this conclusion: *God must exist*. But it is a "conclusion", i.e. the ending of a reasoning process; and in this "process", the will may intervene by moving reason to look for objections, since the ego may resent the existence of someone above himself out of pride.

g. Importance of the rational demonstration of God's existence

### h. Limits of the human knowledge of God

However, it later in life, when the person becomes more mature, he can see that this is a very reasonable truth, that reason by itself can prove that God exists, his faith will be strengthened; he will be confirmed in his beliefs as being very reasonable. And besides, he can prove to others that this is true by reason alone, at least clearing the intellectual side of the problem. (See ch. 3, a)

Lastly, as we saw above, there is a natural link between what for physical forces, or how life began on earth: the why or due to various constellations of stars were formed in space there a universe? The answer cannot consist in just describing it is the question every human being asks himself. Why is asking, what is the world? or how is the world?, but only by asking, why is the world? It is the why that leads to God, and asking, a cause as cause, as we saw in ch. 18).

We cannot reach the knowledge of God's existence by what for physical forces, or how life began on earth: the why or due to various constellations of stars were formed in space that God exists, defined by "faith", that a Christian knows first that this is true. But this is not sensible, since there are myriads of things we cannot see or touch and still we know that they exist, because we have no grounds for doubting the testimony of God, since a pure spirit is not sensible. Our knowledge does begin with the sensible, but we can discover God as the cause of the sensible, i.e., if we are willing to perceive the difference between senses and intelligence (only the intelligence can "see", a cause as cause, as we saw in ch. 18).

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Why is it important for the Christian to know the proofs of God's existence by reason alone? At first a Christian knows world, and of course God is not sensible, nevertheless God can be known as the First Cause of the sensible world. An agnostic may say, "I know that something exists when I can see it or touch it". But this is not reasonable, since there are myriads of things we cannot see or touch and still we know that they exist, because we have no grounds for doubting the testimony of God, since a pure spirit is not sensible. Our knowledge does begin with the sensible, but we can discover God as the cause of the sensible, if we are willing to perceive the difference between senses and intelligence (only the intelligence can "see", a cause as cause, as we saw in ch. 18).

Although human knowledge starts from the sensible come from oneself.

Pride of not wanting to accept the truth because it does not

denece since the entire person is involved in this matter, not person was not a Catholic, to pray with humility and confessation, so as to revive the faith, and it the used to give people in these circumstances: to make a good will is involved. Hence the advice Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer rather mortal than "intellectual", since the disposition of the unacceptable for a Catholic. Difficulties in this regard are were Wisdom 13:1-5 and Rom. 1:20. Agnosticism is therefore starting from His creatures, but that reason alone can prove that God exists, should be given, but that reason alone can prove that God exists, that God exists, and he is a Catholic, he contradicts his own faith. The Church did not state exactly what actual proofs that someone says, therefore, that reason cannot prove that God exists, and quite another to say that God can be known by man, and quite another to say that God can be to balance this statement. One thing is to say that God can be God can then be known by man. Now, however, we have

And how do we know God with human reason alone?

man can never comprehend God, i.e. understand God completely.

man know (and love) God always more and more, although can know (and love) because of fullness of being) to man, that man intelligibility because of fullness (fullness of God). This, however, does not mean that God is unknowable to man: He is precisely so knowable (fullness of infinity of God. This, however, does not mean that God is the lack of proportion between the finite human mind and the rationalism). God is, of course, incomprehensible to man, due to but so would be the opposite extreme (whether ontologism or God perfectly well. The knowledge man can attain of God is true, but extremely imperfect. Agnosticism is unreasonable, that God exists says, therefore, that reason cannot prove that God exists, and quite another to say that God can be known by man, and quite another to say that God can be to balance this statement. One thing is to say that God can be God can then be known by man. Now, however, we have

(i) We can know the existence of God as cause of creation, and thereby deny that God exists. Therefore, since it does not include with certainty that God does not exist, one needs to want to be an atheist in order to be one. The conclusion is not perfect, because "it would be very uncomfortable", but rather, "I don't want God to come up, etc." It is then, as we said, a moral rather than an intellectual problem.

The root of all modern atheistic philosophies, such as marxism, some forms of existentialism, or of logical positivism, meta-psychology, etc. (see, History of Philosophy) is the philosophical principle of immanence.

It started with René Descartes, who lived in the first half of the 17th century. According to him, *human thought is prior to being*: things are or exist in so far as they are *in human consciousness*. Before Descartes, we could say that reality is there, and then man comes along and gets to know it. But from Descartes on, human thought is the first reality: the rest comes from it in one way or another. This is the man-centred world we mentioned in ch. 4, c, and ch. 8, d, based on the principle of immanence. "Immanence" means remaining in: philosophy begins in *human consciousness and remains there* (see ch. 47, b). This is the philosophical principle of immanence, which has inevitably led to all sorts of atheism. If man is the creator of being, "God" must be removed.

Some times, these efforts have been made in the name of "humanism". From the negation of God, one might think that there would follow an exaltation of man. If "man is the creator-god", "we are humanists: we believe in man"; "man can live" and so forth. This is the language of Marx, of Feuerbach, of Nietzsche, of Sartre, etc.

(ii) we can affirm of God, to an infinite degree, all the imperfections of the creatures, having of course purified them from all limitations, and having excluded those which involve perfections of the creatures, since no argument can conclude with certainty that God exists, since it does not exceed the limits of creation, and thereby deny that God does not exist, since He is impossible to prove conclusively that God does not exist, since He is of the will: they really want to deny God. Why so? Because it is beyond the direct reach of our reason. In this sense, both types of atheism, however, involve the intervention of God, but ignore the language of Marx, of Feuerbach, of "arguments", to "prove" it.

We can distinguish two types of atheism. There is a type of atheism which does not consist in denying that God is the denial of God is, therefore, a real possibility. Man's daily experience of our mistakes in reasoning. Man's addition to this, our reasoning process itself is not infallible: in addition, such as will, emotions, environmental influences, etc. This process, other factors intervening coming from outside directly, but *indirectly*, i.e., through a reasoning process. And, in this process, we already seen that our knowledge of God is not proper, i.e., the belief that God does not exist.

After having discussed the type of factual atheism we have called agnosticism, let us now take a look at atheism proper, i.e., the belief that God does not exist.

How can there be atheists if it is so clear that God exists?

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What is the result of this? In comparison with all other human knowledge, this is the greatest treasure man can acquire. But in comparison with God will reveal to us in heaven, and with what He tells us through faith, it is very little indeed. However, it should not be despised, and should be eagerly studied for all the reasons just given.

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## i. The problem of atheism

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reduced to economic categories, herded into war massacres, extreme initiation camps and abortion clinics, in unbelieveably astonomic figures. This is because if man is left without God, he does not know where to go: he has no goal, and so he is lost. And to tell him then that „he is the creator of the world“ is only adding salt to the wounds.

At the beginning of his *Summa theologiae*, St. Thomas takes this matter by first criticizing certain arguments that had been advanced, which claimed that this proposition was evident, and showing the need for demonstration. In this case, any demonstration must be a posteriori, as we said above, namely from the effect to the cause. (See ch. 18, h, and 21, e)

St. Thomas proceeds to put forward five demonstrations of this type, which he took from other philosophers and theologians, but giving them a much more profound import, because of his own original synthesis of the doctrine of participation and that of act and potency (cf. ch. 4, b, and 16, b).

He selected the five which he found most conclusive, all of them a posteriori, after rejecting other proofs which, instead of going from real facts to a conclusion, start from an „idea“, and conclude in reality.

### b. The first way: motion

The first of these arguments starts with the fact of motion or change. No one can have any doubt about this fact: motion is in the sensible world, motion of things as we see them. This is evident, unlike the proposition „God exists“. And this is the method of the metaphysics of esse: first we see sensible reality, then we reach a principle, and from the principle we deduce. What is the principle we arrive at from this observation? Here we pass from a fact of experience to a principle which derives from it the definition. How? Through the definition of motion.

What is in potency. It is not yet. It is, only when it is in act. Therefore, in order to move, it has to be in act; only the act moves. For something to act, a thing has to be in act; only the act moves. For in order to act, it has to be first, i.e. to be in act, because if it is in potency, it cannot move (a potency does not move). If it is in potency, it is in order to move, because if it were not between: an act, but imperfect. Now, in order to move, there would not be the perfect act it is no longer moving; so, it must be known to us. If they are not, the proposition is not evident. Does this mean that it is not true? No. It may not be evident, but it may be true, although the truth of this proposition may have to be demonstrated.

Is the proposition „God exists“ evident? If it were evi-

dent, there would not be atheists. Why are there atheists? Because this is not an evident proposition, although it is true and certain, but it needs to be demonstrated, since the terms used in it may be true, although the truth of this proposition may be known to us. If they are not, the proposition is not evident. Does this mean that it is not true? No. It may not be evident, but it may be true, although the truth of this proposition must far as we are concerned, both the subject and the predicate must be known to us. Is this proposition evident or not? „Evident“ is „exists“, i.e. the ways to show that the proposition „God exists“ is true. Let us now take up the actual demonstration of God's existence, i.e. the ways to show that the proposition „God exists“ is true.

### a. Elucidation of terms

## CHAPTER 22

# Ways of Demonstrating the Existence of God

Atheism is a cruel deception. A „humanistic“ philosophy affirms that there should be no God, so that man can live, is a big swindle. If man is taken away from God, he has no one to appeal to, and so ends up victimized by the mighty. It is the „survival of the fittest“, like in the jungle. This is the problem of atheism: a moral problem, highly moral and metaphysical. It is a real problem, which cannot be dismissed.

But if something is in potency, it cannot move itself, because it is not in act. Therefore, something else has to move it. But for something to move, it has to be in act. Therefore, if something is moving, there must be something else that is moving it, because a thing cannot move itself; whatever is moving it, because it is moving, there must be something else that is moving it, because it is moving, and so we come to one which is not moved by anything, because it is not potentiality at all, but pure act. We call this "pure act", God. And we cannot go on ad infinitum in a chain of movers; if there is no "first", then there is no movement at all, since movement always comes from another. We must come to one which is the first mover, which is unmoved, and this first unmoved mover we call God.

Now, if that "another", is itself being moved, then it needs another one, and so we come to one which is not moved by anything, because it is not potentiality at all, but pure act. Thomas does (i.e. as "act of being"), but only as the act of activity or of moving. St. Thomas, with more conceive "act", as St. Thomas does (i.e. as "act of being"), but only as the act of potency or of existing. This is because he did not conclude that "pure act" must be God. His "pure act" or "first mover", is not the supreme being for him. This is because it with God pure, i.e. as the fulness of being, and so identifies it with God himself.

We see things moving, and motion is act-potency. But a thing in potency cannot move in so far as it is in potency, because it is not yet, so, it has to be in act. A thing cannot move itself, because that would mean that it is in potency and in act in the same sense, which is impossible.

(What about our moving ourselves, as when I move my arm? That's only a manner of speaking. We don't really move ourselves. It is a process in our being whereby our act is the one that begins: the will commands, and moves the arms, legs, etc. It is not that we move ourselves, because nothing can move itself. What happens is that we are made of parts and potencies. In act, we are only one thing, but in potency we are many things. We have many potencies, not only transient but permanent, like the potency of walking. Since we are made up of parts, there is no contradiction in saying that we move ourselves, understanding it in the sense that we move ourselves, underrstanding it in the sense that some part of myself moves another part. Nothing moves itself as such.)

That is the same from? Where does it come from? From nowhere? source of motion? We must come to a first cause, which is (i) uncause, and (ii) the cause of everything else. And which is (i) uncause, and so we come to one which is no motion, which is not course does not make sense. This demonstration proves not only that God must exist, but that He is pure act.

When Aristotle used this proof, he did not conclude that that "pure act" must be God. His "pure act" or "first mover", is not the supreme being for him. This is because he did not conceive "act", as St. Thomas does (i.e. as "act of being"), but only as the act of potency or of existing. This is because it with God pure, i.e. as the fulness of being, and so identifies it with God himself.

The second way begins with another fact of experience, namely the fact of activity or efficient causality. We observe that things act: by acting they produce effects, they cause, that things act; by acting they produce effects, they cause, they are efficient causes or agents. "To produce", means to cause efficiently, to cause an effect efficiently.

Now, for a cause to act, it has to be in act, in act of being, because activity follows being (cf. ch. 16, c): *operari sequitur esse*. Nothing causes unless it exists. When we see causes producing effects (like a cat begetting kittens), we can ask the question, How has this cause come to be in the first place, since in order to act, one has to be? Is this being of the effect cause in the same sense. Therefore, no cause can cause "cause itself", something would have to be both in act and in potency in the same sense. We have seen, in order to move up of parts, like the potency of walking. Since we are made up of parts, there is no contradiction in saying that we move ourselves, underrstanding it in the sense that some part of myself moves another part. Nothing moves itself as such.)

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### c. The second way: activity

That is the same from? Where does it come from? From nowhere? source of motion? We must come to a first cause, which is not course does not make sense. This demonstration proves not only that God must exist, but that He is pure act.

When Aristotle used this proof, he did not conclude that that "pure act" must be God. His "pure act" or "first mover", is not the supreme being for him. This is because he did not conceive "act", as St. Thomas does (i.e. as "act of being"), but only as the act of potency or of existing. This is because it with God pure, i.e. as the fulness of being, and so identifies it with God himself.

The second way begins with another fact of experience, namely the fact of activity or efficient causality. We observe that things act: by acting they produce effects, they cause, they are efficient causes or agents. "To produce", means to cause efficiently, to cause an effect efficiently.

Now, for a cause to act, it has to be in act, in act of being, because activity follows being (cf. ch. 16, c): *operari sequitur esse*. Nothing causes unless it exists. When we see causes producing effects (like a cat begetting kittens), we can ask the question, How has this cause come to be in the first place, since in order to act, one has to be? Is this being of the effect cause in the same sense. We have seen, in order to move up of parts, like the potency of walking. Since we are made up of parts, there is no contradiction in saying that we move ourselves, underrstanding it in the sense that some part of myself moves another part. Nothing moves itself as such.)

## d. The third way: generation and corruption

This is the most difficult of the five. It was taken from Plato and is based on the doctrine of participation. It is the most profound and metaphysical, and so the most convincing. The fourth way begins with a fact of experience which in this case is rather intelligible than sensible, since only the intelligence can perceive it, although it is perceived in sense grasps.

We observe not only that there are types of beings which are generated and corrupted are not necessary; they may or may not be. Now, suppose that all the substances in the universe are like this: would that be possible? If they all might make them be?

What follows from this is that there must be beings which are not like that, which must exist necessarily, which cannot not be. If all of them were possible to be or not to be, none of them would be: therefore, there must be some which cannot not be. And so, there must be one which is necessary for the reason for the necessity of all other necessities. This and is the reason for the necessity of all other necessities. This being which is necessary by itself, must then be „to be“ because it has another step: the distinction between beings which may or may not be, and beings which must be and whose necessity has been given to them by God.

(i) *Predicamental perfections* (see ch. 16, b) or perfections of the essence, founded on the formal act, which is what determines the essence to be what it is, i.e. the essence as essence,

(ii) *Transcendantal or pure perfections*, founded directly on the act of being.

These are two types of perfections of being:

„more“, „less“, mean something only in relation to a those degrees implying the existence of a maximum, because the perfecton. This observation leads us to the principle that of perfection. This observation leads us to the principle that thing, and among living beings there are also obvious degrees thing being shows more perfection of being than an immature observe individuals more perfect than other individuals. A living more perfect than others, but within the same type we are more perfect than others, but within the same type we observe not only that there are types of beings which

„most“, „more“ and the „less“ mean something only in relation to a

thing. These are two types of perfections of being:

Now, that necessity of beings which cannot not be, may again be either by itself or from another (a se or ab alio): some- thing may be either necessary by itself, or necessary because another made it so. But it all of them were „from another“, we would again have a chain ad infinitum, which is impossibi- ble. And so, there must be one which is necessary by itself, which is impossible. This and is the reason for the necessity of all other necessities. This being which is necessary by itself, must then be „to be“ because it has another step: the distinction between beings which may or may not be, and beings which must be and whose necessity has been given to them by God.

Do these perfections have a „more“ and a „less“? Yes. But do they imply a *subsistent maximum*? Can a maximum, say, of the act of being, without considering the act of being, but not by itself. In predicamental perfections there is no sub- sistent maximum. Their maximum would only be in the field but not by itself. No, sensitive life exists in the dog, they imply a *subsistent maximum*? Can a maximum, say, of the act of being, without considering the act of being, but not by itself. In predicamental perfections there is no sub-

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sistent maximum. Their maximum would only be in the field but not by itself. In predicamental perfections there is no sub-

on the act of being, and therefore to be found only in actually existing substances, not in ideas, or abstractions or essences. As we have seen, the perfections of being is the act of being: a being is more perfect as being, the more actual it is. And the more actual it is, the more one, the more true, and the more good it is (see ch. 19). Now, these perfections are participated in the actually existing beings by degrees, and they do impely a subsistent maximum, as otherwise these perfections could not be accounted for. They have these perfections participated, and therefore they must be from another, because it they had those perfections in them selves, namely being itself, unity itself, truth itself, goodness itself, and cause of all these perfects, as well as of the "predicamental" perfections, in all perfects, as we call this Cause, God.

The fourth way is thus like a summary of metaphysics: a laborous but immensely rewarding exercise.

This way is simpler. It starts with the fact of experience that all things act for an end (see ch. 18, f): whatever moves, moves in a direction, towards a destination. There is activity, and there must be a universal intelligence which directs all things to known as end beforehand, but only an intelligence can do this. So, if all things, including non-intelligent ones, act for an end, in order to move towards an end, this end must be from? In order to move towards a destination, what principle follows there? Of course, a definition of God can never be perfect for us to express: strictly speaking, God is ineffable for us, i.e. inexpressible, because He is incomprehensible, as we said in ch. 21, however incomprehensible it may be, about His essence, and this is that He is the fulness of being, substance in itself, ipsum esse subsistens: the source of all being, the being by essence as distinct from the being by participation. This is truly His definition: that He is. For all other beings, "to be", is the act of their essence, for God, "to be", is His very essence.

In other words, if all things act for an end, and it is proper to intelligentence to act for an end, and if even intelligent beings who act for an end are not free to choose the end as such but only the appropriate means, there must be an intelligentence that orders all the beings of the universe to their end. And this infinite and universal intelligentence we call God.

Fifth Way is not that "there is harmony in the universe", as if it were a "clock", implying the existence of a "clock-maker";

we have noted, and called it "this sublime truth", ("hanc sublimis et exodus 3:14 God gives His name to Moses as I AM WHO AM"). There is a correlation of this in divine revelation, when in Exodus 3:14 God gives His name to Moses as I AM WHO AM. This definition: that He is, For all other beings, "to be", is the act of their essence, for God, "to be", is His very essence.

From all that we have been discussing all along, we can say right from the start that we can even give a definition of God, which is metaphysically as good as a definition can be. Of course, a definition of God can never be perfect for us to say anything about its essence or nature of God. There are two questions we can ask about anything, one about its existence and another about its essence or nature of God. So with God, we have first seen the question about its essence or existence, and now we proceed to investigate how much we can know about God, we have first seen the question about His existence, and now we proceed to investigate how much we can know about His nature.

The Five Ways not only prove the existence of God, but give us some glimpses of the essence or nature of God. There are two questions we can ask about anything, one about its existence and another about its essence or nature of God. So with God, we have first seen the question about its essence or existence, and now we proceed to investigate how much we can know about God, we have first seen the question about His existence, and now we proceed to investigate how much we can know about God's nature.

### a. The essence of God

## CHAPTER 23

### God is Ipsum Esse Subsistens

this is the usual misconception of this argument in the history of philosophy. What St. Thomas sees in the universe is order, i.e. ordination to an end in all things, i.e. each thing is ordained to its own end.

(iv) In God there is no composition of essence and the act of being. Since He is esse itself, no essence limits Him. His essence is esse; esse and essence are identical in Him. Otherwise, He would be by participation like all of us creatures, and it the divinity were distinct from the act of being God? That then the act would be caused by something else. That is the case of God, who would have been received by the essence, and so God is not by participation, but by essence.

(v) Because of (iii) and (iv), in God there is no real distinction between the *suppositum* (see ch. 16, d) and the nature, while in man there is. We say that man is a „rational suppositum“ or a „suppositum of a rational nature“. That nature in man is really distinct from the *suppositum* as such. Why? Because the *suppositum* is the actual being that is and exists, while the nature (we say that the *suppositum* subsists in the nature) is what makes the *suppositum* the way it is: not what makes it „to be“, but what makes it „to be what it is“, a person. It is similar to the real distinction between essence and divine essence is then identical with the individuality of God.

(vi) God is, therefore, the supreme unity, because of the perfect identity of essence and esse (see ch. 19, c).

(vii) Divine simplicity is not a simplicity of emptiness, but of finitude richness, finitude of reality possessed in perfect unity of the simplicity of ignorance, for example, is a simplicity of emptiness, while the simplicity of wisdom is a simplicity of wisdom many things, but in having a unified knowledge of reality: non multa, sed multiun).

From this basic definition of God, we can logically deduce the attributes of God. „Attributes“ are predicates one can apply to a subject as belonging to its essence. And the first Being Itself, is absolute *simplicity*, i.e. that He has no composition of parts at all. This is because esse itself implies perfect simplicity: it implies nothing else (see ch. 7, d, and 14, c). „To be a horse“, for example, implies composition, but „to be does not, and that is precisely what God is: To Be Itself.

Now, if God is absolutely simple, the following points follow again logically:

(i) God is not a body. He is not „corporeal“: there are no quantitative parts in Him. This would imply potentiality in God, since parts are related to the whole as potency to act, but God is pure act of being. „Materiality“ in relation to pure potentiality or to nothing is a „perfection“, but it cannot be attributed to God, albeit to an infinite degree. Therefore, correlation between their essence, such as spirituality or intelligence, can be as we said in ch. 21, h, only perfections without imperfection attributed to God since it implies imperfection in itself, and, but it raises our minds towards the Spirit (cf. Jn. 4:24).

(ii) Since God is spirit, there is in Him no composition of matter and form, because matter is passive potency and God is pure act. What is composed of matter and form is good because of the form, not because of the matter. Since „form“ is what determines the matter, and „good“ is the perfection of being (cf. ch. 19, e), a thing is good on account of its form, not on account of its matter, although it is not actualized by the form is also good, but only by participation.

(iii) God is a substance without accidents. The „substance“ of God is identical with His essence, although it is not convertible to call God a „substance“, for various historical reasons. There is nothing „accidental“ in God, because a substance is related to its accidents as potency to act (see ch. 13).

million dollars in our imagination". For something "to be good", it has to be actually there.

Now, if "to be", and "to be good", are interchangeable,

and God is To Be Itself, He must be Supreme Goodness; if He

is Subsistent Being Itself, He must be Subsistent Goodness also. And if being is called good in the sense that it is the object of an inclination or tendency to an end, as we saw, the

Supreme Goodness must be the object of ultimately all inclinations, namely the most valuable being. God is the last end of

creatures, in so far as they all tend to the fulness of their

being. All of them tend to God by nature, but only the spiritual

creatures tend to God consciously and freely, and can actually

adhere to Him by knowledge and love. This is precisely the

first commandment of the natural law: that spiritual creatures

should love God above all things and with their whole heart,

as otherwise they frustrate their nature. (See ch. 32, c, and 37, h)

If God is our last end, we have to love Him with an absolu-

tute love, i.e., above all things and without any conditions.

Absolutum in Latin means "united"; it somehow is tied down,

and I unite him, I "absolve" him (hence, "absolution" from

"absolute", i.e., tied to something). The love of God

"absolute" is relative, i.e., tied to some thing; the opposite of

"absolute", it means then "free from any ties"; The love of God

should interfere.

It is the Last End, the supreme goodness, and all other goods

are ends are subordinated to Him, and no other ends

we must love God and all that has to do with Him in proportion

The first quality of the love of God is that it has to be

#### e. How God should be loved

God is also supreme goodness. We have seen that "being" and "unity" are interchangeable, since every being is one, and "goodness": "being", and "good" are also interchangeable, because whatever is good, is something that it is, is good, and whatever is good, is good in reality, is it good? No. In fact, we call it "no good" in English, as when we say that "it's no good having a

#### d. The supreme goodness of God

As for the intimacy of God in every created being, see ch.

no empty spaces. (See ch. 19, h, and 22, e)

without any gaps at all: Esse Itself implies no limitation, what is complete and has no defect, no empty spaces, so to speak, no gaps in its being. The being of God is perfectly mass, etc.

And thus God is also infinitely perfect. "Perfect" means cause in the universe (He has to be outside the universe), moreover, if He is the first uncaused cause, He cannot be one of those God is the first unmoved mover, He cannot be one of those who cause in the universe (He has to be outside the universe), We can also see this as we go through the Five Ways: if

being, while in the Creator there is no real composition at all. creatures there is a real composition of essence and act of creation difference between creatures and act of the Creator, since in part of it, as God is the fulness of being, and all other things impossible for God to be confused with the universe or any errors are due to lack of understanding, since it is the sun, or the wind, or the forces of nature, or just Nature, "soul" of the universe. People sometimes have worshipped or the belief that the universe is God, or that God is the clearly understood, and there are many varieties of pantheism, between God and the universe. This is sometimes not the same between God and the universe, or the forces of nature, or the belief that the universe is God, or that God is the

love, an order which is determined by proximity to God. There are things, however, which are closer to Him than others, and to that extent more lovable; there must be order in creature of God; we must love the entire creation of God. Everything has to do with God, because everything is a feature of God: we must love the entire creation of God, because whatever is a being, The same thing happens with goodness: "being", and "good" are also interchangeable,

to its proximity to Him. The second is that it has to be total. In other words, absolute. The first quality of the love of God is that it has to be

In a Christian context, and in the light of this metaphysical doctrine, what we call *apostolate* or *euangellization* means helping others to love God: any other help we can give them must aim at this. It is the first requirement and expression of love for others, because to love someone means to want the best for him, and "the best", i.e. the Supreme Good, is God (and to love oneself truly means to direct oneself to God).

And finally, since God has the maximum richness of perfection and unity, God is *Beauty Itself* (perfect harmony of unity and variety). From this we can draw the metaphysical consequence that to know God and to love Him is the greatest happiness for spiritual creatures, because the experience of beauty makes an intelligent creature (a person) happy or ecstatic (beyond himself): the more beauty he can experience, the more ecstasy he becomes, but God is infinite subsistent Beauty. As we have seen, however, beauty cannot be separated from goodness (of truth and unity), and so the contem- plation and enjoyment of God (Beatific Vision) can only be attained, or "inchoated" (initiated) in this life, by those who have absolutely renounced evil and committed themselves unconditionally to good (to the pursuit of holiness).

(i) From the infinity of the *Essence*, it follows that God is everywhere: He is *immense* (see ch. 24, f.).

(ii) If He has the totality of *esse*, He cannot change into something else, since this would be an imperfection: He is *immutable* (which is not the same as "static").

(iii) And if He cannot change, He possesses His Being all at once, without any kind of transition: He is *eternal*.

#### f. Immensity, immutability, eternity

is, in the classical definition of Boethius (5th century), "the "forever". But we are not eternal, strictly speaking. Eternity but because of our immortal souls we have no end, we are "forever", like for example our own being: we have a beginning, but because of our immortal souls we have no end, we are "forever", "Eternal" does not quite mean "forever". The latter term may mean something which had a beginning but will have no end, like for example our own being: we have a beginning, but because of our immortal souls we have no end, we are "forever".

Otherwise we will go against our conscience, and thus sin. If we take God seriously, we will always find ourselves short of love of God, and therefore in the need of making a constant amendment against self-complacency, against tepidity or indifference to God. This is the best metaphorical resolution of loving Him more and not falling into the rut of love of self, and therefore in the need of making a constant amendment against self-complacency, against tepidity or indifference to God. Who can dare to say, "I'm lukewarmness and mediocrity. Who can dare to say, "I'm good enough", "I cannot be better than I am?"

Sometimes are secondary, though not to be despised; but the commandments, without which there is no real human love. How we must love God: first with our will, i.e. obeying His only led by short-lived sentiments and feelings). This is then the rest of the person follows (animals, on the other hand, love the will initiates the movement towards it (love), and then the sentiments and feelings). The intellect perceives the Good, but from the will involves the entire person, with his where does love issue from? From what faculty or power? With all his powers or the very centre of the self. In a person, "Total" means here (this is also its biblical meaning) the whole person ought to be loved more.

"Total" means also that this love of God must be "with our whole heart", i.e. with all one's capacity for love. "Heart" cerebrally strives to live a holy life, and so look more like God, But there is another criterion, aside from "proximity to God", namely *likeness to God*. In this sense, those who sin then the people closest to us: parents, brothers, sisters, etc.

the Church, and in the Church, the Pope and so forth; and to God? His Blessed Mother; and then St. Joseph; and then above all things after the Divinity. And then, what is closest grace. The humanity of Christ, therefore, ought to be loved the Divine Person, and so it is the joint instrument of divine grace. Specifically for us Christians, the closest reality to God is the humanity of Christ, because it is "hypostatically" joined to the Divine Person, and so it is the joint instrument of divine grace. The humanity of Christ, therefore, ought to be loved above all things after the Divinity. And then, what is closest to God? His Blessed Mother; and then St. Joseph; and then

## CHAPTER 24

# Divine Operation

### a. God is personal

We have seen that between the divine esse and the divine

essence there is perfect identity. Therefore, there is a perfect identity of all the perfections of God with His essence. We

can we apply to God the perfection of "life"? Yes, as long as we purify it from "sensitivity", since sensitivity is matter-bound: that leaves the "spiritual" life of intelligence loves infinitely.

The logical sequence will be to examine (i) divine know ledge; (ii) divine will; (iii) divine activity; since our topic is divine operation, but divine operation assumes a divine will and a divine intelligence, as directing operation to an end.

What can we know about divine knowledge? First of all, God's intelligence is infinite. What is the appropriate object of divine intelligence? It must be "infinity being", namely Himself.

We can say, therefore, that God knows Himself completely, i.e., leaving nothing out of His knowledge (in contrast with that extent). And this divine knowledge is identical with His Being.

When we contemplate the immensity and infinity of the Being of God in comparison to our creaturehood, our attitude reason out of the abundance of light (see ch. 21, h.).

God and all divine things, as always surpassing our fancy of God and all creation, we must accept the mystery of the arrogancy of rationalism: we cannot understand God or divine matters perfectly well. We can mind, the intellectual humility of not expecting that we can bring, petition and preparation), including the humility of the should be one of deep humility (of adoration and thanksgiving). Beings of God in comparison to our creaturehood, our attitude and therefore eternal.

That cannot change, because it is divine, doctrine of salvation (the life of Christ in the Sacraments and in the sanctification (the life of the Church), we mean its power of for the better. But it by "the Church", we mean the people in what is human. If by "the Church", we mean the course from God, that is, the Church in what is divine in it, not of because the Church is perfect in that sense, since it comes not for the Church to change: not in dogma and morals, day of my life I should try to become a little better). But it is not change at all. Of course, I am changing all the time (every change was not perfect, it means that the thing that has been changed is for the better, it is for the worse, the conclusion is obvious. Change may be good, but only if it is for the worse! At any rate, change always implies imperfection, the worse! It depends: if it is for the better, yes, but not if it is for good? It would be just another human institution. Is change change, it means that the thing that has been changed is for the better, it is for the worse, the worse!, to hear the undoubted statement that the Church "has to change". If the Church is the instrument that the Church "has to change", it is for the latter, since the latter implies change.

It is disturbing, therefore, to hear the undoubted state- tion or transition, since the latter implies change.

is the manner of His abiding in being, of His enduring or duration, a manner fully transcending time and any type of dura- tion, a manner fully transcending time and any type of success- possessees His Being all at once, totally and perfectly: eternity and perfection, He God cannot change, for this would imply possessio- nis, (interminabilius autem tota similitate perfecta possesso). Since total, simultaneous and perfect possession of life without

Now, by knowing Himself, God knows all His creatures in their first cause. This is why His knowledge of creatures infinite surpasses any created knowledge. Intelligent creatures know by going from the effect to the cause (science is the knowledge of causes, as we said). But God knows His creatures without any self-interest or compensation, sheer self-giving, throughout all time. (This is, by the way, the type of love commanded by Christ for His disciples to have for one another; cf. Jn. 13:34-35).

The power of God, the "active potency" of God, is almighty or omnipotent, since there is no limit to His Being, and His activity is identical with it.

#### d. Divine omnipotence

One agent *agitat sibi simile*: "every agent produces an effect similar to itself". The type of production of an agent bears the imprint or stamp of the producer. A thing acts according to its nature (cf. ch. 17, c), and what it produces is similar to its nature.

Now, God is the infinite Being in whom the perfection of every being is contained in the whom the perfection of God. And this greatest act of omnipotence is the forgiveness of the representative sinner, given the infinite malice of the offence done. Like a square circle, since what is impossible can not be (it is impossible to ask whether He can do everything possible). We can say that His power is almighty: He can do everything possible follows the intelligence. And just as the understanding of God is identical with His Being, His willing or loving is also identical with His Being. Since He is a perfect identity of the Being of God with itself.

Since there is a perfect identity of the Being of God with itself, but the infinite loving possession of goodness tends to the good, since He cannot tend to something better than Himself, but the infinite loving possession of goodness tends to the infinite loveable object: the infinite goodness which is self, because He is the supreme goodness. He infinitely loves the infinite loveable object, the infinite love of Himself loves Himself perfectly and absolutely, and by loving Himself knows His creatures, and by knowing Himself He knows His creatures comprehensively, and by knowing Himself He knows Himself. And as we said about divine knowledge (that He knows Himself infinitely) loves the infinite goodness which is self, because His infinite proportionate object of His love? Himself says (cf. 1 Jn. 4:7-16).

His willing and loving, God is Love, which is in fact what the Bible says (cf. 1 Jn. 4:7-16). Since there is a perfect identity of the Being of God with itself, but the infinite loving possession of goodness tends to the good, since He cannot tend to something better than Himself. And therefore, the will of God is not just a call with His Being. His willing or loving is also identical with the intellect with His Being. And just as the understanding of God follows the intelligence. And because the will comes from the will that "Love comes from the will".

The will, as we shall see in ch. 29, is the power of tending towards good, the inclination to the good. This inclination is what is called love: that is why we said in the previous chapter that "Love comes from the will".

We can say that God wills and loves, because the will follows the intelligence. And just as the understanding of God is identical with His Being, His willing or loving is also identical with His Being. Since He is a perfect identity of the Being of God with itself.

#### c. Divine will: God is Love

Now, by knowing Himself, God knows all His creatures in their first cause. This is why His knowledge of creatures infinite surpasses any created knowledge. Intelligent creatures know by going from the effect to the cause (science is the knowledge of causes, as we said). But God knows His creatures without any self-interest or compensation, sheer self-giving, throughout all time. (This is, by the way, the type of love commanded by Christ for His disciples to have for one another; cf. Jn. 13:34-35).

God's love for His creatures, however, is a pure love of God's goodness (see ch. 16, c, and ch. 24, g). He loves His creatures. He loves His creatures perfectly and absolutely, and by loving Himself loves the infinite loveable object, the infinite love of Himself.

God is the cause of the being or esse of everything. Why? Because whatever esse is participated must be caused by the cause of the being or esse of everything. Why? (see ch. 16, b).

The efficient cause is more on the transcendental level of being. The formal cause is on the pre-diamental level, while the latter points to the essence, while the former points to the while the formal cause makes the effect to be what it is. The efficient cause is that which makes the effect be or become, (see ch. 18, d).

#### e. God as creator

God is the efficient cause of the universe (see ch. 18, d).

Because whatever esse is participated must be caused by the cause of the being or esse of everything. Why?

To create is proper and exclusive of God, since "to create" means to give the esse. Every being acts according to its nature (cf. ch. 16, d); but the nature of God is to be. Therefore, in this case no instrumental cause is possible: God does not create and our being in another (it may be activity or substance) and our needs and thus reach our goal.

In other words, why we have our activity in some place tickal, and that is why we may have our activity in some place are identical; therefore, wherever He acts, there He is. In our case, activity and being (accident and substance) are not identical; therefore, wherever He acts, there He is, because His presence to remove His presence, things would be annihilated, they would fall back into nothingness. We can conclude, therefore, as St. Thomas does, that God is in all things: it God were to remove His presence, things would be annihilated; my activity is distinct from my being). But that is not the case with God: wherever He acts, there He is. This means that from God. by speaking to him, but this does not mean that I am in him: my activity is distinct from my being).

(i) by essence, because He preserves them in being by Himself; (ii) by power, because He directs them and acts upon them;

(iii) by presence, because He directs them and acts upon them,

Thus, the presence of God, His imminence, as we saw above, is all-pervasive: God is everywhere, by His activity in the world, on all things. This is very relevant for our trying to live in the presence of God, and that God loves us with an infinite love, we feel the need to be good, as He is.

Remember also, however, the transcendence of God, as explained in ch. 23, c.

Summing up, God creates the world freely, not by necessity, because the divine action is creative is identical with His being: creation is thus the overflow of His goodness and love.

Because He does not need anything, since He is the perfect In relation to this, the last point concerning the causality of God is divine Providence. "To provide" means to foresee the future and supply what is needed for it. God is "provident" with His creatures in that He gives them what they need in order to attain their end. For instance, He gives us our intelligence and our will, and all our bodily powers, for us to support our needs and thus reach our goal.

In other words, God's creatures in that He gives us our intelligence and our will, and all our bodily powers, for us to support our needs and thus reach our goal.

## 6. Divine freedom and Providence

That God is what makes things be, means that He not only has created the universe at the beginning, but is preserving it from the preservation of all creatures in being, which also comes from God.

There is a very important consequence of this (one of the most important of all): if He is preserving the being of every- thing all the time, He must be intimately present to everything all the time. Why? Because in God, as we said, activity and being

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## f. God's presence everywhere

In the things below man, the substantial form is always "becoming" of things (see ch. 18, d).

In other causes are "second causes", since they only cause the "become". Only God is "first cause", or author of the "to be": table "be"? No. What he does is to make it "come to be", or here because God makes it be. Does the carpenter make the table "be",? They only have being. Therefore, whatever exists, is not being; and so only He can give being. Other things are processes), this activity consists in making things be: only not talking of the intra-divine activities, like the "initiation in other words, if His activity goes out of Himself (we are from God.

through instruments, because nothing else can give esse, apart case no instrumental cause is possible: God does not create (cf. ch. 16, d); but the nature of God is to be. Therefore, in this case, activity and being acts according to its nature

To create is proper and exclusive of God, since "to create" means to give the esse. Every being acts according to its nature (cf. ch. 16, d); but the nature of God is to be. Therefore, in this case no instrumental cause is possible: God does not create and our being in another (it may be activity or substance) and our needs and thus reach our goal.

This truth is, like all divine things, full of mystery. It is indeed mysterious how God can direct someone respecting his freedom at the same time. We do know, however, that God directs us to our end, and that we are free, and thus perfectly responsible for all that we do. The rest is mysterious. Divine government (directing to the end, but respecting personal rights) is the authority of God: religious authorities, parental authorities, civil authorities, academic authorities. . . The model is the principle of subsidiarity, whereby what can be done by the smaller body should not be done by the bigger one: the child must be taught how to walk, so that he can do it by himself, without overprotection. (See ch. 33, f, and 38, b)

# PART V

## Metaphysics of Man

### CHAPTER 25

#### Introduction

##### a. Recapitulation: metaphysics as comprehensive knowledge

At the beginning of the Church, in order to explain the faith better, the early Christians resorted to philosophy. "Theology" is the elaboration of our faith; the elucidation or understanding of our faith: *fides quaerens intellectum*, faith seeking understanding. It is in the Christian person, "reason", seeking understanding. "Philosophy", on the other hand, is also "doing" philosophy. Reason is used in both theology and philosophy (see ch. 2, c).

The early Christians received the faith, tried to better understand what it contained, and developed a body of truths about reality which, although philosophical, would not have come about without the faith (see ch. 3, c). We have seen the importance of studying this Christian "philosophy", (i) because it is like a bridge with non-believers, and (ii) because it is the instrument of "handmaid" of theology.