

**“DIVINE DRUNKENNESS”:  
THE SECRET LIFE OF THOMISTIC REASON<sup>1</sup>**

In the modern age, it appears to be taken for granted, or was until fairly recently, that such a thing as “pure reason” exists, that we are to take it as our guide in developing philosophical positions, evaluating moral issues, framing political constitutions. For medieval thinkers, however, this view is as hypothetical—and as counterfactual—as the larger supposition of which it forms a part, namely “a state of pure nature,” which might have been, but never was. For St. Thomas Aquinas, whom I shall consider in this article, reason, having within itself a seed of transcendence meant to mature by the dew of grace into the fruit of eternal life, can never be “just” reason: man is either living *below* reason by leading the life of a well-adapted but still earth-bound animal, or *beyond* reason by aiming at perfect union with the divine good, the mind’s (and the whole man’s) ultimate perfection.<sup>2</sup> My purpose in what follows is to articulate the manner in which reason, for Thomas, is a power created to flourish in the hospitable world of revelation and ultimately the beatific vision, in such a way that philosophy and human virtues are not negated, since grace truly builds upon nature, but are decisively subordinated to and fulfilled in a super-rational destiny beyond their grasp. This implies a consequence foreign to much contemporary work on Aquinas, namely, that reason cut off from the supernatural life of grace is operating unnaturally, contrary to its God-given *telos*, and that this state of affairs may rightly be called mental sickness. The opposite state, mental health, is identified by Thomas as a state of sober drunkenness, in other words, a state of *extasis* in which reason stands ‘outside itself’. I conclude with reflections on the social-political consequences of this view.

The article’s title is intended to express three points. First, for Aquinas, the power of reason is in no sense autonomous or sufficient unto itself; it was created to drink of the excess of divine wisdom and love, to the point of ‘inebriation’, and this is its true *life*.<sup>3</sup> Second, this transcendent vocation of reason is truly a secret, for it is hidden in the depths of the Creator’s intention and was revealed to us by Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It is therefore not within reach of the ‘natural’ man, even the ‘virtuous pagan’ who measures all things by the rule of a reason unilluminated by faith, unformed by charity. The *social* significance of this difference deserves renewed attention. Finally, Thomistic reason has a “secret life” in a historical sense. In the long history of Thomism, while many commentators have acknowledged the *supernatural* context in which their master assesses the faculty and functioning of reason, this truth has not established itself as an ele-

mentary and characteristic feature of Thomism, whereas a good case can be made that when we fail to see it so, we are on the road to abandoning what is deepest and most Christian in St. Thomas's doctrine.

## I. LOVE IS FOUNDED UPON KNOWLEDGE

In order to talk about love with any precision, we must get clear what kind of love we are speaking of, towards what object, for what motive. All love is founded upon knowledge, whether sense-perception, intuition, science, opinion, the subtle interpersonal knowledge of friendship, or faith in revealed truth.<sup>4</sup> Such are the different types of soil in which love's vineyards are planted, giving a distinctive flavor to the wines they produce. Love always bears the signature of the knowledge that furnishes it with its object, and while love can, in this life, reach *further* than knowledge,<sup>5</sup> it remains dependent on its initial provision of object, and will only attain perfection when the cloud of unknowing is dispersed.<sup>6</sup>

A further conclusion follows. Although love is not determined solely by knowledge, it receives dignity or shame, rectitude or perversity, sacredness or profanity, from the knowledge that feeds it. For example, sensual love is dignified when its source of energy is not mere sense-pleasure but intelligible goodness, as when husband and wife come together not as animals driven by tactile instinct but as persons rejoicing in their nuptial communion with its awesome potentialities for new life. Sensation, of itself, begets a love limited to the sensible domain. But assumed into the domain of reason, sensuality is dignified by its order to reason or made shameful by its rebellion against it. Sensual love is right when the knowledge associated with it is enfolded within the intellectual order, in a total act governed by reason's discernment of the *due good* to be achieved by that total act according to its kind. Thus, in my example, while the nuptial act has many dimensions, sensual and spiritual, with a *telos* woven of two strands, the unitive and the procreative, reason can discern that the total act is generative in kind, and thus, that the due good of offspring is never to be excluded by changing the nature of the act, as when a natural process that may lead to offspring is obstructed. Human sensuality is rendered beautiful when it is rational through and through. What 'rational' means here, however, is precisely the inquiry we have to make.

The difference between the nuptial act and its manifold simulacra, and in general, between a good act and a bad one, has much to do with the kind of knowledge *active* and *operative* and with the order placed into knowledges involved in a given act. Free activity flowing from well-ordered reason is morally good, delightful, and meritorious.<sup>7</sup> If reason's apprehension of the good is true (that is, in accordance with eternal law<sup>8</sup>), and if subsequent acts of reason and will take place along a path that seeks this good without deviation or distortion (that is, with a view to the ultimate end acknowledged in its true identity<sup>9</sup>), then all of the energy of love, from the first obscure stirrings of volition to the final execution

sharp as cut crystal, is itself good, praiseworthy, holy, and salvific.<sup>10</sup> If, however, reason apprehends as a fitting good something unsuitable for man—something that, *in reality*, obstructs the end God, his Creator, has appointed for him—then the whole energy of love unleashed by that false knowledge is off the mark, vitiated, unholy, unavailing for salvation.<sup>11</sup> The immense and, in this life, vague natural desire that drives man necessarily to the universal good such as he knows it can never be vitiated (*voluntas ut natura*), but the moment this desire is shaped into a distinct and goal-oriented love (*voluntas ut ratio*),<sup>12</sup> it must be either wholesome or corrupt. The human longing to be complete, fulfilled, divine, is incorruptibly good, yet it is the goodness of promise, not of harvest—the seed, not the fruiting plant. Fulfillment in the flowering of grace, yielding in due season a rich harvest of glory, is the unqualified good for man; this is the concrete, realized goodness of the saint.<sup>13</sup>

Such is the conclusion that follows from the analysis of man's last end, of human acts and passions, virtues and vices, of law and grace, unfolded in the impressive *Secunda pars* of the *Summa theologiae*. What is the root of this view? What implications does it have?

## II. FAITH, FOOLISHNESS, AND THE FONT OF LIFE

The root of this view is simple. Revelation alone gives man the knowledge of his ultimate end.<sup>14</sup> Only in the act of faith is this end received, taken into one's home under cover of darkness; the intellect adheres to this end by an act of will, which moves the intellect to assent to what it cannot see.<sup>15</sup> This unseeing faith determines the course of one's entire life. The resounding affirmations of the Creed, when spoken from the heart, give to human life a new orientation: to God, to Spirit, to heaven, to invisible and divine things, and at the same time, to the poor, the little, the neglected, the oppressed.<sup>16</sup> It gives one an orientation diametrically opposed to the spirit of this world, the pride of the father of lies.<sup>17</sup> If her faith is made living and life-giving by charity, the believer determines all her actions in reference to the end received in faith and held out to hope: eternal happiness with God through entering into the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Since love is the innermost, ever-abiding source of motion and rest, of action and contemplation, love develops into faithful love or faithless love. Faithless love includes all appetitive acts which terminate in a good not ordained (or worse, not ordainable), here and now, to God. Faithful love is the will's *complacentia* in the blessed God as *my end*, the end *I myself* aspire to attain through His gracious willing of it.<sup>18</sup>

It is at this point that we must size up what the Christian is claiming: that *God*, the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, all-perfect, all-holy, has called man to a

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share in His eternal life, His infinite love and joy—and that He has made Christ the way, His Cross the gate, for entering this life.<sup>19</sup> In the words of Robert Barron:

All of Christian life begins with Jesus because in him we see the meeting of two ecstasies, that of God and that of the human being. For Thomas the most impressive and powerful aspect of the Incarnation is its surprise. God's decision to join us human beings in our own flesh, in time and space, in all of the weakness and suffering of our finitude, is something in the presence of which astonishment is the only proper response. God must be a reality stranger, more powerful, more wonderful than we can imagine. Though God needs us not, though God is utterly self-sufficient, God nevertheless goes out of himself, in an unheard-of ecstasy, and becomes one of us. There is, in all of this, says Thomas, an *excessive, ever-greater quality*.<sup>20</sup>

For all his sobriety of manner, Thomas can hardly contain his astonishment: "This truth, that Christ died *for us*, is so tremendous that our intellect can scarcely grasp it; indeed, in no way does it fall within reach of our understanding. ... For so great is His favor and love for us, that He has done more for us than we can possibly grasp."<sup>21</sup> No wonder the Apostle exclaimed, when the Gospel was still an infant in swaddling clothes:

The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart." Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.<sup>22</sup>

These verses are invoked more often by St. Thomas than his undeserved reputation for rationalism would lead one to expect.<sup>23</sup> Or rather, the 'rationalism' one might truthfully speak of searches out and rejoices in divine *rationes*, not human ones, fully expecting to be surprised, even bewildered. "If anyone shall ponder the mystery of the Incarnation diligently and reverently, he shall find such a depth of wisdom as will surpass all human knowledge, according to the saying of the Apostle: 'The foolishness of God is wiser than men.' Hence it is that to those who reverently ponder this mystery, more and more of its marvellous aspects [*rationes*] are revealed."<sup>24</sup> "Something divine appears to be foolish, not because it falls short of wisdom, but because it superexceeds human wisdom. For people are accustomed to judge something foolish if it exceeds their understanding."<sup>25</sup> The

praise of folly reaches its height in the commentary on Dionysius. "The Apostle extols foolishness in God on account of that which appears in the wisdom of God [as] beyond our reason and which seems to us unfitting, as long as we are unable to comprehend God's wisdom; and through this, he raises us to divine truth, which is ineffable to us and exceeds all our reason."<sup>26</sup> Shortly after this last text, Thomas lays out before us the two ultimate possibilities of human life under the reign of grace: relying on what is natural to us and so neglecting union with God, or abandoning ourselves to God and attaining total perfection in this very standing outside of ourselves, conformed to Him by deification.

[O]ur mind stands in two ways to the understanding of intelligible things: first, it has a natural power, i.e., intelligence, through which it can look into intelligible things proportioned to it; second, it has a certain uniting to divine things by grace, which [uniting] exceeds the nature of our mind. By this uniting men are conjoined by faith or any kind of knowledge to those things which are above the natural power of the mind. It is therefore necessary that we understand divine things according to this uniting of grace—not, as it were, by drawing divine things down to those that are at our level, but rather, [by being drawn upwards,] our whole selves standing outside ourselves in God, so that by the afore-said uniting we may be totally deified. And because someone might say that it would be harmful to us if we abandon ourselves, therefore he excludes this concern, where he says "It is better." And he says that, since God is better than we are, it is better for us that we belong to God by the uniting of grace than that we belong to ourselves, i.e., relying on what is natural to us. For, when we are brought together with God, i.e., when we shall have been united with God, divine gifts will come to us which we are not able to receive, if being negligent of uniting with God, we cling to just ourselves.<sup>27</sup>

While the passionate utterances of a Bernard of Clairvaux or a Hugh of St. Victor on love's folly, haste, blindness, violence, and so on are not typical of Thomas's style, the sentiments that give birth to this mystical clamor are no different from those that find expression in his sermons and verses, flaring up from time to time even in his most formal treatises, consecrated to the wisdom that sinners deem lunacy and saints, inebriation.<sup>28</sup> Consider as an example the way in which the prologue to the *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* culminates on a note of drunkenness. At the final branch of his opening *divisio textus*, Thomas explains that the faithful, planted in the garden of the Church and nourished by streams flowing from the side of Christ, are destined to produce the fruits of sanc-

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tity. The Fourth Book treats of the *fructus ecclesiae* from two angles: the sacraments whereby the saints attain glory and the resurrection whereby this glory is consummated. The prologue concludes:

Now the fruits of this birth [of offspring to the Church] are the saints in glory, of which fruit it is written (Song 5:1): "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat the fruit of his apple trees."<sup>29</sup> These He makes drunk by His most abundant fruition, of which drunkenness it is written (Ps. 35:9): "They shall be made drunk by the riches of your house." And 'drunkenness' is said because [that state] exceeds every measure of reason and of desire, whence Is. 64:4 says: "Eye has not seen, O God, apart from you, what you have prepared for those who await you expectantly." And this touches on the matter of the Fourth Book, in the first part of which the sacraments are treated, and in the second part, the glory of the resurrection.<sup>30</sup>

The culmination of Christian theology is mystical drunkenness—a view confirmed by higher authority in that stupefying vision of divine realities Thomas experienced while offering the holy sacrifice of the Mass on December 6, 1273.<sup>31</sup> These two themes of Book Four, as of the *Tertia Pars* in its projected scope, existentially merge in the Eucharist: the Bread of Life (Jn. 6:48) gives life to soul *and* body, soaking the spirit with divine goodness, sowing the seed of immortality in the flesh. The daily, supersubstantial bread come down from heaven<sup>32</sup> is, for Thomas, the agent *par excellence* of life, transformation, drunkenness, ecstasy. How can he express the total effect the Eucharist is meant to have on the well-disposed communicant? "The fire of that desire which is in us, taking ignition from the burning coal (that is, from this sacrament) will burn up our sins and light up our hearts, so that by participation of the divine fire we may be set on fire and deified."<sup>33</sup> United to Jesus "through faith and love," the communicant "is transformed into Him and becomes His member: for this food is not changed into the one who eats it, but turns into itself the one who takes it ... This is a food capable of making man divine and inebriating him with divinity."<sup>34</sup> "The proper effect of this sacrament is the conversion of man into Christ, that it might be said with the Apostle, 'I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me' (Gal. 2:20)."<sup>35</sup> "Charity's work is transforming the lover into the beloved, for as Dionysius says, charity makes for ecstasy. And since the growth of virtue in this sacrament takes place by the conversion of the one eating into the spiritual food, therefore growth in charity is more [specially] attributed to this sacrament than growth in other virtues."<sup>36</sup> "Through this sacrament's power the soul gains spiritual nourishment, for the soul is gladdened and, in a way, inebriated with the sweetness of divine goodness, as we read in the Song (5:1): 'Eat, friends, and drink, and be drunk, my dearly beloved.'<sup>37</sup> On the verse "My cup which inebriates me, how goodly it is!" (Ps. 22:5), Thomas comments: "This cup is the gift of divine love which inebriates, since one who is drunk is not in himself, nor speaks according to himself, but according to the impetus of the wine. In this

way, the one who is filled with divine love speaks according to God, for he is made to be in ecstasy. 'Eat, friends, and be drunk' (Song 5:1) ... Or the cup means the blood of Christ, which ought to make us drunk."<sup>38</sup> And to illustrate the verse "You will make them drink of the torrent of your pleasure" (Ps. 35:9), Thomas makes a comparison: "just as those who keep their mouth on the opening of a bottle of wine get drunk, so those who hold their mouth, that is, desire, to the font of life and sweetness are made drunk."<sup>39</sup> The result?

They who are drunk are not *in* themselves but *outside* themselves. So it is with those who are filled with spiritual charisms: their whole intention is borne into God, "our conversation is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20). And they are nourished not only by gifts, but also by the love of God: "Then you shall abound in delights in the Almighty, and shall lift up your face to God" (Job 22:26). This is the love of the Holy Spirit, who makes an impetus in the soul like a torrent—"as if a violent river, which the Spirit of the Lord compels on its way" (Is. 59:19).<sup>40</sup>

### III. *RECTA RATIO* IS REASON SOBERLY DRUNK

These sorts of statements, too frequent to be incidental, give us an unexpected key to Thomas's understanding of what reason truly is and how it is meant to function.<sup>41</sup> There is no such thing as "neutral reason." Reason is the spiritual being's astonishing capacity for assimilating and identifying with reality. Hence, when reason conforms to things as they are, it is perfected, it is "right." One could hardly find a better elucidation of this point than Josef Pieper's:

Reason includes a reference to reality; indeed, it is itself this reference. "In accord with reason" is in this sense that which is right "in itself," that which corresponds to reality itself. ... [*R*]atio is not that reason which arbitrarily restricts itself to the province of purely natural cognition. *Ratio* here signifies—in its widest sense—man's power to grasp reality. Now, man grasps reality not only in natural cognition but also—and this reality is a higher object of knowledge and the process of grasping it a higher process—by faith in the revelation of God. If therefore the *Summa Theologica* states that Christ is the chief Lord (*principalis Dominus*), the first owner of our bodies, and that one who uses his body in a manner contrary to order, injures Christ the Lord Himself, Thomas is not of the opinion that this proposition exceeds the pattern of "mere" rational order, but rather that for Christian thought to be guided by divine revelation is the very highest form of "accord with reason"—this in spite of the fact that elsewhere Thomas knows how to distinguish

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sharply between natural and supernatural cognition. "The order of reason," accordingly, is the order which corresponds to the reality made evident to man through faith and knowledge.<sup>42</sup>

It is when reason yields itself in faith, surrenders in prayer, touches and embraces divine realities, that it functions most of all *secundum naturam*—not, to be sure, according to a nature which it might be tempted to claim as its own possession, but according to a wholly gratuitous participation in that higher nature for the sole sake of whom it was created and is given being at every moment.<sup>43</sup> For Thomas, it is in *oratio* that *ratio* discovers its pilgrim purpose, performs its most profitable activity, finds its singing voice.<sup>44</sup> Reason is perfected in praise, confession, adoration. Without this work of God, it becomes a house divided against itself, built on shifting sands.

It is significant that Thomas shows no hesitation in accepting the Dionysian portrayal of the life of faith as an *excessus* or *extasis* which readily invites the world's mockery:

He who is united to the truth in faith knows well how well it is for him, by thus adhering to the truth of the faith, even though many reproach him as having suffered ecstasy, that is, as a fool and alienated from himself; for owing to their errors, it is hidden to the ones who make reproaches, that he without doubt suffered, by the true faith, the ecstasy of truth, as if placed outside all sense and conjoined to supernatural truths, since he, as a believer, knows within himself that he is not insane, as they are saying, but he is liberated by the simple truth which always abides in the same way, not tossed about by the unstable and changeable winds of diverse errors.<sup>45</sup>

To the world, the serious Christian appears mad, besotted, out of his wits.<sup>46</sup> Paraphrasing Dionysius, Thomas turns this derogatory judgment on its head: "the divine wisdom is *more highly praised* as irrational, inasmuch as it exceeds reason; and as mad, inasmuch as it exceeds the mind or intellect; and as foolish, in as much as it exceeds the habit of mind, namely wisdom."<sup>47</sup> The infinite God exceeds all that finite reason, mind, and wisdom can attain. The life of one who participates in the life of this infinite God cannot fail to exceed the bounds set up by the prudence of the flesh and the wisdom of the world, the bounds taken to characterize 'sanity': reasonable self-interest, bourgeois moderation, minding one's own business.<sup>48</sup> But this kind of 'sanity' is, from the vantage of God and those who live in God, the worst sickness, the most abysmal failure. In reality, the ecstasy of Christian life is pure, transcendent sanity.<sup>49</sup> According to St. Thomas, health or sanity of mind, *sanitas mentis*, is twofold:

one kind is that by which the mind is cleansed from guilt by the grace of faith, and this health makes one see that inaccessible brilliance [of the divine nature] through a mirror and in riddles. Another kind is that by which it is cleansed of all guilt and punishment and misery, which will

happen through [attaining] glory; and this health will make one see God face to face.<sup>50</sup>

There is no such thing as non-religious sanity. The man separated from God is sick in his whole being, for flesh and spirit mirror one another.

According to nature's order, owing to the tying-together of the soul's powers in one essence and of soul and body in the composite's one being, the higher and lower powers, even body and soul, let flow from one to the other whatever superabounds in any one of them; this explains why from the soul's apprehension the body is changed with regard to heat and cold, sometimes to the extent of health and sickness, and even death; for it does happen that a person meets with death from joy or sorrow or love. And hence it is that there occurs in the glorified body an overflowing of the soul's very glory ... and contrariwise, a change of the body overflows into the soul. For a soul joined to the body imitates its make-up in point of insanity or docility and other such things.<sup>51</sup>

*Human* health is first and foremost the health of the *soul* healed by grace in this world, made blessed in the world to come. Only secondarily, in strict reference to the soul, is bodily health a human goal as opposed to an animal condition.<sup>52</sup> In this teaching we can see how deep-seated is the opposition between Thomas and modern rationalists, if we may take as their representative the philosopher who saw in the abolition of disease and the prolongation of bodily life mankind's highest achievements.<sup>53</sup> One recalls, too, Descartes's comparison of philosophy to a tree whose root is metaphysics, whose trunk is physics, and whose three branches are medicine, mechanics, and morals. "Now just as it is not the roots or the trunk of a tree from which one gathers the fruit, but only the ends of the branches, so the principal benefit of philosophy depends on those parts of it which can only be learnt last of all."<sup>54</sup> The fruit of knowledge is, on the bodily side, an abundance of devices for postponing or tranquilizing death and, on the psychic side, the gritty Stoicism to accept life in a universe of indifferent and impersonal forces.<sup>55</sup>

A few moments ago we saw Thomas speaking of the ecstasy of truth and liberation from error experienced by the one who welcomes God's revelation of Himself, regardless of the contempt—and possibly the violence—of unbelievers.<sup>56</sup> Though no mention is made of violence in the *Divine Names* passage, Thomas's teaching that the God-given capacity to endure martyrdom represents the pinnacle of fortitude indicates that he is keenly aware of the consequences of proclaiming the true religion.<sup>57</sup> It is something his own order of preaching friars experienced early on in the martyrdom of Peter of Verona, who on April 6, 1252

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(about eight years after Thomas had taken the Dominican habit) was waylaid en route to Milan by a Manichaean assassin. Peter is said to have given up his spirit with a poignant gesture: the Manichaean assassin struck him in the head with an axe but the saint, not yet dead, rose to his knees and, dipping his finger in his own blood, wrote on the ground the words CREDO IN DEUM. After this, the murderer finished off his victim with a blow to the heart. Nearly every Dominican church in Europe today houses a prominent image of Peter standing erect with a blade buried in his head. Seeing the image again and again, one might be led to see it as the bearer of a more universal truth: the Christian mind, reason filled with the Gospel, the anointed head, is destined to suffer assault when it confronts the world of disbelief.

The 'world', the *amator mundi*, refuses to believe the wisdom of a crucified God and so rejects the Gospel as sheer nonsense, but more than that, as *socially dangerous* nonsense.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, in modern times, its opponents deem it the greatest possible threat to the "liberal" social order marked by a nearly unlimited freedom for practicing vice, an "order" of moral disorder that can only survive through systematic dechristianization.<sup>59</sup> In the Church's universal missionary impulse, the *amator mundi* is right to sense a threat to his desires. After stating that Christians are to the world as the soul to the body, the author of *The Epistle to Diognetus* (ca. AD 120-200) observes: "The flesh hates the soul, and wars against her without any provocation, because she is an obstacle to its own self-indulgence; and the world similarly hates the Christians without provocation, because they are opposed to its pleasures."<sup>60</sup> This ingenuous remark from Christian antiquity shows us why the modern West, for its part, is regressing ever further into the darkness of a cruel, chaotic paganism much like that from which it was long ago delivered by the preaching of the first missionaries. In every age the pagans, whoever they be, have sought to destroy the Church, in proportion to their awareness of what she endeavors to do. It is not for idle reasons that the winding path of *Veritatis Splendor* passes in the end (§90-§94) through the gates of martyrdom—in the pope's words, "the exaltation of the inviolable holiness of God's law," the eternal law or divine Reason to which St. Thomas attributes the prerogative of being the supreme measure of the created mind and of all free acts.

This being so, the moral implications are potent. Christian and non-Christian do not share the same end of life, or rather, the one embraces his destiny while the other, so long as he seeks for happiness where it cannot be found, sows in vain his seed, which the enemy devours (Lev. 26:16).<sup>61</sup> "Nothing less than everything, than Being itself, than the divine energy will fill up the emptiness of the human heart. Nothing other than a concrete and complete imitation of Christ, the ecstatic lover of God, will bring us to life."<sup>62</sup> The Christian living from faith and the non-Christian living without faith do not share identical perceptions, attitudes, affections:

The dogma of the Trinity reveals to the Christian what Being is in itself.

... Once a relation with Being itself is elevated and transformed as it is in

Christ, one's way of existing is elevated and transformed, and at the same time the activities that have to do with being, the activities of knowing and willing, are transformed and elevated. Through faith and vision, the Christian knows otherwise than the rest of men; and through charity, he wills otherwise.<sup>63</sup>

In the abstract, there is room for common ground, but *in the concrete*, believer and unbeliever stand at odds regarding the meaning and structure of activities as basic and evidently *good* as natural sexual intercourse and the procreation of offspring.<sup>64</sup> While the Christian's life may seem from one perspective largely a "private" affair, it takes but a moment's thought to realize that it is a public, political life on which depends the rise and fall of civilizations, the life and death of societies. The Christian's virtues of chastity, purity, modesty, restrain subrational chaos; their contrary vices release it. Sacramental marriage endures and bears fruit, sustaining hope and bringing peace in the midst of even the greatest difficulties; profane marriage plummets into divorce and broken families, leading to universal nausea about fidelity and permanence. Contraception corrupts the desire to give and receive generously, without lies. Abortion rots away the deepest foundations of conscience, justice, and law, weakening resistance to proposals such as the cloning of embryos, the fashioning of hermaphrodite zygotes, the staging of in-vitro fertilizations with eggs harvested from the immature ovaries of aborted fetuses, and the transplantation of wombs from women to men.<sup>65</sup> This riot of metaphysical blasphemy fosters an atmosphere of madness in which the bizarre contradiction of same-sex "marriage" and with it, the adoption of a child by two "fathers" or two "mothers," can be seriously entertained. Given man's fallen nature, its raw wounds of ignorance, malice, weakness, concupiscence,<sup>66</sup> it follows with almost mathematical rigor that a society of unbelievers, if left to run its course, will degenerate into something more libidinous and more violent than a herd of wild beasts.<sup>67</sup>

Reality is constituted by its causal dependency on God's knowledge and love, which means that something *is* and *is for* what God knows and wants it to be and be for.<sup>68</sup> The soul of unfallen man, arrayed with preternatural gifts, could mirror without blemish the truth of things derived from their divine origin, his natural intelligence could effortlessly unlock the doors to himself and the world around him.<sup>69</sup> But human life is profoundly affected by the effects of sin, original and personal, and that is why man *needs* a savior and a savior's gifts of grace if he would rise above the darkness into which he is born, the blindness in which he walks.<sup>70</sup> In the state of the world *as it is*, those who accept the revelation of what is *above* nature gain renewed access to what is *natural* and *its* intended purpose.

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#### IV. EGOISTIC RATIONALISM?

There is no need to call into question man's capacity to attain some true knowledge without grace or special revelation, and even to acquire some moral virtues, however imperfect and unstable.<sup>71</sup> What is at stake is something far more: the power to live as children of God, the capacity to know the world with a childlike purity and insight, the ability to love with a clean heart, making a gift of oneself to God and to the world. This is not something within the range of fallen nature; it is not even within the range of a (hypothetically) sinless but unelevated nature, however lofty its flights of thought and feeling could be. It is the fruit of grace alone.<sup>72</sup>

In no way is my presentation of Thomas intended as an assault on natural reason or the relative autonomy of philosophy, much less a claim that the Angelic Doctor could have supported such an assault.<sup>73</sup> It is rather a plea to view *reason*, in all its God-reflecting dignity, as essentially and principally ordered by its Creator to the loving contemplation of divine truth, a transcendent *telos* only very imperfectly realized in philosophical speculation, even less in many other human activities, but purely and perfectly in the face-to-face vision of God—that culmination of the divine romance portrayed in the Song of Songs. Yet it is exactly *because of* the sovereign ordination of reason to beatific contemplation that a Christian must work and be willing to work tirelessly on behalf of his neighbor, for the betterment of *this* world, for its conversion and transformation in Christ. This heavenly vision is not imparted in proportion to intellectual mastery or maturity but in proportion to ardor of love, the love that longs to see the beloved's face and lead others, without jealousy, into God's eternal kingdom. The neighbor, too, is called to that blessed vision, and this world is destined to be re-created, its wounds of war and malice healed, bearing the imprint of each individual effort for peace and justice. There is surely no contemplation without goodness of heart, open-handed sharing, cosmic renewal. But were there no entrance into the courts of the Lord, no blissful contemplation of His changeless beauty, nothing else and nobody else could be worth anything at all, except to the blurry eyes of sentimentality.<sup>74</sup>

Philosophy abides, then, for mortal man on pilgrimage, not for the soul in paradise. As there is neither Eucharist nor Bible in heaven because the Blessed feast upon the Bread of Life and Word of God as He is and appears in glory, without symbolic mediation,<sup>75</sup> so there is neither servile art nor philosophical science: all things are known, all are done, in and through the intuitive vision of the divine essence, God's mystical theology, the *scientia Dei et beatorum*. In our condition of exile from the fatherland, however, we need all these things—sacrament and book, food and clothing, physics and metaphysics. If we tried to do without them, we should find ourselves further, not nearer, to our ultimate goal, just as the one who wants to kick away a ladder has to use it first to reach the loft.

From our all-too-human vantage, divine reason is decidedly irrational. It makes unreasonable demands, replete with unwarranted expectations. The super-excessive eternal Mind beckons human beings to a life of unconditional ecstasy, where the heart is torn open to receive the fullness of the beloved, where selfish desire evaporates and the self becomes sheer gift, gaining its identity in the very act of surrender.<sup>76</sup> This is not what sinful human beings ordinarily want, even when we know it is what God wants. It is in reference to the seeming irrationality of divine reason and the "excessiveness" it imparts to Christian life that I wish to make some critical remarks on an essay by Scott MacDonald, "Egoistic Rationalism: Aquinas's Basis for Christian Morality."<sup>77</sup> Since variants of MacDonald's position are frequently encountered in writings on Thomistic ethics, he may stand as representative of a school or avenue of interpretation. Aquinas holds that acting for one's own interests as reason apprehends them is the basis for moral action; hence believers and unbelievers can peacefully coexist in a common rational way of life. In two easy steps, Aquinas is launched on a second career as apologist for the liberal democratic order, a "Whig" in Lord Acton's language, echoed by the indefatigable propagandist Michael Novak.<sup>78</sup>

My principal objection is against the use of the terms "egoist" and "rationalist," no matter how nuanced their definitions. Thomas's understanding of self-perfection as the ecstatic gift of self to God and neighbor is as far removed from the Enlightenment's "enlightened self-interest" as is the God of the *quinque viae*—who at the same time is open to being a helpless infant, a crucified lover, a glorious judge—from the remote God of the Deists or the socially engineered God of postmodernism. What Thomas underlines in his *Christian* ethics is the science of the saints, the wisdom of God, which is folly and scandal to the world. Is self-profiting calculation foolish and scandalous? Not in the least; it is eminently respectable. It has nothing to do with the pattern of Jesus Christ, who poured out His blood for the redemption of His enemies, nor is it recognizable in the lives of the saints, consumed with a love that makes the self vanish from the horizon of thought and desire.

There is no need to ignore the legitimate place, in Thomas's moral theology, of the *bonum suum*, possession of which constitutes the *perfectio hominis*. "On this basis a man loves something, that he apprehends it as his own good."<sup>79</sup> The question is rather, How does Thomas understand this *bonum suum* and *perfectio hominis*? The first step, the most crucial, is to arrive at a proper conception of *one-self*, the self whose good is being spoken of.<sup>80</sup> True love of oneself involves loving God *more* than oneself; man's primary *bonum suum* is none other than God.<sup>81</sup>

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“The perfection of man consists in this: that he cleave totally to God.”<sup>82</sup> “Man’s greatest good is that he cleave with his mind to God and to divine things.”<sup>83</sup> “The happiness of man is to cleave to God; for each and every thing is perfect when it cleaves to its proper good, and the proper good for man is God.”<sup>84</sup> In all these texts—and there are numerous others like them<sup>85</sup>—Thomas spontaneously gravitates towards the language of *inhaesio*, *inhaerere*, *adhaesio*, *adhaerere*. One thing “inheres” in another when it belongs in it as in a subject, the way accidents “inhere” in a substance. It pertains to an accident “that is has neither absolute being nor unity, but its being and its unity depend upon that in which it inheres.”<sup>86</sup> The common meaning of this group of words is poorly conveyed by a transliteration. In typical Latin usage, as can be gathered from the Vulgate, the Roman liturgy, Augustine, Albert, and Thomas, it resounds with immediacy, passion, urgency.<sup>87</sup> To “inhere” or “adhere” is to cleave to someone in love, to hold on tightly, hold fast, stick, cling, embrace closely; it expresses an attachment that is intimate and intense. For the Christian, human perfection, human happiness, human virtue, are about *this*, and only this: *adhaerere Deo*. Reason is for the sake of this, and only this: *adhaerere Deo*.

Towards the end of his essay, MacDonald claims: “Both Christians and atheists are rational creatures, and it is natural to suppose that they will largely agree about what actions are in accordance with reason.”<sup>88</sup> How do we empty the Cross of its power? We say that all men can agree on the basics and can get along, in practice, without the Cross, even if some might wish to embrace it privately; we say that social order is a spontaneous aggregate of well-intentioned activities aiming at personal benefit. But the wisdom of God is folly to the world, and God has chosen this folly, this weakness, to confound human cleverness and power. A Christian social order will bear within its body the marks of Jesus, the healing wounds that must be dealt to fallen nature. It will embody in its legal and political structures reverence for the Commandments; its cultural life will reflect and promote the beauty of holiness.<sup>89</sup> The social end believers aspire to as “doers of the word” is a political and economic order permeated by the new law of the Gospel handed down by the Church<sup>90</sup>—an end that was, to a large extent, really achieved in the ages of faith, when love of God and neighbor held in check the forces perpetually aligned against it. Faith leading to love of God builds the city of God; unbelief, keeping distant from Him, builds the city of man.

The non-believer and the Christian agree about moral activity *only* to the extent that the non-believer is either disposed to becoming Christian or is a fallen-away Christian, for in either case his heart is already impregnated, to some degree, with the wisdom and strength of the Son of God nailed to the cross. The less the non-believer’s heart is touched or formed by this divine light, the less *reasonable* he will be, and the less he will “largely agree” with the Christian. In fact, it is much more likely that he will turn against the Christian and ostracize him or put him to death, even as he is already willing to consign unborn children or

unwanted pensioners to the memory hole. To a systematic atheist like Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, or Peter Singer, there is no such thing as moral good and evil, there is no “natural law,” because there is no such thing as spirit, soul, or nature. Hence, it would be more correct, and rightly provocative, to rewrite MacDonald’s sentence: “Christians, to the extent that they are such, are rational creatures living rationally, and atheists, to the extent that they are such, are rational creatures living irrationally. It is therefore obvious that they *cannot* agree about meaningful action because they do not act from the same principle.”<sup>91</sup>

Is this sentence the distillate of a dreary pessimism? No, it is Christian realism—the realism that prompts Thomas to maintain that no virtue is virtue *simpliciter* if its practitioner lacks the grace of charity. The so-called “natural man,” the pagan, has also a spiritual life, a life ordered by God to a single blessedness, a soul to be saved or lost. Hence Thomas’s remarks are no less applicable to such a person: “The perfection of the spiritual life is to be assessed from charity. The one who lacks charity is *spiritually nothing*, as is said in 1 Corinthians 13, whereas someone is said to be perfect, simply, according to its perfection; whence it is said in Colossians 3: ‘Above all these things ... have charity, which is the bond of perfection.’”<sup>92</sup> A virtue *simpliciter* is one whose acts merit salvation, which, as we have seen, is definitive human health or ‘sanity’. The only virtue that can produce and rule over such acts is charity, for it unites the believer with Christ, the Lamb that was slain, and conforms her to Him who is worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, might, honor, glory, blessing (Rev. 5:12). Since man’s ultimate end is *concretely* the beatific vision—existentially man *has* no other end than this, no merely “natural” end—he who fails to attain this vision fails as a man *simpliciter*.<sup>93</sup>

While St. Thomas willingly allows for a *certain* development of acquired moral virtues among non-believers, he remains staunchly Augustinian in his insistence that (1) such virtues are not virtues *simpliciter*, and hence cannot qualify a person as morally good *simpliciter*, unless they are informed by charity, and (2) a person without charity will, in practice, come up against insuperable obstacles to acquiring and exercising natural moral virtues.<sup>94</sup> This point is sharpened by Thomas’s view that not even acquired moral virtues informed by charity suffice for human perfection; this demands the exercise of *infused* moral virtues different from the acquired ones.<sup>95</sup> A non-believer can perform only *materially* good acts—acts which, taken abstractly and in isolation from life as a whole, are right for their circumstances, but which, concretely and holistically, do not avail for ultimate happiness.<sup>96</sup> There is no point in trying to soften the radicalness of this position. It does not mean that non-believers cannot do much towards improving their own moral behavior and the health of a given society. It means that all such activ-

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ity, apart from grace, will be intrinsically defective and inadequate in view not only of the divine economy of salvation but also of the 'human economy' of self-perfection.<sup>97</sup> "Even if one is perfect among the sons of men, yet without the wisdom that comes from you, he will be regarded as nothing," declares the Book of Wisdom (9:6).

The paradoxicality of Thomas's position on perfect virtue is summed up in his belief that a person, left to his own resources, can become "reasonably" virtuous, but that this amounts to *not* being virtuous in the unexpected way God has deemed fitting for man, namely deification in Christ, receiving and exercising a share of the Lord's virtues. To be *only* reasonable is not to be *simply* reasonable, because there is a divine life for man greater than his innate life of reason. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are necessary for salvation and lead man to his highest perfection—to produce the works of the Beatitudes and reap their rewards—have the *Spirit*, not reason, as their measure.<sup>98</sup> The actions of a Christian in the state of grace are no longer governed by reason alone, but by a reason instructed by divine law, moved by the Spirit's impulses. Though obviously indispensable (for animals cannot obey a law, strictly speaking, nor receive interior promptings from a higher source), reason is here decisively secondary.<sup>99</sup> The perfection of something that must be moved to its end consists in its very *disposition to be so moved* by the one who has possession of the end.<sup>100</sup>

A lower principle of movement is chiefly helped and is perfected through being moved by a higher principle of movement, as a body through being moved by a spirit. Now it is evident that the rectitude of human reason is compared to the divine Reason, as a lower motive principle to a higher: for the eternal Reason is the supreme rule of all human rectitude. Consequently prudence, which denotes rectitude of reason, is chiefly perfected and helped through being ruled and moved by the Holy Spirit, and this belongs to the gift of counsel.<sup>101</sup>

In a daring simile, Thomas calls the Holy Spirit the artist, man the instrument by which He accomplishes His work.<sup>102</sup> Divinely heedless of my natural limitations, the Spirit of God draws me beyond my powers, "places me outside myself" in my thoughts, desires, words and works. The *extasis* of the believer is a being-led-by-another, being at His disposal, to do *His* will and work, for His sake and because it is His. One is moved by the Other's will, and what is Other becomes one's own.<sup>103</sup> Thomas makes the same point in regard to the ruling principle (*regula*) of charity:

Reason is not the ruling principle of charity, as it is of [the other] human virtues; instead, charity is regulated by God's wisdom and transcends the rule of human reason, according to what is written: "The charity of Christ, which surpasses all knowledge" (Eph. 3:19). Hence, it is not *in* the reason—neither as to its subject, as prudence is, nor as to its rule, as justice and temperance are; but solely by a certain affinity of the will to the reason.<sup>104</sup>

God motions the human mind to subordinate itself humbly, obediently, to a higher measure *from which* the lower measure gains its power to measure human acts rightly.<sup>105</sup>

While acquired and infused moral virtues, under the guidance of the theological virtues and the gifts of the Spirit, are meant to coexist and collaborate in the Christian "spiritual organism,"<sup>106</sup> the notable difference between their measures should not be overlooked. It is just this difference which, on the one hand, makes a Christian who *lacks* acquired virtue experience difficulty in sharing the "heavenly conversation" (Phil. 3:20) and behaving as "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19), and, on the other hand, makes Christian life appear ridiculous or excessive to unbelievers—vows of obedience, poverty, and celibacy, fasting or other bodily penances,<sup>107</sup> rural processions for a good harvest, pilgrimages to Marian shrines, the elaborate ceremonies of a *missa solemnis*. Unsurprisingly, these traditional Catholic practices weaken and vanish, or fail to spring up at all, in proportion to the dominance of Enlightenment ideology, which rests upon and at the same time fabricates for itself a seductive mythology of many gods (autonomous reason, "free choice," science and technology, "progress," etc.)—an ersatz religion that quickly betrays its true character as idolatry, gross or subtle.

Truth is found in communion: the wedding of nature and grace, the fertile embrace of reason and revelation, the convergence of sanity and sanctity, the simultaneity of possession and being dispossessed, the coinherence of entelechy and ecstasy. In an incomprehensible gift of love, God willed to join these primordial pairs in Himself. *Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis, et vidimus gloriam eius*. It is man who foolishly tries, in thought or in life, to put asunder what God has joined together. In the eyes of Jacques Maritain, this *conjunctio oppositorum* is the hallmark of St. Thomas's life and work, as well as the most urgent lesson that we who are so preoccupied with 'humanism' need to learn from him:

Proclaiming both that grace perfects, without destroying, nature and that the specifically divine life, which graces implants in us, can alone heal the wounds of nature and must take hold of nature absolutely, his peculiar achievement was to bring all the virtues of the mind into the service of Jesus Christ. The whole problem of culture and humanism presented itself in him and his answer was: *sanctity*. Man becomes perfect only supernaturally: he develops only on the cross. A humanism is possible, but on condition that its ultimate end is union with God through the humanity of the Mediator and that it proportions its means to that essentially supernatural end, a humanism of the Incarnation: on condition that

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it orders itself entirely to love and contemplation; that it entirely subordinates, like the holy soul of Thomas Aquinas itself, mere knowledge to wisdom and theological wisdom to the wisdom of the saints; that it realizes that the form of reason can subject the world only if it is itself subject to the supra-rational and supra-human order of the Holy Ghost and His gifts. Otherwise humanism, even Christian humanism, will inevitably tend to the destruction of man and a universal ruin.<sup>108</sup>

Perhaps the postmodern revolt against “reason,” in spite of its sound and fury, is, little more than a necessary clearing away of accumulated modern debris—a step that may well assist us in rediscovering the fuller, more nuanced account of reason given by the Angelic Doctor.<sup>109</sup> Since tribute is often paid to St. Thomas for exemplifying the integration of faith and reason, we should take pains not to misunderstand what are the gift of faith and the power of reason he sought to integrate, nor the nature of the resulting synthesis, in order to be sure that we are paying tribute to the right thinker, or rather, to the right saint. What should be clear to us and decisive for our discipleship is that Aquinas is no rationalist. For Thomas, reason is capable of infinite exaltation beyond its native power as well as frightful debasement beneath its basic nature; owing to the power of reason, man wanders near the edge of a paradoxical abyss that goes not just downwards but upwards, a depth of self-destruction into which he can plummet, an endless glory into which he can be caught up. And he cannot straddle the fence, for by essence he is dynamic and mobile, restless to go somewhere—he will go up or down, he will enter the narrow gate and follow the hard way, or the wide gate and the broad avenue.<sup>110</sup>

As revealed in the icon of his life, Thomas is a lover of divine Wisdom who places all that God has given mankind at the service of joyful obedience to the new commandment of love—a love that first flowed and ever flows from the ebullient ecstasy of God and leads captivity captive, up to the heavenly Jerusalem, the wedding feast of the Lamb. There, the wine of God’s love flows freely, and all who put their thirsty lips to this blessed draft shall be made drunk by the riches of His house, the eternal embrace of glory.<sup>111</sup> Thomas could have made his own the serenely passionate words of Paul: “For I want you to know how greatly I strive for you ... that [your] hearts may be encouraged as they are knit together in love, to have all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”—a verse on which the friar comments: “Just as if one were to have a book in which the whole of knowledge could be found, he would seek nothing else than to know that book, so, too, there is no need for us to seek anything beyond Christ.”<sup>112</sup> Can this be pious exaggeration? Thomas is a man of his word, a man of the Word to whom he consecrated himself in single-hearted virginity, reckless poverty, kenotic obedience. He was “following naked the naked Christ”<sup>113</sup>—the Word in whom, through whom, and for whom all things were made and thus the *meaning* hidden

at the center of every one of them; the Word made flesh for our salvation, our *sanctitas mentis*, the praise of His glory.<sup>114</sup> Evidently, then, in searching out the structure and secrets of nature, in commenting line by line on the Philosopher or the *Liber de causis*, in finely dissecting metaphysical issues for Trinitarian clarity, in all the strenuous efforts of reasoning to pierce the veil of ultimate truth, Thomas is always seeking one and only one treasure—the face of Jesus, his Beloved. *Non nisi te, Domine.*<sup>115</sup>

<sup>108</sup>An early version of this paper was delivered at the conference on *Thomas Aquinas and Thomism/Aquinói Szent Tamás és a Tomizmus*, Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, Piliscsaba, Hungary, on December 13, 2002. I owe special thanks to David Bolin, Vivian Boland, OP, and Lawrence Dewan, OP, for their helpful comments on a later draft. Unless otherwise noted, translations from St. Thomas are my own.

<sup>109</sup>Cf. *Summa theologiae* [ST] I-II, q. 70, a. 4: “Spiritus enim Sanctus movet humanam mentem ad id quod est secundum rationem, vel potius ad id quod est supra rationem, appetitus autem carnis, qui est appetitus sensitivus, trahit ad bona sensibilia, quae sunt infra hominem. Unde sicut motus sursum et motus deorsum contrariantur in naturalibus, ita in operibus humanis contrariantur opera carnis fructibus Spiritus.” As Herbert McCabe, OP, puts it: “That is the theology behind the story of the Garden of Eden. There was no way that human beings could be simply human. They had to be either superhuman or inhuman” (*God, Christ, and Us*, ed. Brian Davies, OP [New York: Continuum, 2003], 65).

<sup>110</sup>The simple fact that Thomas’s employment of the term *ratio* in regard to knowledge is by no means univocal but extends in various analogous directions is already significant, for it indicates a view of rationality richer, more dynamic, and more fluid than the abstract and univocal “emancipated reason” proclaimed by the Enlightenment *philosophes*. Not infrequently, Thomas appeals to the Augustinian contrast between *ratio inferior* and *ratio superior* (e.g., ST I, q. 79, a. 9). Sometimes *ratio* points to the limitations of human intellect in its discursivity (e.g., ST I, q. 59, a. 1, ad 1). At other times the meaning of *ratio* includes even divine intellect (e.g., ST I-II, q. 19, a. 4, where the eternal law is called *ratio divina*; cf. ST I-II, q. 93, a. 1; II-II, q.

130, a. 1). In ST I, q. 15, the *rationes* of things are said to be in the divine mind.

<sup>111</sup>For a schematic discussion of this dependency, see Elsbeth Michel, ‘Nullus potest amare aliquid incognitum’. *Ein Beitrag zur Frage des Intellektualismus bei Thomas von Aquin*, *Studia Friburgensia* 57 (Freiburg/CH: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1979).

<sup>112</sup>ST I-II, q. 27, a. 2, ad 2.

<sup>113</sup>ST I, q. 12, a. 2; I-II, q. 5, a. 3.

<sup>114</sup>See Thomas’s treatment of the goodness and merit of the marital act at *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* [Sent.] IV, d. 26, q. 1, a. 4, reproduced in part at ST Suppl., q. 41, a. 4. The general principle is well stated in *De malo* q. 2, a. 5, obj. 11.

<sup>115</sup>ST I-II, q. 19, a. 4.

<sup>116</sup>The acts I have in mind are: *voluntas, intentio, consilium, consensus, iudicium, electio, imperium, usus* (ST I-II, qq. 8-17). Such ‘acknowledgment’ does not require explicit consciousness of the final end at the moment of acting, but at least a virtual or habitual ordering to the final end. As Thomas writes at ST I-II, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3: “non oportet ut semper aliquis cogitet de ultimo fine, quandocumque aliquid appetit vel operatur, sed virtus primae intentionis, quae est respectu ultimi finis, manet in quolibet appetitu cuiuscumque rei, etiam si de ultimo fine actu non cogitetur. Sicut non oportet quod qui vadit per viam, in quolibet passu cogitet de fine”; cf. *De veritate* [De ver.] q. 22, a. 5, ad 11. Consider *Super ad Philip.* 3, lec. 2, §126: “Perfectio namque hominis consistit in hoc, quod adhaeret Deo per charitatem, quia unumquodque est perfectum secundum modum quo adhaeret suae perfectioni. Anima autem potest adhaerere Deo dupliciter perfecte. Uno modo, ut totam actionem suam referat in Deum actualiter, et cognoscat ut cognoscibilis est; et haec est patriae. Sed inhaesio viae est duplex.

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Una de necessitate salutis, ad quam omnes tenentur, scilicet ut in nullo cor suum quis applicet ad id quod est contra Deum, sed habitualiter referat totam vitam in eum. ... Alia est supererogationis, quando quis ultra communem statum inhaeret Deo, quod fit removendo cor a temporalibus, et sic magis appropinquat ad patriam; quia quanto deficit cupiditas, tanto plus crescit charitas" (Marietti ed., 113). Cf. *ST* II-II, q. 24, a. 8; II-II, q. 44, a. 4, ad 2; and II-II, q. 184, a. 2, ad 3, as well as *De malo* q. 2, a. 5, ad 11 and q. 9, a. 2.

<sup>10</sup>*ST* I-II, q. 21.

<sup>11</sup>See *De malo* q. 9, a. 2, end of the response.

<sup>12</sup>On these two types of *voluntas*, see *Sent.* III, d. 17, q. 1, a. 1, qa. 3, ad 1 and *ST* III, q. 18, aa. 3-5.

<sup>13</sup>On the human 'flower' and 'fruit', see *ST* I-II, q. 70, a. 1, ad 1.

<sup>14</sup>One may judge how fundamental a point this is from its function in the very first article of the *Summa theologiae*; see also *ST* I-II, q. 62; cf. II-II, q. 1, a. 1 and q. 2, a. 3. In the last, Thomas writes: "Perfectio ergo rationalis creaturae non solum consistit in eo quod ei competit secundum suam naturam, sed etiam in eo quod ei attribuitur ex quadam supernaturali participatione divinae bonitatis." Before going further I must clearly state that it is no intention of mine to plunge into the debate unleashed by Henri De Lubac concerning the intelligibility of a "natural" beatitude for man. This debate does not impinge upon my argument, which rests exclusively on Thomas's unambiguous position that man has *existentially or concretely* one and only one ultimate end: heavenly beatitude through incorporation into the Mystical Body of Christ. A complementary truth also maintained by Thomas is that human nature, as is the case with any created nature, has an end, a highest activity and object, proportionate to it as *created*, which end (in its formality) is necessarily distinct from, though an *image* of, the uncreated divine end that the gift of charity renders proportionate to human nature. Further discussion of these matters is, however, unnecessary, since the views I will advance concern the actual condition of the human race here and now, ordered by its Creator to a single universal end—(sharing in the life of) God himself, uncreated beatitude.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. *ST* II-II, q. 1, a. 4; q. 2, a. 9; q. 4, a. 1.

<sup>16</sup>For a poignant discussion of how faith-perception differs from unbelief as regards what is truly valuable in human life, see Denys Turner,

"How to Kill People," in *Faith Seeking* (London: SCM Press, 2002), 57-65.

<sup>17</sup>On this contrast, see Thomas's remarks on "duplex spiritus, huius mundi, et Dei," in *Super II Timoth.*, cap. 1, lec. 3, §14 (Marietti ed., 269).

<sup>18</sup>The primal act of appetitive power is *amor*: the subject's connaturality with, aptitude for, or proportion to the thing to which it tends. Love is the first of all acts vis-à-vis the good, the root from which they spring and receive nourishment. Love is not the tending of the appetite towards a good not yet possessed (this is desire), but something prior still: "that motion whereby the appetite is changed by the appetible object, so as to have *complacentia* in it" (*ST* I-II, q. 26, a. 2, ad 3). The term *complacentia* means finding, feeling, or 'taking' a good to be suitable, right, worthy of acceptance. See the classic study by Frederick E. Crowe, SJ, "Complacency and Concern in the Thought of St. Thomas," *Theological Studies* 20 (1959): 1-39, 198-230, 343-95; cf. David M. Gallagher, "Desire for Beatitude and Love of Friendship in Thomas Aquinas," *Mediaeval Studies* 58 (1996): 1-47, esp. 8-20. As I am speaking globally of the shape of a person's life as formed or unformed by divine love, I use the word 'faithless' to refer not to sins specifically against faith, but to a state of soul that lacks a vital bond with saving truth. Since faith precedes hope and charity in the order of generation (*ST* I-II, q. 64, a. 4), it is possible for a person to have the supernatural gift of faith, a divine illumination of the intellect, without charity (*fides informis*: II-II, q. 4, a. 4; II-II, q. 6, a. 2). From this, it follows that the love involved in the initial act of faith is not the love of charity by which one loves God for His own sake and oneself as invited to share His bliss (II-II, q. 4, a. 7, ad 5; q. 6, a. 2, ad 3). However, the point of Thomas's analysis of the generation of theological virtue is to show that faith and hope are impelled by an inner dynamism towards *communion in love*; they are not complete, they are in fact dead, without that communion. Conversely, *dilectio* can only be *caritas* when it tends towards the divine good adhered to by faith as the first Truth, the divine happiness cherished by hope as one's future possession. Thus, an act of faith unformed by charity is a 'loveless faith', just as an act of rational love which does not proceed from supernatural faith—let us say, a heathen philosopher's love of a First Cause discovered by a process of demonstration—is a 'faithless love'. Obviously, it is possible for love-

less faith to become loving, and faithless love to become faithful.

<sup>19</sup>See the prologue to *ST* I, q. 2, and the prologue of *ST* 3. At *Super Matthaeum* 24, lec. 4, §2003, we read: "sicut in hoc mundo non perveniet ad statum perfectionis, nisi qui sequitur vestigia Christi, sic nec tunc," i.e., the world to come, "nisi qui coniuncti fuerint Christo: et habebunt dominium super omnia, in quantum voluntas sua fit conformis voluntati divinae" (Marietti ed., 310).

<sup>20</sup>*Thomas Aquinas, Spiritual Master* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1996), 25-26. On the *extasis* of God, see *Sent.* III, d. 32, q. 1, a. 1, ad 3; *ST* I, q. 20, a. 2, ad 1; *In librum Beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus* [*In De div. nom.*] cap. 4, lec. 10, §437. Barron's "meeting of two ecstasies" has to be understood along the lines of the texts just cited, if we are not to get into troubles. A fuller exposition of the divine ecstasy cannot, however, be undertaken in this article.

<sup>21</sup>*In symbolum apostolorum*, art. 6: "Hoc autem, scilicet quod Christus pro nobis est mortuus, ita est arduum quod uix potest intellectus noster illud capere; immo nullo modo cadit in intellectu nostro. ... tanta enim est gratia et amor eius ad nos, quod plus ipse fecit nobis quam possumus capere" (the provisional Leonine text, published in *The Sermon-Conferences of St. Thomas Aquinas on the Apostles' Creed*, trans. Nicholas Ayo, CSC [Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988], 66).

<sup>22</sup>I Cor. 1:18-25.

<sup>23</sup>St. Thomas's commentary on this passage (*Super I Cor.* 1, lec. 3) deserves to be read in every course devoted to his doctrine. It is a text likely to provoke surprise if not distress in readers accustomed to fasting on the bread-and-water Aquinas, namely, the 'philosophical' passages of his writings, which have held the spotlight for decades because of the preoccupations of modern secular universities. Ample collections of the "philosophical texts of Aquinas" abound, but how many of the Scripture commentaries have been translated, and of the few done, how many are still in print? Happily, the situation appears to be changing.

<sup>24</sup>*Summa contra gentiles* [SCG] IV.54, §3922: "Si quis autem diligenter et pie incarnationis mysteria consideret, inveniet tantam sapientiae profunditatem quod humanam cognitionem

excedat, secundum illud Apostoli: Quod stultum est Dei, sapientius est hominibus. Unde fit ut pie consideranti semper magis ac magis admirabiles rationes huius mysterii manifestantur" (Marietti ed., 348).

<sup>25</sup>*Super I Cor.* 1, lec. 3, §62 (Marietti ed., 244). The full commentary on I Cor. 1:25 reads: "Deinde cum dicit quia quod stultum est Dei, assignat rationem eius quod dixerat, dicens quomodo id, quod est infirmum et stultum possit esse virtus vel sapientia Dei, quia quod stultum est Dei sapientius est hominibus, quasi dicat: iam aliquod divinum videtur esse stultum, non quia deficiat a sapientia, sed quia superexcedit sapientiam humanam. Homines enim quidam consueverunt stultum reputare quod eorum sensum excedit. Eccli. III: plurima super sensum hominis ostensa sunt tibi. Et quod infirmum est Dei, fortius est hominibus, quia scilicet non dicitur aliquid infirmum in Deo per defectum virtutis, sed per excessum humanae virtutis, sicut etiam dicitur invisibilis, in quantum excedit sensum humanum. Sap. XII: virtutem ostendis tu qui non crederis esse in virtute consummatus. Quamvis hoc possit referri ad incarnationis mysterium: quia id quod reputatur stultum et infirmum in Deo ex parte naturae assumptae, transcendit omnem sapientiam et virtutem. Ex. XV: quis similis tui in fortibus, Domine?"

<sup>26</sup>*In De div. nom.* 7, lec. 1, §702: "Apostolus in Deo laudat stultitiam propter id quod apparet in Dei sapientia, praeter nostram rationem et videtur nobis inconveniens, dum non possumus Dei sapientiam comprehendere; et per hoc elevat nos ad veritatem divinam, quae est nobis ineffabilis et quae omnem nostram rationem excedit" (Marietti ed., 262).

<sup>27</sup>*In De div. nom.* 7, lec. 1, §705-§706: "Dicit quod oportet considerare quod mens nostra duo habet ad intelligibilia cognoscenda: primo, quod habet naturalem virtutem, id est intelligentiam, per quam inspicere potest intelligibilia sibi proportionata; secundo vero, habet quamdam unionem ad res divinas per gratiam, quae excedit naturam mentis nostrae, per quam unionem, coniunguntur homines per fidem aut quamcumque cognitionem, ad ea quae sunt super naturalem mentis virtutem. Oportet ergo ut intelligamus divina secundum hanc unionem gratiae, quasi non trahendo divina ad ea quae sunt secundum nos, sed magis totos nos stat-

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uentes extra nos in Deum, ita ut per praedictam unionem totaliter deificemur. Et quia posset aliquis dicere quod hoc nobis esset nocivum, si nos ipsos deseramus, ideo hoc tertio excludit, ibi: melius ... Et dicit quod, cum Deus sit melior nobis, melius est nobis quod simus Dei per unionem gratiae quam quod simus nostri ipsorum, idest nostris naturalibus innitentes. Sic enim, nobis factis cum Deo, idest cum Deo uniti fuerimus, divina nobis dona aderunt quae percipere non possumus, si Dei unionem neglegentes, nobis ipsis inhaereamus" (Marietti ed., 263).

<sup>28</sup>On the profound parallels between Thomas and the saints conventionally styled 'mystics', see the classic works of Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, OP, *Christian Perfection and Contemplation According to St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John of the Cross*, trans. M. Timothea Doyle, OP (St. Louis: Herder, 1949); *The Love of God and the Cross of Jesus*, trans. Jeanne Marie (St. Louis: Herder, 1947); *The Three Ages of the Interior Life: Prelude of Eternal Life*, trans. M. Timothea Doyle, OP (Rockford, Ill.: TAN, 1989). For a superb recent overview of Thomas's mystical theology, see Heather McAdam Erb, "'Pati Divina': Mystical Union in Aquinas," in *Faith, Scholarship, and Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Alice Ramos and Marie I. George (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2002), 73-96. In view of philosophical immanentism, scientific empiricism, psychoanalytical reductionism, and (as if in exaggerated reaction against these methodologies) the frenetic growth of sects and New Age movements laying claim to special religious experiences, it is now more necessary than ever to recover an authentic and profound understanding of 'mysticism' and the category of the 'mystical', reasserting their centrality in the Catholic tradition and purifying them of pietistic and subjectivistic distortions. For two important attempts to do this, see Louis Bouyer, *The Christian Mystery: From Pagan Myth to Christian Mysticism*, trans. Illtyd Trethowan (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990); Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in the Christian Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>29</sup>This citation would surely have called to mind the verse immediately following: "I have drunk my wine with my milk: Eat, O friends, and drink, and be drunk, my dearly beloved." Thomas quotes this striking invitation of the Bridegroom many times: cf. *ST III*, q. 79, a. 1, ad 2; *Super Isaiam* 25, 28, and 66; *Super Ps.* 22

and *Super Ps.* 35; *Super Matthaeum* 26, lec. 4; *Super Ioannem* 2, lec. 1 and 21, lec. 2; *Super I Cor.* 11, lec. 4; *Super II Cor.* 5, lec. 3.

<sup>30</sup>*Sent.* I, prologus: "Fructus autem istius partus sunt sancti qui sunt in gloria: de quo fructu Cant. v: veniat dilectus tuus in hortum suum et comedat fructum pomorum suorum. Istos inebriat abundantissima sui fructione; de qua ebrietate Psalm. xxxv: inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus tuae. Et dicitur ebrietas, quia omnem mensuram rationis et desiderii excedit: unde Isa. LXIV: oculus non vidit, Deus, absque te quae praeparasti expectantibus te. Et in hoc tangitur materia quarti libri: in cuius prima parte agitur de sacramentis; in secunda de gloria resurrectionis."

<sup>31</sup>On this event and its significance, see my article "Golden Straw: St. Thomas and the Ecstatic Practice of Theology," *Nova et Vetera*, Eng. ed., 2 (2004): 61-89. Needless to say, in this life of exile, much of the work of *sacra doctrina*, as of the philosophical disciplines, will be humble and hardly rapturous (cf. *ST I*, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3 on two kinds of divine wisdom, the one a gift of the Spirit, the other acquired by diligent study).

<sup>32</sup>Cf. Mt. 6:11 (*ton arton hēmōn ton epiousion dos hēmīn sēmēron*, or in the Vulgate, *panem nostrum supersubstantialem da nobis hodie*); Jn. 6:32-33.

<sup>33</sup>St. Thomas quoting St. John Damascene in the *sed contra* of *ST III*, q. 79, a. 8 ("Ignis eius quod in nobis est desiderii, assumens eam quae ex carbone, idest hoc sacramento, ignitionem, comburet nostra peccata, et illuminabit nostra corda, ut participatione divini ignis igniamur et deificemur").

<sup>34</sup>*Super Ioannem* 6, lec. 7, B969. Thomas here cites a beautiful statement from Augustine's *Confessions*: "Sic ergo spiritualiter manducat carnem et bibit sanguinem per comparisonem ad Christum contentum et signatum, qui coniungitur ei per fidem et caritatem, ita quod transformatur in ipsum, et efficitur eius membrum: non enim cibus iste convertitur in eum qui sumit, sed manducantem convertit in se, secundum Augustinum, cum dicit: 'cibus sum grandium: cresce, et manducabis me; nec tu me mutabis in te, sed tu mutaberis in me'. Et ideo est cibus hominem divinum facere valens, et divinitate inebrians." Cf. *ST III*, q. 73, a. 3, ad 2; *Sent.* IV, d. 12, q. 2, a. 1, qa. 1.

<sup>35</sup>*Sent.* IV, d. 12, q. 2, a. 1, qa. 1: "Unde proprius effectus huius sacramenti est conversio hominis in Christum, ut dicat cum Apostolo,

Galat. II: Vivo ego, jam non ego; vivit vero in me Christus."

<sup>36</sup>*Sent.* IV, d. 12, q. 2, a. 1, qa. 1, ad 3: "Caritatis proprium est transformare amantem in amatum, quia ipsa est quae extasim facit, ut Dionysius dicit. Et quia augmentum virtutum in hoc sacramento fit per conversionem manducantis in spiritualem cibum, ideo magis attribuitur huic sacramento caritatis augmentum quam aliarum virtutum."

<sup>37</sup>*ST III*, q. 79, a. 1, ad 2: "Et inde est quod ex virtute huius sacramenti anima spiritualiter reficitur, per hoc quod anima delectatur, et quodammodo inebriatur dulcedine bonitatis divinae, secundum illud Cant. V, comedite, amici, et bibite; et inebriamini, carissimi."

<sup>38</sup>*Super Ps.* 22, §2 (Busa 6:79b). The whole passage reads: "Hic calix est donum divini amoris qui inebriat: quia ebrius non est in se, nec secundum se loquitur, sed secundum impetum vini; sic ille qui est plenus divino amore, loquitur secundum Deum: est enim in extasim factus. Cant. 5: comedite amici, et inebriamini. Isa. 55: quomodo descendit imber et nix de caelo, et inebriat terram, et germinare eam facit; sic erit verbum quod egredietur de ore meo. Hier. 23: factus sum quasi vir ebrius, et quasi homo madidus vino a facie Domini. Vel calix dicitur sanguis Christi, quia debet inebriare. Et hic cum praeclarus est, idest maxime clarus." Citations from the *Postilla super Psalmos* are taken from the *Opera Omnia cum hypertextibus in CD-ROM*, ed. Roberto Busa, SJ (Milan: Editoria Elettronica Editel, 1992), with reference to the printed edition. The *Postilla super Psalmos* is a precious transmitter of Aquinas's mature views on important topics, as Thomas F. Ryan demonstrates in *Thomas Aquinas as Reader of the Psalms* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000).

<sup>39</sup>*Super Ps.* 35, §4 (Busa 6:99b): "sicut qui tenerent os suum ad fontem vini, inebriarentur; sic qui tenent os suum, idest desiderium, ad fontem vitae et dulcedinis, inebriantur." I take a small liberty in the translation, for it does not seem idiomatic to say "the font of wine."

<sup>40</sup>*Super Ps.* 35, §4 (Busa 6:99a): "Et qui sunt ebrii, non in se sunt, sed extra se. Sic qui repleti sunt spiritualibus charismatibus, tota eorum intentio fertur in Deum: Phil. III: nostra conversatio in caelis est. Et non solum donis reficien-

tur, sed etiam dilectione Dei: Job xxii: tunc super omnipotentem deliciis affluens, et elevabis ad Deum faciem tuam. Et ideo dicit quantum ad secundum, et torrente voluptatis tuae potabis eos. Hic est amor Spiritus Sancti, qui facit impetum in anima, sicut torrens: Isa. LX: quasi fluvius violentus, quem Spiritus Domini cogit."

<sup>41</sup>Two significant passages on divine drunkenness, and its implications for human perfection and the vocation of reason, are *Super Ps.* 35, §4 and *Super II Cor.* 5, lec. 3, §179. To gain a broader view of this neglected topic would require a separate study on how Thomas uses the notion of 'sober drunkenness', as well as the notions of *excessus* and *raptus* with which it is frequently associated. Paul Murray, OP, has drawn attention to the early Dominicans' widespread use of the metaphor of getting drunk on the word of God; see "Dominicans Drinking: A Neglected Image of the 'Holy Preaching,'" *Religious Life Review* 41 (Sep/Oct. 2002): 272-83.

<sup>42</sup>*The Four Cardinal Virtues*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston, Lawrence E. Lynch, and Daniel F. Coogan (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 155-6. Pieper is referring to *ST II-II*, q. 153, a. 3, ad 2.

<sup>43</sup>That this is Thomas's view is clear from the *Summa's* question on man as *imago Dei* (*ST I*, q. 93; see especially aa. 4, 7, and 8). For commentary, see Jean-Pierre Torrell, OP, *Saint Thomas Aquinas, Spiritual Master*, trans. Robert Royal [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003], 80-100; Erb, "'Pati Divina,'" 92; Michael A. Dauphinais, "Loving the Lord Your God: The *Imago Dei* in Saint Thomas Aquinas," *The Thomist* 63 (1999): 241-67.

<sup>44</sup>*ST II-II*, q. 83, a. 1: "secundum Cassiodorum, oratio dicitur quasi oris ratio"; *ibid.*, ad 2: "Damascenus dicit quod oratio est ascensus intellectus in Deum."

<sup>45</sup>*In De div. nom.* 7, lec. 5, §739: "Ille enim qui veritati per fidem unitus est, bene cognoscit quam bene sit ei, sic veritati fidei adhaerendo; quamvis multi reprehendant ipsum sicut extasim passum, idest sicut fatuum et a se alienatum; etenim latet ipsos reprehendentes ex eorum errore, quod ipse sine dubio per veram fidem est passus extasim veritatis, quasi extra omnem sensum positus et veritati supernaturali coniunctus, quia ipse credens novit de seipso quod non est furens, ut ipsi dicunt, sed est liber-

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atus per veritatem simplicem et semper eodem modo se habentem, ne circumferatur per instabiles et variabiles ventos diversorum errorum” (Marietti ed., 278).

<sup>46</sup>By ‘world’ here is meant, of course, the fallen world, under the power of the evil one (1 Jn. 5:19), not the world as created by God and redeemed by Christ: see *Super Ioannem* 1, lec. 5, §128. On *mundus* as signifying *amatores mundi*, see also *ST I-II*, q. 72, a. 3, obj. 3; *I-II*, q. 106, a. 1, ad 1.

<sup>47</sup>In *De div. nom.* 7, lec. 2, §708: “Recolligit ergo primo excessum divinae sapientiae dicens quod divina sapientia laudatur excellenter sicut irrationabilis, in quantum excedit rationem; et sicut amens, in quantum excedit mentem sive intellectum; et sicut stulta, in quantum excedit habitum mentis, scilicet sapientiam” (Marietti ed., 265).

<sup>48</sup>On “prudence of the flesh,” see *ST I-II*, q. 93, a. 6, ad 2; *ST II-II*, q. 47, a. 13, ad 3 and q. 55, a. 1. On “worldly wisdom,” see *ST II-II*, q. 45, a. 1, ad 1 and q. 46. According to St. Thomas, sinners cannot have the virtue of prudence, but they can have its deceptive likenesses: cleverness and cunning (cf. *ST II-II*, q. 47, a. 13, ad 3). In that passage Thomas speaks of shortcomings at the level of the *acquired* virtue of prudence, as Aristotle recognized them. The situation becomes more complex when we remember that for Thomas, acquired moral virtue—even were it perfect on its own terms—is not virtue *simpliciter*, and hence we have a new critique: in so far as it falls short of the right command of means to eternal life, acquired prudence too is a sort of ‘simulation’ of infused prudence, a deceptive likeness. I will return to this contrast below.

<sup>49</sup>On many of the themes discussed in the preceding pages, see John Seward, *Perfect Fools: Folly for Christ’s Sake in Catholic and Orthodox Spirituality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980). See also Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Love of God and the Cross of Jesus*, 1:85ff.

<sup>50</sup>*De ver.* q. 10, a. 11, ad 9: “Duplex est sanitas mentis: una qua sanatur a culpa per gratiam fidei, et haec sanitas facit videre illam inaccessibilem claritatem per speculum et in aenigmate; alia est ab omni culpa et poena et miseria, quae erit per gloriam, et haec sanitas facit videri Deum facie ad faciem.”

<sup>51</sup>*De ver.* q. 26, a. 10: “Secundum naturae ordinem, propter colligantiam virium animae in una essentia et animae et corporis in uno esse

compositi, vires superiores et inferiores, et etiam corpus et anima invicem in se effluunt quod in aliquo eorum superabundat; et inde est quod ex apprehensione animae transmutatur corpus secundum calorem et frigus, et quandoque etiam usque ad sanitatem et aegritudinem et usque ad mortem; contingit enim aliquem ex gaudio vel tristitia vel amore mortem incurere. Et inde est quod ex ipsa gloria animae fit redundantia in corpus glorificandum ... et similiter est e converso, quod transmutatio corporis in animam redundat. Anima enim coniuncta corpori eius complexiones imitatur secundum animantium vel docilitatem et alia huiusmodi” (Leonine ed., 22:784). Translation based on that of Robert W. Schmidt, SJ, *Truth*, Questions XXI-XXIX (Chicago: Regnery, 1954).

<sup>52</sup>*ST I-II*, q. 3, a. 3, and q. 4, aa. 5 and 6.

<sup>53</sup>A famous passage in the *Discourse on Method* still has power to shock when read against the backdrop of the Christian wisdom it repudiates: “In place of that speculative philosophy taught in the schools, it is possible to find a practical philosophy,” by means of which we could “render ourselves as masters and possessors of nature. This is desirable not only for the invention of an infinity of devices that would enable one to enjoy trouble-free the fruits of the earth and all the goods found therein, but also principally for the maintenance of health, which unquestionably is the first good and the foundation of all the other goods of this life ... [I]f it is possible to find some means to render men generally more wise and more adroit than they have been up until now, I believe that one should look for it in medicine. ... [O]ne could rid oneself of an infinity of maladies, as much of the body as of the mind, and even perhaps also the frailty of old age, if one had a sufficient knowledge of their causes and of all the remedies that nature has provided us” (*Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Donald A. Cress, 4th ed. [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998], 35). See Richard Kennington, “Descartes and the Mastery of Nature,” in *Organism, Medicine, and Metaphysics*, ed. S. F. Spicker (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1978), 201-23.

<sup>54</sup>See *Principles of Philosophy*, Preface to the French edition of 1647, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1:186. For Descartes’s notion of “morals”—described in this work as “the high-

est and most perfect moral system, which presupposes a complete knowledge of all the other sciences and is the *ultimate level of wisdom*”—one must look to his final work, *The Passions of the Soul*, with its subtext of political control by the manipulation of physical forces. See Richard Kennington, “Rene Descartes,” in *A History of Political Philosophy*, ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1972), 421-39.

<sup>55</sup>One of the first to see that this is all Cartesianism had to offer was Leibniz, who around 1679—30 years after the publication of *The Passions of the Soul*—wrote a perspicacious letter on God and the soul in the course of which he says: “Descartes’s God, or perfect being, is not a God like the one we imagine or hope for, that is, a God just and wise, doing everything possible for the good of creatures. Rather, Descartes’s God is something approaching the God of Spinoza. ... That is why a God like Descartes’s allows us no consolation other than that of patience through strength ... [I]t is impossible to believe that this God cares for intelligent creatures any more than he does for the others; each creature will be happy or unhappy depending on how it finds itself engulfed in these great currents or vortices. Descartes has good reason to recommend, instead of felicity, patience without hope” (in *Philosophical Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989], 242).

<sup>56</sup>*In De div. nom.* 7, lec. 5, §739.

<sup>57</sup>*ST II-II*, q. 124.

<sup>58</sup>It may seem strange to have cited the example of a Manichaean assassin as an *amator mundi*, since classical dualism identifies evil with bodily things (“the world”) and good with spiritual things. However, St. Thomas, in accord with St. Augustine, sees more penetratingly that the real root of the error is a gross materialism supported by exclusive reliance on the imagination (cf. *Confessions* VII) and a narrow, self-centered apprehension of goods and evils (cf. *ST I*, q. 49, a. 3; q. 22, a. 2, ad 2). Thus it is the very inability to go beyond flesh and discern the spiritual origin of all material reality that leads to contempt of flesh and abuse of matter. Put differently, denial of the goodness of creatures fashioned by the Word and redeemed by the Word-made-flesh stems ultimately from a per-

verse *amor sui*, which is the hallmark of the *amator huius mundi*.

<sup>59</sup>As one sees occurring on all sides in contemporary Europe, where the union of Christian nations envisioned by Adenauer, Schuman, and Gasperi has been undermined by an obstinate secularism that cannot hide its derivation from the anticlericalism of the nineteenth century, itself derived from the liberalism of the Enlightenment. Pierre Manent has convincingly shown that the fundamental question of modern political philosophy is: How do we react to the Church—how do we gain power over it, neutralize it, and if possible, destroy it? Many are the methods proposed, ranging from wholesale slaughter to the legislative cold shoulder. See his *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*, trans. Rebecca Balinski (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>60</sup>*Early Christian Writings: The Apostolic Fathers*, trans. Maxwell Starnforth, rev. Andrew Louth (London: Penguin Books, 1987), 145. The author of this Epistle seems to take for granted the world’s (irrational) opposition to the Gospel, while holding out hope that some, such as the epistle’s recipient, will choose a wiser path. He does insist, nevertheless, that Christians are people who obey all *just* laws and keep all *honest* customs, giving no cause for scandal or disapproval on that account.

<sup>61</sup>Cf. *ST I-II*, q. 4, a. 5; q. 5, aa. 7 and 8.

<sup>62</sup>Barron, *Spiritual Master*, 172; cf. Torrell, *Spiritual Master*, 101-24.

<sup>63</sup>Emile Mersch, SJ, *The Theology of the Mystical Body*, trans. Cyril Vollert, SJ (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1952), 327.

<sup>64</sup>I do not choose this example at random, for I agree with John Paul II that the conflict between procreative and contraceptive mentalities discloses fundamentally opposed anthropologies resting on incompatible visions of reality. See *Familiaris Consortio* §32, last paragraph; *Letter to Families* §12-§13.

<sup>65</sup>All these research projects were either announced or proposed at the annual meeting of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology, held in Madrid from June 29 to July 2, 2003. See the Zenit report ZE03071201, available at [www.zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org). More recently, some researchers have proposed patenting and marketing human embryos with

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manufactured genetic profiles as 'models' for studying diseases with genetic roots. See the Zenit report ZE03112123.

<sup>66</sup>See *ST I-II*, q. 85, a. 3, and Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, ed. James Bastible, trans. Patrick Lynch (Rockford, Ill.: TAN, 1974), 113. The Council of Orange (529) taught that due to the sin of Adam, the whole man, both in body and in soul, was changed for the worse (cf. DS 371).

<sup>67</sup>Thomas accepts and even develops further Aristotle's claim that wicked men are worse than wild beasts: "peior enim est malus homo bestia, et plus nocet" (*ST II-II*, q. 64, a. 2, ad 3). The most complete discussion is in the commentary on the *Ethics* (*Sent. 7 Ethic.* lec. 1, Leonine ed., 47:380-82); cf. *De Regno* 1.3 (Leonine ed., 42:453). According to Jean Porter, Thomas's view that even sinners can acquire the virtue of justice by dint of repeated just acts in accordance with right reason "seem[s] to imply that a non-Christian society can nonetheless be a just society, which the Christian can recognize as such"; "justice provides a framework for human life that does not owe its validity to Christian revelation" ("The Virtue of Justice," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope [Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002], 284). These claims are highly questionable, if "Christian revelation" means not only a special message but also the healing and elevating grace that accompanies it. In *abstractu*, that is, prescinding from the structures of sin erected and consolidated by personal sins and the effects of original sin, a non-Catholic society could attain widespread justice, but in *concreto*, such a goal would be unimaginably difficult, and can be realized only with the healing and elevating effects of grace. That even the manifestly religious Plato and his disciple Aristotle defend abortion in some instances—a crime John Paul II considers in some respects the most heinous, the most at variance with natural law—is a sober reminder of the limits of unregenerate human thought and action. On pagan attitudes towards the child, see John Saward, *Cradle of Redeeming Love: The Theology of the Christmas Mystery* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002), 308-14; on Plato and Aristotle, 311. See *infra*, note 94.

<sup>68</sup>See, e.g., *ST I*, q. 14, a. 8 and q. 15; q. 16, a. 6; q. 19, a. 4; q. 20, aa. 2-3; q. 44.

<sup>69</sup>Cf. *De ver.* q. 18, aa. 2, 4, and 6; *ST I*, q. 94, aa. 3-4.

<sup>70</sup>On this point, see *infra*, note 94.

<sup>71</sup>Hence I agree with Lawrence Dewan's critique of the idealist and fideist bent of John Milbank's and Catherine Pickstock's response to secular rationalism ("On Milbank and Pickstock's *Truth in Aquinas*," *Nova et Vetera*, Eng. ed., 1 [2003], 199-212). All the same, one looks around at the world of high-powered intellectuals and the barely educated masses bewitched by Darwinism into rejecting something as obvious as nature's acting for the sake of an end, and one cannot help asking oneself: How is it possible for the human mind, that spark of divine light, to fall so far down into darkness? Without help, left to his own resources, man is prone to become a cesspool of ignorance, error, and vice. It is for this reason that Thomas, when discussing why the Word became flesh, never fails to emphasize His mission to deliver men from their sins.

<sup>72</sup>Cf. *SCG III*.160, §3316: "quibus de facili homo provocatur ad peccandum, nisi retrahatur per firmam inhaesionem ad ultimum finem, quam gratia facit" (Marietti ed., 3:238); *Compendium theologiae* 1.213: "Perfecta autem inhesio voluntatis ad Deum per amorem est per gratiam, per quam homo iustificatur secundum illud Ro. III 'Iustificati gratis per gratiam eius': ex hoc enim homo iustus est quod Deo per amorem inheret" (Leonine ed., 42:166).

<sup>73</sup>I hold, with *Veritatis Splendor* and *Fides et Ratio*, that reason and philosophy stand to faith and theology as human conscience to divine lawgiver: "participated theonomy." For a defense of the relative autonomy of reason, see Wayne Hankey, "Why Philosophy Abides for Aquinas," *The Heythrop Journal* 42.3 (2001): 329-48; "Philosophy as Way of Life for Christians? Iamblichan and Porphyrian Reflections on Religion, Virtue, and Philosophy in Thomas Aquinas," *Laval théologique et philosophique* 59.2 (2003): 193-224. My position depends entirely on accepting that reason, or more generally intellect, is *truly* a power of grasping (though not of comprehending) reality directly and successfully; this is the precondition of its ecstatic openness to God's revelation of Himself, its welcoming of the Word which penetrates and fecundates its innermost potency.

<sup>74</sup>On the imperturbable happiness of God as the ultimate foundation of reality, see Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 1998), esp. 29-31; on the

intrinsic ordering of the active, social life to the goal of gazing upon God, see David M. Gallagher, "Moral Virtue and Contemplation: A Note on the Unity of the Moral Life," *Sapientia* 51 (1996): 385-92. On the link between love of neighbor and contemplative prayer, see Paul Murray, OP, *Preachers at Prayer* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2003).

<sup>75</sup>See, e.g., *ST III*, q. 63, a. 5, obj. 3; q. 61, a. 4, ad 1; q. 80, a. 2, ad 2.

<sup>76</sup>For a magnificent description of this process, see *Sent. III*, d. 27, q. 1, a. 1 corp., and among the responses, particularly the response to the fourth objection.

<sup>77</sup>In *Christian Theism and the Problems of Philosophy*, ed. Michael D. Beaty (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 327-54.

<sup>78</sup>It was nothing less than the total perversion of Thomas's political theology by Novak's philosophical precursors—men like Ignatius Eschmann, OP, Walter Farrell, OP, and Mortimer Adler—that prompted Charles De Koninck to demonstrate once and for all the impossibility of pressing the Angelic Doctor, or, more importantly, the social doctrine of the Church, into the service of modern liberalism (i.e., "personalism," in the way De Koninck understood that term). See *On the Primacy of the Common Good: Against the Personalists*, translated by Sean Collins and published, with companion essays by Eschmann and De Koninck, in *The Aquinas Review* 4 (1997). For a recent discussion of this debate, see Mary Martha Keys, "Personal Dignity and the Common Good: A Twentieth Century Thomistic Dialogue," in *Catholicism, Liberalism, and Communitarianism*, ed. K. Grasso, G. Bradley, and R. Hunt (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995), 173-95. On a sample of Novak's tendentious reading of tradition, see Kenneth R. Craycraft, Jr., "Was Aquinas a Whig? St. Thomas on Regime," available at [www.ewtn.com/library/business/ff94302.htm](http://www.ewtn.com/library/business/ff94302.htm).

<sup>79</sup>*ST I-II*, q. 62, a. 4: "ex hoc homo aliquid amat, quod apprehendit illud ut bonum suum."

<sup>80</sup>See *ST II-II*, q. 25, a. 7, where Thomas analyzes the self in terms of spirit and flesh. Am I, is my 'self', most of all my body; is my identity constituted by the stream of data that comes through its powers of sensation; is my good the life of sensual delight, the force or fame or for-

tune available here? Or am I, is my 'self', most of all a spiritual soul open to, yearning for, the infinite good, so that my weal and woe are bound up primarily with my *interior* life, to which my body—creature of God that it is, and vital part of who I am—should minister? Another approach is to consider different activities or objects to which a man gives himself. Cf. *De caritate* a. 2, corp.: "Proprium autem bonum hominis oportet diversimode accipi, secundum quod homo diversimode accipitur. Nam proprium bonum hominis in quantum homo, est bonum rationis, eo quod homini esse est rationale esse. Bonum autem hominis secundum quod est artifex, est bonum artis; et sic etiam secundum quod est politicus, est bonum eius bonum commune civitatis." Thomas goes on to apply this insight to man's participation through grace in the blessed life of God, the ultimate and infinite common good. Though infinitely beyond his nature, yet by God's merciful gift of Himself, *this* good paradoxically becomes the *proprium bonum hominis* beyond compare.

<sup>81</sup>See *ST I*, q. 60, a. 5. The coming citations will highlight this connection, but for a complete exposition the reader is referred to David M. Gallagher, "Thomas Aquinas on Self-Love as the Basis for Love of Others," *Acta Philosophica* 8 (1999): 23-44; idem, "Desire for Beatitude and Love of Friendship," 34-39.

<sup>82</sup>*ST II-II*, q. 186, a. 1: "In hoc autem perfectio hominis consistit quod totaliter Deo inhaereat."

<sup>83</sup>*SCG* 3, ch. 130, §3020: "vero optimum hominis est ut mente deo adhaereat et rebus divinis" (Marietti ed., 3:192). Cf. *ST II-II*, q. 81, a. 7: "Deo reverentiam et honorem exhibemus non propter ipsum, qui in seipso est gloria plenus, cui nihil a creatura addici potest, sed propter nos, quia videlicet per hoc quod Deum reveremur et honoramus, mens nostra ei subicitur; et in hoc eius perfectio consistit; quaelibet enim res perficitur per hoc quod subditur suo superiori, sicut corpus per hoc quod vivificatur ab anima, et aer per hoc quod illuminatur a sole."

<sup>84</sup>*Super Ps.* 32, §11: "beatitudo hominis est inhaerere Deo. Unumquodque enim perfectum est, si inhaeret proprio bono. Proprium autem bonum hominis est Deus" (Busa 6:93a). This passage of *Super Ps.* 32 is of great interest. Thomas first reviews the different opinions of the philosophical sects on what constitutes hap-

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piness: the Epicureans, who say bodily goods; the Stoics, who say the virtues of the active life; the Peripatetics, who say contemplation of the truth. But all these fall short of man's true happiness, union with God Himself; anything short of this is *vanum*. Cf. the contrast drawn in *Sent.* III, d. 35, q. 1, a. 2, qa. 1 between the philosopher's and the saint's contemplation; also Erb, "Pati Divina," 80-81.

<sup>85</sup>Though Thomas is also able to speak of the *perfectio hominis* as beatitude (e.g., *ST I-II*, q. 4, a. 5, obj. 3; *II-II*, q. 186, a. 3, obj. 4), contemplation of truth (*ST II-II*, q. 180, a. 4, obj. 4), virtue (*De virtutibus*, q. 1, a. 9, ad 20), as consisting in *imitatione divina* (*De malo*, q. 12, a. 1, obj. 5), in *coniunctione ad Deum* (*In Boethii De Trinitate* q. 2, a. 1, response), in *dilectione Dei et proximi* (*De duobus praeceptis*, De quarto praecepto), etc.

<sup>86</sup>*Sent.* I, d. 9, q. 1, a. 2: "Haec est differentia inter adjectiva et substantiva: quia substantiva significant per modum substantiae, et ideo significant rem suam absolute ...; adjectivum autem significat per modum accidentis, quod non habet esse absolutum, nec unitatem: sed esse suum et unitas sua dependet ex eo cui inhaeret."

<sup>87</sup>"Relinquet homo patrem suum et matrem et adheret uxori suae et erunt duo in carne una" (*Gen.* 2:24); "Sychem filii mei adhesit anima filiae vestrae, date eam illi uxorem" (*Gen.* 34:8); "adhesit pavimento anima mea: vivifica me secundum verbum tuum" (*Ps.* 118:25). From the Latin liturgy (both Roman and Dominican rites), a prayer after communion: "Fac me tuis semper *inhaerere* mandatis et a te nunquam separari permittas." Augustine's *City of God* is replete with it: "ita illud, quod omnes homines appetunt, id est vitam beatam, quemquam isti assecuturum negant, qui non illi uni optimo, quod est incommutabilis Deus, puritate casti amoris *adhaeserit*" (*Lib.* 10, c. 1, in *De civitate Dei libri XXII*, ed. Bernard Dombart and Alfonsus Kalb, 2 vols. [Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1993], 1:401); "Verum sacrificium est omne opus, quo agitur, ut sancta societate *inhaeremus* Deo" (*Lib.* 10, c. 6, Dombart-Kalb 1:410.9-10); "Bonum enim nostrum, de cuius fine inter philosophos magna contentio est, nullum est aliud quam illi *cohaerere*, cuius unius anima intellectualis incorporeo, si dici potest, amplexu veris impletur fecundaturque virtutibus. ... Hic autem finis est *adhaerere* Deo" (*Lib.* 10, c. 3, Dombart-Kalb 1:406). We find Albert, too, saying: "Visio ... dicit conversionem super praesen-

tiam tantum: comprehensio autem quae succedit spei, dicit *adhaerentium*: sed amor eo quod est vitta stringens et acutum mobile, penetrans amatum, ut dicit Dionysius, dicit *inhaerentium*" (*Sent.* I.1.B.12 ad 1, ed. Borgnet, 35:29-30).

<sup>88</sup>"Egoistic Rationalism," 348.

<sup>89</sup>See John Seward, *The Beauty of Holiness and the Holiness of Beauty: Art, Sanctity, and the Truth of Catholicism* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997); Aidan Nichols, OP, *Christendom Awake: On Re-energising the Church in Culture* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999).

<sup>90</sup>See Thomas Storck, *The Catholic Milieu* (Front Royal, Va.: Christendom College, 1987) and *Foundations of a Catholic Political Order* (Springfield, Va.: Four Faces Press, 1998); E. Cahill, SJ, *The Framework of a Christian State* [1932] (repr. Harrison, NY: Roman Catholic Books, n.d.).

<sup>91</sup>I do not wish to overlook the elements of truth in MacDonald's position. No atheist consistently acts on the basis of his atheism; in addition, most non-believers are not atheists simply speaking. Consequently, it does turn out to be the case that men *in general*, whether Christian or not, agree that murder, theft, and the like should be outlawed, even if an unbeliever promotes exceptions such as abortion and euthanasia, which he fails to recognize as crimes. The natural law could not really be abandoned as a whole without the utter destruction of society, and consequently, wherever there remains even a *vestige* of society, many principles of natural law remain operative. From this perspective, a Thomist will rightly stress the reality of the natural law in the human race, to which agreements at the level of general precepts bear witness (e.g., "human life is good and worthy of protection"), and will blame the mighty discord over its specification (e.g., "the life of an unborn child is worthy of protection") on sinful habits and stubborn deafness to the Church's authoritative guidance. The sinner is not one who is altogether empty of principles, much less is he successful in obliterating them; he is one who betrays innate principles with a worldly kiss. And this is the tragedy of fallen human nature, repeating again and again the treachery of Judas.

<sup>92</sup>*Quodlibet* III, q. 6, a. 3: "Dicendum quod perfectio spiritualis vite ex caritate pensanda est, qua qui caret, spiritualiter *nihil* est, ut dicitur I ad Corinthios XIII, ab eius autem perfectione simpliciter aliquis dicitur esse perfectus, unde dicitur ad Colossenses III: *Super omnia ... cari-*

*tatem habete, quae est vinculum perfectionis*" (Leonine ed., 25:268). For detailed treatment of this doctrine, see Gérard Gillemann, SJ, *The Primacy of Charity in Moral Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., trans. William F. Ryan, SJ and André Vachon, SJ (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1961).

<sup>93</sup>For discussion of these points, see Torrell, *Spiritual Master*, 341-69, et passim. My statement should be understood in reference to the person who, *by his own fault*, fails to attain the supernatural end; it is possible to believe that those who fail to attain it on account of original sin alone, such as unbaptized children, may attain some lesser end which, from the vantage of true beatitude, is a punishment, but which nevertheless participates in a shadowy way in this beatitude. I am speaking, of course, of the *limbus puerorum*, the existence of which was supported at the Council of Florence. See Christopher Beiting, "The Idea of Limbo in Thomas Aquinas," *The Thomist* 62 (1998), 217-44. While I do not discount Thomas's view, I have suggested a different possibility at least for the victims of abortion: see my "King Herod and the Martyr-Children," in *Abortion and Martyrdom: The Papers of the Solesmes Consultation and an Appeal to the Catholic Church*, ed. Aidan Nichols, OP (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2002), 32-50.

<sup>94</sup>Cf. Thomas Osborne, "The Augustinianism of Thomas Aquinas's Moral Theory," *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 279-305. Brian Shanley ("Aquinas on Pagan Virtue," *The Thomist* 63 [1999]: 553-77) is right to remind us of Thomas's view that some kind of genuine political virtue existed among the pagans. Yet Shanley admits that acquired virtues are virtues *secundum quid* since they do not order man to his ultimate end (to say they could so order him would be sheer Pelagianism), and more importantly, hints at a connection, in the order of divine providence, between any authentic virtue and the gift of grace (576). Indeed, this seems evident: If a pagan *does* transcend the egoism of fallen human nature, he *must* be moving under the influence of grace. Self-transcendence is natural to man insofar as he is *capax Dei* (*ST I*, q. 93, a. 4), but after the fall, this inclination has to be supported by an assistance beyond that of the conservation of being (*ST I-II*, q. 109, a. 3). If there *is* a virtuous pagan, he is already moving

*in and towards* Christ, though he may not yet be an actual member of His body (cf. *ST III*, q. 8, a. 3; Charles Journet, *The Church of the Word Incarnate*, vol. 1: *The Apostolic Hierarchy*, trans. A. H. C. Downes [London: Sheed & Ward, 1955], esp. 1-15, 28-45; Jacques Maritain, *On the Church of Christ*, trans. Joseph W. Evans [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973], 93-134).

<sup>95</sup>*ST I-II*, q. 63, a. 4; q. 65, a. 2: "Solae virtutes infusae sunt perfectae, et simpliciter dicendae virtutes." There is considerable discussion in the Thomist tradition about how to understand infused moral virtues, but we need not enter into details, for the salient point to me is just Aquinas's insistence on the magnitude and multitude of divine gifts necessary for attaining man's single true end, owing to its loftiness. It is a point nicely made in *De Trinitate* q. 6, a. 4, ad 5: "Quamvis enim homo naturaliter inclinatur in finem ultimum, non tamen potest naturaliter illum consequi, sed solum per gratiam, et hoc est propter eminentiam illius finis."

<sup>96</sup>*ST I*, q. 113, a. 4, obj. 3: "Infideles etiam, etsi interdum bona opera faciant, non tamen bene faciunt, quia non recta intentione faciunt, fides enim intentionem dirigit, ut Augustinus dicit." In his reply Thomas does not dispute this principle. Similarly, in the much-discussed article on whether human beings can acquire virtues by habituation (*ST I-II*, q. 63, a. 2), the austere Augustinian view rehearsed in the first objection ("omnis infidelium vita peccatum est; et nihil est bonum sine summo bono. Ubi deest cognitio veritatis, falsa est virtus etiam in optimis moribus") is not rejected, but placed alongside the *lesser* truth defended in the corpus: virtues directed to the good as defined by reason can be acquired by a man's own effort, yet these do not avail for his total perfection or salvation, since they are not virtues directed to man's *unqualified* good, namely the good as defined by the divine law. Cf. *ST I-II*, q. 109, a. 2: "Quia tamen natura humana per peccatum non est totaliter corrupta, ut scilicet toto bono naturae privetur; potest quidem etiam in statu naturae corruptae, per virtutem suae naturae aliquod bonum particulare agere, sicut aedificare domos, plantare vineas, et alia huiusmodi; non tamen totum bonum sibi connaturale, ita quod in nullo deficiat." Cf. *Sent.* II, d. 40, q. 1, a. 5, obj. 2

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and reply. The reason a non-believer does not sin of necessity is that he does not always think explicitly of, much less will, an end contrary to God. When he performs an act generically good, such as giving alms, or good by reason of the circumstances, such as eating soup when hungry, his action is ordered habitually to his last end but not in its distinctness, and therefore not insofar as this end is contrary to God. His action can be good simply speaking, although it is imperfect and he merits nothing by it.

<sup>97</sup>See the concurrent opinion of Torrell, *Spiritual Master*, 268-75.

<sup>98</sup>ST I-II, q. 68, a. 2; q. 69, a. 1; ST I-II, q. 68, a. 1: "virtutes humanae perficiunt hominem secundum quod homo natus est moveri per rationem in his quae interius vel exterius agit. Oportet igitur inesse homini altiores perfectiones, secundum quas sit dispositus ad hoc quod divinitus moveatur. Et istae perfectiones vocantur dona, non solum quia infunduntur a Deo; sed quia secundum ea homo disponitur ut efficiatur prompte mobilis ab inspiratione divina." On the Thomistic doctrine of the gifts, see M.-Michel Labourdette, OP, "Dons du Saint-Esprit—Saint Thomas et la théologie thomiste," *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* 3:1610-35; Garrigou-Lagrance, *Three Ages*.

<sup>99</sup>Of course, for Thomas God's motion is never violently opposed to rationality: see, e.g., ST II-II, q. 52, a. 1; I-II, q. 68, a. 3, ad 2; q. 68, a. 4, ad 1. The gifts take precedence over the moral and intellectual virtues, but the theological virtues take precedence over the gifts, since it is through faith, hope, and charity that the mind is united to God so as to be moved by His promptings: I-II, q. 68, a. 4, ad 3, and a. 8.

<sup>100</sup>ST I-II, q. 68, a. 1: "Manifestum est autem quod omne quod movetur, necesse est proportionatum esse motori, et haec est perfectio mobilis inquantum est mobile, dispositio qua disponitur ad hoc quod bene moveatur a suo motore." This general principle is then immediately applied to the virtues and gifts. Cf. q. 68, a. 2: "Sed in ordine ad finem ultimum supernaturalem, ad quem ratio movet secundum quod est aliquid et imperfecte formata per virtutes theologicas; non sufficit ipsa motio rationis, nisi desuper adsit instinctus et motio Spiritus Sancti ... quia scilicet in haereditatem illius terrae beatorum nullus potest pervenire, nisi moveatur et deducatur a Spiritu Sancto."

<sup>101</sup>ST II-II, q. 52, a. 2: "principium motivum inferius praecipue adiuvatur et perficitur per hoc

quod movetur a superiori motivo principio, sicut corpus in hoc quod movetur a spiritu. Manifestum est autem quod rectitudo rationis humanae comparatur ad rationem divinam sicut principium motivum inferius ad superius, ratio enim aeterna est suprema regula omnis humanae rectitudinis. Et ideo prudentia, quae importat rectitudinem rationis, maxime perficitur et iuvatur secundum quod regulatur et movetur a Spiritu Sancto. Quod pertinet ad donum consilii."

<sup>102</sup>ST I-II, q. 68, a. 4, ad 1: "quantum ad infusionem donorum, ars pertinet ad Spiritum Sanctum, qui est principaliter movens; ratio autem ad homines, qui sunt quaedam organa eius dum ab eo moventur."

<sup>103</sup>This has its earthly analogue in noble friendship: I am moved by the other's will, the other's needs; I act for his sake, for his benefit. Since it is good to help another, this action indirectly redounds to my benefit as well, just as the being-moved by the Holy Spirit is for my salvation (ST I-II, q. 68, a. 8). The key point, however, could be put colloquially: What is moving me, what is motivating me? Is it the Spirit of God or my own will, as distinct from His? But if my will—in the sense of *liberum arbitrium*, *voluntas ut ratio*—has been totally shaped by the divine will and led to perfect concord, there is no longer an 'either/or' scenario. Two wills have become as one.

<sup>104</sup>ST II-II, q. 24, a. 1, ad 2: "ratio non est regula caritatis, sicut humanarum virtutum, sed regulatur a Dei sapientia, et excedit regulam rationis humanae, secundum illud Ephes. III, supereminentem scientiae caritatem Christi. Unde non est in ratione neque sicut in subiecto, sicut prudentia; neque sicut in regulante, sicut iustitia vel temperantia; sed solum per quandam affinitatem voluntatis ad rationem." Translation adapted from that of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1948).

<sup>105</sup>ST I-II, q. 19, a. 4; I-II, q. 63, a. 2. At ST II-II, q. 23, a. 6, we read: "cum bonum in humanis actibus attendatur secundum quod regulantur debita regula, necesse est quod virtus humana, quae est principium bonorum actuum, consistat in attingendo humanorum actuum regulam. Est autem duplex regula humanorum actuum, ut supra dictum est, scilicet ratio humana et Deus, sed Deus est prima regula, a qua etiam humana ratio regulanda est." Cf. ST I-II, q. 71, a. 6: "peccatum est dictum vel factum vel concupitum contra legem aeternam."

<sup>106</sup>This phrase is borrowed from the title of chapter 3 of Garrigou-Lagrance's *Three Ages*, 1:48.

<sup>107</sup>ST I-II, q. 63, a. 4.

<sup>108</sup>St. Thomas Aquinas, *Angel of the Schools*, trans. J. F. Scanlan (London: Sheed & Ward, 1942), 43. This paragraph is a highly-compressed statement of the argument unfolded in Maritain's classic works *Integral Humanism*, *Freedom in the Modern World*, and *A Letter on Independence*, ed. Otto Bird (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996).

<sup>109</sup>Cf. the remarks of Thomas Storck, "The Dissolutions of Modernity and the Response of Thomism," *Doctor Angelicus* 4 (2004): 191-206.

<sup>110</sup>See ST II-II, q. 7, a. 2. Again, no one has expressed this truth better than Pieper, who writes, apropos human life in this world: "Man's being is always dynamic (*geschehendes Sein*); man is never just 'there'. Man 'is' insofar as he 'becomes'—not only in his physical reality, in growing, maturing, and eventually diminishing towards the end. In his spiritual reality, too, man is constantly moving on—he is existentially 'becoming'; he is 'on the way'. For man, to 'be' means to 'be on the way'—he cannot be in any other form; man is intrinsically a pilgrim, 'not yet arrived', regardless of whether he is aware of this or not, whether he accepts it or not. The object of this dynamism, the destination of this journey, the aim, therefore, of this becoming and the moving force underlying it all, is the *good*"

(*Only the Lover Sings*, trans. Lothar Krauth [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990], 42-43).

<sup>111</sup>Recall the prologue to *Sent. I*, the remarks from *Super Ps. 22* and *Super Ps. 35*, and similar texts, discussed above.

<sup>112</sup>*Super ad Colossenses* 2, lec. 1, §82: "sicut qui haberet librum ubi esset tota scientia, non quaereret nisi ut sciret illum librum, sic et nos non oportet amplius quaerere nisi Christum" (Marietti ed., 142). The text is Col. 2:1-3.

<sup>113</sup>Thomas cites this phrase from Jerome on three occasions, in each instance to sum up the essence of the evangelical life or *sequela Christi: Contra retrahentes* ch. 15, *Contra impugnantes* ch. 6 (in the numbering of the Leonine ed.), and ST II-II, q. 186, a. 3, ad 3.

<sup>114</sup>Cf. Jn. 1:3, Col. 1:16; Eph. 1:12.

<sup>115</sup>"Lord, nothing but yourself." St. Thomas's famous response to the question ("You have written well of me, Thomas; what do you desire as a reward for your labours?") projected from the crucifix in the chapel of Saint Nicholas at the Dominican priory in Naples, and overheard by the sacristan Dominic of Caserta. For the incident as recorded by William of Tocco, see *Thomae Aquinatis vitae fontes praecipue*, ed. Angelico Ferrua, OP (Alba: Edizioni Domenicane, 1968), §35, pp. 79-80; for discussion, see Kwasniewski, "Golden Straw," 62-63; Jean-Pierre Torrell, OP, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 285.

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